

## Psalm 146

### The blessedness of trusting God

Psalm 146: The last five psalms stand out quite conspicuously in the Psalter. Each begins and ends with "Praise ye the LORD" (Hebrew *Hallelujah*), none contains petition or lament, none contains historical allusion to any large extent, and each strikes a distinct note of praise not found in the others. That note (in Psalm 146), is a personal one. It is the only one of the five containing the personal pronoun "I" (verse 2). Thus, the call to praise (verses 1-2), is addressed by the psalmist to himself. Though in the body of the psalm (verses 3-9), he exhorts other pious Israelites to trust in the Lord's providential care. In the conclusion (verse 10), he envisions an even wider audience.

Verses 1-10: From this psalm to the conclusion of the Psalter, each psalm begins and ends with "Praise the LORD!" (Psalms 146-150). Neither the composer nor the occasions are known.

Psalm 146 appears similar in content to (Psalms 113, 145).

- I. Commitment to Praise (146:1-2);
- II. Misplaced Trust (146:3-4);
- III. Blessed Hope (146:5-10).

Verses 146:1 – 150:6: All of these Hallelujah psalms are so called because they begin and end with the words "Praise the LORD". *Hallelujah* is the Hebrew word for "Praise the Lord".

### **Psalm 146:1 "Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul."**

Or, "hallelujah"; which, in the Greek and Vulgate Latin versions, is the title of the psalm. But is rather the beginning of it; and is an exhortation to men, especially to the saints, to praise the Lord. The Lord Christ, the Lord of the world, who has created it and upholds it. The Lord of lords, David's Lord; and the Lord of all his people, by creation, redemption, and grace. And from whom they receive all blessings and mercies, temporal and spiritual, and are therefore under the highest obligations to praise him.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul": The psalmist does not put onto others that he does not choose to do himself. But, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, and prophet of the church, leads the way and sets an example. And not only strikes his harp and psaltery, and with his tongue, mouth, and lips, shows forth the praise of the Lord. But engages his heart and his soul in this work. Which, as it was capable of it, so most agreeable to the Lord. Who requires the heart in his service, and to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. And this being the better and more noble part of man, making melody in it to the Lord. And engaging all the powers and faculties of it in such an employment, must be acceptable to him. "O my soul" (compare the beginnings and ends of Psalms 103, 104).

We have spoken before about the soul of man being the will of man. God has given us a free will, that we can choose to do good or evil with. David in the verse above, is just stating that he has decided that he will praise the Lord with everything within him, even his soul.

Verses 2-3: Twice in these verses the psalmist says, "I will". Hope in God is a decision. Either Christians continue trusting in their own strength or what others may offer, or they reject a reliance on humans ("trust in princes"), and resolve to hope in God.

**Psalm 146:2 "While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."**

As he had good reason to do, since he had his life from him, and was upheld in it by him. Who also favored him with the mercies and comforts of life. And that every day, being renewed to him every morning, and continued all the days of his life. Which determined him throughout the whole of it to praise the Lord. Nay, he had his spiritual life from him, with all the blessings of it; which are lasting. Everlasting ones, and had hope of eternal life with him.

"I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being": Or "while I am". Not only in this world, but in the world to come. For men have a being or existence after death, and the saints have a most comfortable and happy one then. And will be more capable of singing praises to their incarnate God. And which will be their work to all eternity (see Psalm 104:33).

David is speaking of the frailty of the body of man in this. There will be a time when there will be no physical body. He is saying, while I have a mouth to speak with and the breath of life to utter it with, I will praise the Lord. David was a singer. His voice lifted in songs of praise was his ultimate way of praising his Lord.

Verses 3-4: "Put not your trust" This could be:

- (1) A general principle;
- (2) A reference to the people wanting a human king like the nations (1 Sam. 8:5); or
- (3) Judah's later dependence on foreign kings for protection (2 Kings 16:7-9).

**Psalm 146:3 "Put not your trust in princes, [nor] in the son of man, in whom [there is] no help."**

Not in foreign princes, in alliances and confederacies with them; nor in any at home. David did not desire his people to put their trust in him, nor in his nobles and courtiers; but in the Lord Christ. Who, as he is the object of praise, is also the proper object of trust. Princes, though ever so liberal and bountiful, as their name signifies, and therefore called benefactors (Luke 22:25). Or ever so mighty and powerful, wise and prudent, yet are not to be depended upon. They are changeable, fickle, and inconstant. And oftentimes not faithful to their word, but fallacious and

deceitful. "Men of high degree are a lie" (Psalm 62:9). Wherefore it is better to trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. Who gives all things richly to enjoy; who is unchangeable, and ever abides faithful (see Psalm 118:8).

"Nor in the son of man": Any son of man; any human being, no matter what his rank or power. The phrase is often used to denote man (see notes at Psalm 8:4). The appellation "Son of man" was often applied by the Savior to himself to express emphatically the idea that he was a man, that he had a human nature. That he was identified with the race; that he was a brother, a fellow-sufferer, a friend of man. That he was not a cold and abstract being so exalted that he could not feel or weep over the sins and woes of a fallen and suffering world. The language here, however, it is scarcely necessary to say, does not refer to him. It is right to put our trust in him; we have no other trust.

"In whom there is no help": Margin, salvation. So the Hebrew. The idea is, that man cannot save us. He cannot save himself; he cannot save others.

It really does not make any difference how important a title they have on this earth, people cannot and will not help you. They will ultimately let you down. Your trust should be in God, who will never let you down. All people on this earth are sons of man, until they receive Jesus as their Savior and become sons of God.

**Psalm 146:4 "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."**

That is, the breath of a son of man, of any and every one of the princes. It goes forth continually, and is drawn in again as long as a man lives. But at death it goes forth, and returns no more till the resurrection. The breath which the Lord breathed into man, and which is in his nostrils while he lives, and is very precarious. And when it is taken away, he dies, and;

"He returneth to his earth": From whence he was taken, and of which he was made. Upon which he lived, where he dwelt, and in which he took delight and pleasure. Minding earth and earthly things, and which is now all he has. Who, though he may have had many large estates and possessions. Nay, have ruled over many kingdoms and countries, yet his property of earth is now no more than the length and breadth of a grave. He returns to earth as soon as he dies, becoming a lump of clay. And particularly when he is interred in it. And when by corruption and worms he is turned into it.

"In that very day his thoughts perish": In the day, hour, and moment he dies. Not that the soul ceases, or ceases to think at death; it is immortal, and dies not. And, as it exists in a separate state after death, it retains all its powers and faculties, and, among the rest, its power of thinking. Which it is capable of exercising, and does, as appears from the case of the souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9). But the meaning is, that at death all the purposes and designs of men are at an end. All their projects and schemes, which they had formed, and were pursuing, now come to nothing. Whether to do good to others, or to aggrandize themselves and families. And therefore such mortal creatures are not to be depended upon, since all their promises may fail. Nay, even their good designs may be frustrated (see Job 17:12).

The breath of man is the life that God placed in each of us when He breathed the breath of life in us. When the breath of life (spirit), leaves the body, the body is just a clay doll. That clay doll will return to the dust from whence it came. Whatever had been the plans of this clay man, they all go up as a puff of smoke when his spirit leaves his body.

**Psalm 146:5 "Happy [is he] that [hath] the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope [is] in the LORD his God:"**

“The God of Jacob”: Also the God of Abraham and Isaac, thus the recipients of God’s blessing through the Abrahamic Covenant (compare Gen. 12:1-3; Psalm 144:15).

The spirit of man is not going to die. The decision about where this spirit body will live all of eternity, is entirely up to the individual. Those who have placed their faith in God (the God of Jacob), will be happy indeed for their eternal life will be spent in heaven with Him. The hope spoken of here, is the hope of the resurrection. He is our Resurrection and our Life. He is our God. Because He arose, we shall rise. Heaven to me, will be in the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 146:6 "Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein [is]: which keepeth truth for ever:"**

Man’s trust is best placed in the Creator of heaven and earth and the Revealer of all truth.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

The Word of God is Truth. The Word of God is Jesus Christ. I will put my hope in Him.

Verses 7-9b: God righteously and mercifully reaches out to those in need.

**Psalm 146:7 "Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:"**

This is the third reason why the lot of those is a happy one who trust in God. It is because he has power to pronounce and execute a right judgment or sentence in regard to the oppressed and the wronged. And because it is characteristic of his nature that he does thus execute judgment (see notes at Psalm 103:6). "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed."

"Which giveth food to the hungry" (see notes at Psalm 107:9). "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." This is the fourth reason why they who confide in God are happy (compare Luke 1:53). "He hath filled the hungry with good things."

"The Lord looseth the prisoners": This is the fifth reason why they who trust in the Lord are "happy" (compare notes at Psalm 68:6). "He bringeth out those which are bound with chains"(see Psalm 107:10). "Being bound in affliction and iron" (compare Job 36:8-9).

Jesus Christ is the Judge of all the earth. He will separate all people into two categories. His sheep will be on His right hand and will inherit eternal life in heaven with Him. The goats will be on His left. They will inherit eternal damnation. This is the same Jesus that fed the hungry, and set the captives free.

**Psalm 146:8 "The LORD openeth [the eyes of] the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:"**

“The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down” is a classic expression of depression. This pictures someone so burdened by a load of care that he or she cannot even straighten up. The God of hope comes along and lifts up, renews hope, invigorates.

LORD in the verse above, is Jehovah. Jesus proved by the many miracles that He did, that He was God. Whether the bowed down in the verse above, means in death or not, He certainly did raise the dead. Not only did He raise the dead that we read about, but He raised all of us who were bowed down in the death that sin brings. The righteous are those who have received Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They are righteous, because they have been clothed in His righteousness.

**Psalm 146:9 "The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."**

The life of them, as he did the daughter of the Greek, a Syrophenician woman, and a Samaritan, by healing them of their diseases (Mark 7:26). And in a spiritual sense he preserves the lives and saves the souls of his people among the Gentiles, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise. For these he laid down his life a ransom, and became the propitiation for their sins. To these he sends his Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation unto them.

"He relieveth the fatherless and widow": In their distresses and troubles, who have no helper. A wonderful instance of his relieving a widow, in the most disconsolate circumstances, we have in raising the widow of Nain's son to life. And restoring him to his mother (Luke 7:12). In him "the fatherless", and all that in a spiritual sense are destitute of help in the creatures, and see they are so, "find mercy". Nor will he leave his people comfortless, or as orphans and fatherless ones, but will and does come and visit them. Relieve and supply them with everything convenient for them. Though his church here on earth may seem to be as a widow, he being in heaven at the right hand of God. Yet he cares for her in the wilderness, and provides for her support, where she is nourished with the word and ordinances. And will be until he comes again (see Hosea 14:3).

"But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down": So that they cannot find it. Nor their hands perform their enterprise. Their schemes and counsels are all confounded and blasted by him, and all their policy and power are not able to prevail against his church and people (see Psalm 1:6).

I was a stranger, and ye took me in. The LORD had a real compassion for the stranger, and even promised to bless us if we would take the stranger in. The story of the good Samaritan is a story of someone helping a total stranger. The Mosaic law made provision for the fatherless and the widows. We are cautioned to take care of the fatherless and widows. The wicked are those who will not help those less fortunate than themselves. God has no tolerance at all for this type of person.

**Psalm 146:10 "The LORD shall reign for ever, [even] thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD."**

“Shall reign for ever”: In contrast to man who perishes (compare verse 4), the truths (of verses 5-9), are not faddish or temporal but rather eternal (compare Rev. 22:5).

Zion is symbolic of the church. We are the church who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Look, with me, at heaven and the eternal reign of our Lord there.

Revelation 22:3-5 "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:" "And they shall see his face; and his name [shall be] in their foreheads." "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

PRAISE YE THE LORD.

### **Psalm 146 Questions**

1. What is the soul of man?
2. What is David saying, in verse 1?
3. How long will he praise the Lord?
4. How will David praise the Lord?
5. What is David speaking of in verse 2?
6. Who did David warn them not to put their trust in?
7. How do the sons of men become the sons of God?
8. When do his thoughts perish?
9. What is the breath of man?
10. What is the body, when the breath leaves?
11. When the breath leaves, what becomes of the plans the man had?

12. Verse 5 says, that who is the happy man?
13. Why are they happy?
14. What is the hope spoken of here?
15. Who is the Word of God?
16. Who is the Judge of the world?
17. How will He separate the people?
18. What is the reward of the wicked?
19. What did Jesus prove by the many miracles He did?
20. Who are the righteous?
21. What is the story of the good Samaritan about?
22. What law made provision for the widows?