

PSALMS

Chapter 146

Put Not Your Trust in Princes

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! 2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. 3 Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. 4 When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, 6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; 7 who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free; 8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. 9 The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. 10 The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

Ps 146 An exhortation to trust in the Lord, Zion's King. The first of five Hallelujah psalms with which the Psalter closes, its date is probably postexilic. This and the remaining four psalms are all framed with Hallelujahs, which may have been added by the final editors (see Ps 105–106; 111–117). (CSB)

First of five hallelujah psalms (hallelujah means “praise the LORD!”) that conclude the Psalter. Also known as the final Hallel. An acrostic poem, each line begins with the next letter in the Hbr alphabet. See pp 777–78. LXX notations associate this psalm with the postexilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–2, lifelong praise; vv 3–4, unreliable princes; vv 5–7a, God's blessings; vv 7b–9, the Lord's deeds; v 10, the Lord reigns forever. (TLSB)

The 146th psalm is a psalm of thanks. It teaches at the same time that one should trust in God and not in princes, as the abominable world, flesh, and blood do. For God is the only one who can truly help in all kind of need, and he helps so that it can really be called being helped. Human help is so uncertain and does not last. For we ourselves do not know the length of our life. (Reading the Psalms with Luther)

This may come from the time of the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah. It certainly would fit well into the days of Nehemiah. Though it abounds in allusions and more especially in somewhat free quotations from earlier psalm, this poem is, nevertheless rather fresh in tone and content. The quotations come so naturally and have been so thoroughly absorbed by the writer that the resultant psalm seems anything but a string of familiar quotations. (Leupold)

This psalm is similar to Psalm 145, which also spoke of the Lord's protection and provision for his people. It contrasts the help of earthly rulers, who are short-lived and undependable, with the Lord, who is trustworthy and eternal. (PBC)

146:1–2 Initial vow to praise—as long as life continues (see 145:21). (CSB)

146:1 *Praise the LORD, O my soul.* See the frames around Ps 103–104. (CSB)

This opening line is an invitation in the plural, intended for all people. (PBC)

This phrase is a translation of the familiar Hebrew word Alleluiah (or Hallelujah). It is a call that is address to all to engage in this holy business. It may be understood liturgically. It may be a mere summons to all who hear or read this word to act accordingly. But he who here summons others to engage in this delightful task at the same time exhorts himself or his inmost soul to have a part in it all. The resemblance to Psalm 104:1 is obvious. (CSB)

Psalm 104:1, “Praise the LORD, O my soul.” (CSB)

“Alleluia” means “Praise the Lord.” It is used a lot when the family of faith gathers together as a special “church cheer.” It is like we are saying, “Hurray God.” (Worship Notebook for Kids)

The next three lines are the personal response of the psalmist to this invitation. His whole life will be devoted to praise. (PBC)

Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

1 Corinthians 10:31, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

146:2 *as long as I live* – The exhortation addressed to himself has taken fire, for it has already grown to the proportion where he resolves to praise the Lord as long as he lives. The theme is so great that it calls for great efforts to do justice to it. Such perpetual preoccupation with so great a subject does not strike the psalmist as involving any growing weary of the theme or of its losing its freshness. He is sure that its possibilities and resources are endless. (Leupold)

Psalmist’s continued life will be a constant praising. (TLSB)

146:3–4 The call to trust in the Lord (see vv. 5–9) is heightened by contrast. (CSB)

146:3 *put not your trust in princes* – The influential and powerful of the world, even the best of them, cannot be our ultimate source of confidence. Like Adam, all of them are dust and will return to the ground from which they came. (PBC)

According to the root meaning of the term, the princes are persons who are in a position to make their own decisions as to what they shall do. To bank on such is always uncertain. (Leupold)

The German Menschenkind conveys the proper impression. It means the children of men. (Leupold)

146:4 *plans perish* – Whatever he may have been devising up to that time, whatever unfinished plans there are, they will all die with the person. (Leupold)

When descendants of Adam no longer breathe, they die; their bodies are buried and decay into dust (cf Gn 3:19). (TLSB)

146:5–9 Exhortation to trust in the covenant God of Jacob, who as Creator is Lord over all, as the Faithful One defends the defenseless and provides for the needy, and as the Righteous One shows favor to the righteous but checks the wicked in their pursuits. (CSB)

146:5 *blessed* – The book of Psalms begins with the word “blessed.” This verse begins the last blessing in this book of blessings. Although there is brief mention of the food the Lord provides for his people, the main focus of the psalm is on the protecting power of the Lord, which raises the lowly, frees the prisoners, and gives sight to the blind. (PBC)

We think of the dramatic way the Lord did this through the ministry of Jesus. His ministry reminds us that the greatest gifts are not natural food, physical healing, and political freedom, but spiritual food that gives eternal life, healing that frees us from sin and death, and freedom which will endure forever. These blessings the Lord provided for His people through the Messianic King whom He sent to them. For these blessings we praise the Lord now and forever. (PBC)

Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

whose hope is in the Lord – He keeps pinning his hope in the Lord his God. Such a man does not merely have a correct theory about what God can do; he puts his theory into practice. (Leupold)

146:6 *who made heaven and earth* – The one true God, the King of all creation. (CSB)

This whole theatre of action in which man moves and has his being originated with God who made “heaven and earth,” the sea and all that is in them. It must be quite obvious that He who made can control what He made. This is the nature of a quotation: Ps. 115:15; 121:2. (Leupold)

keeps faith – An equally stable thing to build confidence on is the further fact that He keeps faith forever. No one of His saints has yet found Him unreliable. His is a long record of dependability. (Leupold)

God keeps His promises. (TLSB)

2 Timothy 2:13, “if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

146:7b-9 List of the disadvantaged, whom the Lord protects. Cf Lk 4:17–21; Is 61:1–2. (TLSB)

146:7 *who executes justice for the oppressed* – This was always a priority with God and was to be so with His people. (Leupold)

As in a courtroom. (TLSB)

Hosea 6:6, “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”

Deuteronomy 10:18, “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.”

Nations, societies and churches will be judged by how they deal with the weakest among them.

Gives food to the hungry – For all grow hungry, man and beast, and it is God who satisfies their hunger, not the independent operations of the laws of nature. Desert journey – Feeding of large crowds with little bread and fish. Psalm 145: 15-16. (Leupold)

sets the prisoners free – The context demands some limitations such as freeing those who are innocently imprisoned or those who have served their sentence and deserve to be liberated. Since the expression occurs also in Is. 42:7 and 61:1, and there is reference to the deliverance from Babylonian Captivity. Otherwise Joseph in Egypt might well be thought of. (Leupold)

God gives a verdict of acquittal. (TLSB)

146:8 *lifts up* – God has at numberless times lifted up the discouraged and those who were physically bowed down and given them fresh hope. (Leupold)

Weighed down by burdens of life. (TLSB)

146:9 *watches over the sojourners* – Ever since Israel herself was a stranger in Egypt, the remembrance of that fact is kept alive, and the nation is taught to show kindness to those from without the nation who for the time being dwelt in its midst. (Leupold)

Resident aliens, usually treated with scorn. “Since [the poor man] can complain to no one else, he will cry and call to heaven (Psalm 20:6; 146:8–9). Then beware (I say again) as of the devil himself. For such groaning and calling will be no joke. It will have a weight that will prove too heavy for you and all the world. For it will reach Him who takes care of the poor, sorrowful hearts” (LC I 247) (TLSB)

the way of the wicked he brings to ruin – This is not a thought that grows out of limited insight but an emphasis on one of the Lord’s consistent and admirable qualities. If God’s strict judgment upon wickedness is overlooked, a vital divine attribute is neglected, and a distorted picture of God results. All these works of the Lord were enumerated in order to foster trust in Him as the One on whom man can and should always lean. Making the way crooked turns a man aside from his goal and may lead him to destruction. (Leupold)

146:10 Concluding exultant testimony to the citizens of God’s royal city. (CSB)

Zion. This verse specially rings the note of praise with a statement on the Lord’s unending kingship, based on Exodus 15:18, where the hymn of Miriam closes with the same words. The reminder is added that this eternal king is Zion’s God. Happy is the nation that can claim this God for her own! Therefore a final victorious Alleluiah. (Leupold)

Ps 146 Do not put your faith in human beings—in politicians, social elites, or individuals, none of whom can save and all of whom will die. Rather, put your trust in God. Your Lord is Christ, the Son of Man in whom there is salvation, who on earth fed the hungry, healed the blind, and ministered to everyone in need. You were buried with Him in Baptism so you can share His new life and claim all of these promises. • O Lord, help us not to put our trust in people, but in You alone. Forgive us for mistreating others and for looking down on people different from ourselves. Thank You for keeping all of Your promises through Christ. Amen. (TLSB)