

Be Still and Know.... What?

There is a thin veil of spirituality cast over our land. We see it on bumper stickers, t-shirts, bible covers, and memes all over social media.

One such text is the passage, "*Be still, and know that I am God,*" Psalm 46:10a (ESV).

When you see this passage, it's usually covered with flowers and butterflies. It's meant to instill peace and a sense of wellbeing. It's used in inspirational calendars. Sometimes we'll see this passage used for a month at a time, but pondering what?

Using the verse of Psalm 46 this way comes to us from the movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy. It's one of a short list of passages cited as their central teaching. The teaching is an expression of peace, found in pursuing the father-mother god in the Christian Scientist Church.

The Christian Scientist Church is a non-trinitarian, christian-ish heretical sect founded in the 1870s in Boston, MA by Ms. Eddy. They are part of a group of metaphysical Christian offshoots centring on the "divine mind" and the unreality and/or escape-ability of the physical world.

There is nothing new under creation. These ideas have been with mankind since the beginning. One more notable case is that of the gnostic heresy of the earliest centuries of Christianity. The Gnostics also viewed the physical world as an evil to escape. They shared the same the notion of divinity as an essence we aspire to join.

Our creeds all speak of God in substance and personhood, in direct opposition to these ideas.

The metaphysics intend for us to hear those words, "*be still, and know,*" and find a new understanding and a new revelation within our own minds and the stillness thereof. This does not fit the context of Psalm 46 very well at all.

Psalm 46 is the scriptural basis of Martin Luther's reformation battle hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Not surprisingly, the Psalm is rich with imagery relating to battle and warfare. There is a stillness, but not an internal one. We look to God for peace and protection. In the midst of all we are about to hear, He is our Fortress.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling" (Psalm 46:1-3).

The presence of God here is immediate, not distant. He is not a God who can, may, or will be our refuge. He is. That's the same answer He gave to Moses from the burning bush, "*I am has sent Me to you.*" Jesus says the same, "*before Abraham was, I am*" (Gen 3:14; John 8:58).

The roaring of the seas and the destruction of the mountains are the image of uncreation. The disorder that rises out of the good order of creation after the fall into sin is that raging. All creation groans for redemption.

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psalm 46:4-7).

The seas are an image of disorder and sin. The river is an image of new life, forgiveness, and new creation. In the prophets and in the Revelation of Saint John, the river flowing into, through, and from the city of God is the source of restoration. The peace and restoration isn't cowardly though. She cannot be moved. She, the city, is resolute. The Lord is with her.

The Lord of Hosts, Lord God of Sabaoth, Lord of battle-tested armies, this is not a weak, peaceable image of our God. He, who commands the armies of victorious angels, that Lord of host is with us, our fortress.

"Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth!'" (Psalm 46:8-10).

The enemies of the Lord: sin, death, and the devil are defeated and bound for destruction. That battle is already won. But yet the complete destruction of our old evil foe awaits Him and his minions. Beyond victory, the Lord will break and destroy even the implements of that warfare. With your weapons broken, shattered, and burning before you, now be still before the Lord.

Primarily an accusation to the vanquished: be still. Those who would not cease in speaking against the Lord: be still. Those who accuse the children of God: be still. Those who serve the adversary: be still and know that I am God. I shall be exalted in the earth! Let all mortal flesh keep silence.

Why?

Because "*The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*" (Psalm 46:11).