

PSALM 146

Thanksgiving and Praise
for God's
Greatness and Faithfulness



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

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INTRODUCTION

--The Psalter is climaxed by five joyous hymns of praise or "Hallelujah Psalms," of which this is the first.

--Each psalm begins and ends with an enjoinder "Hallelujah," the Hebrew term for "praise the Lord."

--The five psalms conclude with a celebration of the blessings of Christ's rule at the Second Advent.

146:10

The Lord shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the Lord!

147:12

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!

148:14

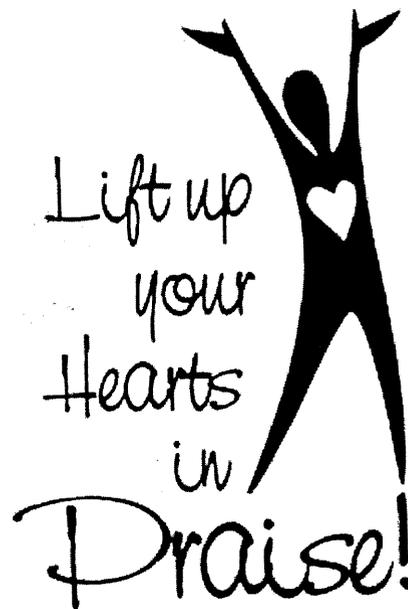
And He has exalted the horn of His people,
The praise of all His saints—
Of the children of Israel,
A people near to Him.
Praise the Lord!

149:7

To execute vengeance on the nations,
And punishments on the peoples;

150:1

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!



--These five psalms focus on the return, redemption and restoration of Israel.

--The "Hallelujah Psalms" point to the blessings of the whole world through the Messiah and His elect nation (Psa. 148:14, see above).

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

The **thanksgiving** of saints should normally result in **praise** of the benefactor. In **thanksgiving** the individual expresses gratitude for blessings. In **praise** the person extols the greatness of the persons' attributes or actions.

1A. THE CALL FOR PRAISE: 1-5

The psalmist lifts his voice of praise because of the greatness of God.

1b. The psalmist resolves: 1-2

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

²While I live I will praise the Lord;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

1c. He exhorts that saints praise the Lord.

2c. He resolves to praise the Lord himself.

2b. The psalmist's caution: 3-4

Do not put your trust in princes,

Nor in a son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

His breath goeth forth to return to the earth;

In that very day his thoughts perish.

1c. The psalmist warns of putting one's confidence in men.

1d. Princes: men of influence

2d. Son of man: mere mortals

--when man dies, his plans perish with him

--if the individual cannot save himself, he certainly cannot save anyone else. (Verse 3c "no help," i.e. salvation)

2c. The psalmist notes the inability of man:

As Unger well notes:

"How can he who is impotent to save himself bring salvation to others?"

(Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 971)

3b. The psalmist declares: 5

Happy is he who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,

Whose hope is in the Lord his God,

1c. Happiness comes from trusting in the God of Jacob.

Jacob was helped by God even though he deserved no help. The same is true of the people of Israel in general.

2c. Blessings come from confidence in the hope of the Lord God.

The term Lord, "**Yahweh**" speaks of His promise-keeping.

The term God, "**Elohim**" speaks of His power and strength.

Hebrew – הללויה

Greek – αλληλουια

Latin – Alleluia

English – Hallelujah/Alleluia

2A. THE CAUSE OF PRAISE: 6-10

- 1b. The greatness of God: 6
**Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that is in them;
Who keeps truth forever.**

--The Lord is the omnipotent creator.
--The Lord is the faithful provider.

- 2b. The graciousness of God: 7-10

- 1c. The Lord helps the oppressed and needy: 7

Who gives food to the hungry.
Who executes justice for the oppressed,
The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners.

- 1d. He maintains justice for the oppressed.
2d. He provides food for the hungry.
3d. He releases prisoners.

The wrongs in the world will someday be corrected.

The believer should pray for these things and then praise the Lord for them.

- 2c. The Lord helps the individuals with physical needs: 8

The Lord opens *the eyes of* the blind;
The Lord raises those who are bowed down;
The Lord loves the righteous.

- 1d. He gives sight to the blind: 8a
Literally, He "opens the blind." The blindness could be literal or, used figuratively, spiritual. (John 9:35-41)
- 2d. He lifts up people who are bent down: 8b
This condition remedied could be that of oppression, discouragement or weakness.

- 3c. He champions righteousness: 8c-9

The Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.

- 1d. He loves the righteous: 8c
They, in turn must love the Lord (Deut. 6:4,5)



- 2d. He protects the aliens: (Ex. 22:21; Lev. 19:34)
- 3d. He sustains widows and orphans: (Deut. 10:18; Psa. 86:5)
- 4d. He thwarts the way of the wicked: Psa. 147:6
 The Lord lifts up the humble;
 He casts the wicked down to the ground.
 The Lord literally “bends, makes crooked” their way, their life and their work. He diverts their plans so that they can never achieve their purposed goals.
- 4c. The Lord reigns forever: 10
 The Lord shall reign forever—
 Your God, O Zion, to all generations.
 Praise the Lord!

The tense of the verb for “reigns” has the thrust of “your God always reigns, now and forever.”

The people are figuratively referred to as Zion. The psalmist resolves to praise the Lord, now and forever, in eternity.

Allen Ross correctly asks, “Who in the world would reject the sovereign Lord of creation and put their trust in people, no matter how powerful? No wonder the psalm calls such a person a fool (Psa. 14:1).” (*A Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. 3, 927).

CONCLUSION:

The main thrust of the Psalm can be stated thus:

“Believers must commit themselves to praise the Lord because as the sovereign creator He alone is able to help them in all their needs, and because as the Creator He is faithful to do it” (Ibid, 927).

The counterpoint is this: that it is foolish to trust in humans who are weak and transitory, when God is very capable and most ready to meet all our needs. The content of the opening and closing “Hallelujah” focuses on the sovereignty of God as creator and His faithfulness as Yahweh to His people.

The believer’s contemplation of God’s greatness and goodness should result in a **heart of thankfulness and lips of praise.**

The righteous should demonstrate their love for God by emulating His faithfulness and justice to those in bondage, and bringing relief to the hungry, strangers, widows and orphans.



Psalm 146

Words: Isaac Watts

(Note: two versions on this page)

♪ L.M.

- 1 Praise ye the Lord, my heart shall join
in work so pleasant, so divine;
Now, while the flesh is mine abode,
And when my soul ascends to God.
- 2 Praise shall employ my noblest powers,
While immortality endures;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last.
- 3 Why should I make a man my trust?
Princes must die and turn to dust;
Their breath departs, their pomp, and power,
And thoughts, all vanish in an hour.
- 4 Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Isr'el's god; he made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train,
And none shall find his promise vain.
- 5 His truth for ever stands secure;
He saves th' oppressed, he feeds the poor;
He sends the laboring conscience peace,
And grants the prisoner sweet release.
- 6 The Lord hath eyes to give the blind;
The Lord supports the sinking mind;
He helps the stranger in distress,
The widow and the fatherless.
- 7 He loves his saints, he knows them well,
But turns the wicked down to hell:
Thy god, O Zion! ever reigns;
Praise him in everlasting strains.

Another of the same

♪ L.M. (888 888)

- 1 I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.
- 2 Why should I make a man my trust?
Princes must die and turn to dust;
Vain is the help of flesh and blood
Their breath departs, their pomp and pow'r,
And thoughts all vanish in an hour,
Nor can they make their promise good.
- 3 Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God: he made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train;
His truth for ever stands secure,
He saves the oppressed, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain.
- 4 The Lord hath eyes to give the blind;
The Lord supports the sinking mind;
He sends the laboring conscience peace;
He helps the stranger in distress,
The widow, and the fatherless,
And grants the prisoner sweet release.
- 5 He loves his saints, he knows them well,
But turns the wicked down to hell;
thy God, O Zion! ever reigns:
Let ev'ry tongue, let ev'ry age,
In this exalted work engage;
Praise him in everlasting strains.
- 6 I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.