

Christian Worship Hymn 200/201—A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

*A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need that has us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe now means deadly woe; Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal.*

*With might of ours can naught be done; soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one whom God himself elected.
You ask, "Who is this?" Jesus Christ it is, The almighty Lord
And there's no other God; He holds the field forever.*

*Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us.
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done! One little word can fell him.*

*The Word they still shall let remain, nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain with his good gifts and Spirit.
And do what they will—hate, steal, hurt, or kill—though all may be gone,
Our victory is won; the kingdom's ours forever!*

Our hymn of the week is one that is near and dear to many Lutherans. Martin Luther's, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" has been translated into a host of other languages other than its original German and has over 100 English translations alone! It is based off of Psalm 46.

This hymn serves well as the hymn of the day for this week's lessons. It deals very directly with our need for God's strength in our daily fight against the Devil and his angels. Verse one begins by reminding us that our God is our fortress. He is the place where we can go to find refuge and safety. But he is not only our refuge, but he is also our weapon to fight against the Devil. The Devil is serious about this battle. He wants all of us to die with him eternally in hell. Deep hatred and great power are his weapons. No one on earth can stand up to him alone and win.

Verse two begins by confirming our weakness. We can do nothing by ourselves against the Devil. But we are not alone; no, we have a substitute who will fight for us. This substitute is someone whom God himself chose. Who could it be? It's like the old Superman episodes where the people see their hero and ask, "Is it a bird? Is it a plane?" We ask, who can save us from our impending disaster? Jesus Christ, our superman! There is no other God! He holds his place in battle forever!

Because we have our hero fighting for us, verse three says that we are not afraid even if the world is full of devils who want nothing better than to devour us. Why? Because we won't be overpowered! Even the Devil himself can bark as loud as he wants, he can roar like the mightiest of lions, but he has no bite. He can't harm us because Jesus has defeated him. One word of God can and will destroy him.

But Jesus, the Word incarnate remains! He's with us through out our lives here on earth and he gives us his good and perfect gifts and he gives us the Holy Spirit. No matter what happens here on earth, if we are hated, if we lose our possessions, if they torture us physically and mentally, even if they kill us, they can't take away our victory. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ! His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven is ours forever!