

Passage: Psalm 146 (prepared 9/3/09; preached 9/7/09)

Psalm 146¹

1 **Praise the LORD**². Praise the LORD, O my **soul**³.

2 **I will**⁴ praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God **as long as I live**⁵.

3 **Do not put your trust**⁶ in **princes**⁷, in **mortal men**⁸, who cannot save.

4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.

5 **Blessed**¹⁰ is he whose help is the **God of Jacob**¹¹, whose **hope is in the LORD**¹² his God,

6 the **Maker**¹³ of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the LORD, who remains **faithful**¹⁴ forever.

7 He **upholds**¹⁵ **the cause of the oppressed**¹⁶ and **gives** food to the hungry. The LORD **sets** prisoners free,

8 the LORD **gives sight** to the blind, the LORD **lifts up** those who are bowed down, the LORD **loves** the **righteous**¹⁷.

9 The LORD **watches** over the alien and **sustains** the fatherless and the widow, **but he frustrates** the ways of the wicked.

10 The LORD **reigns forever, your God, O Zion**¹⁸, for all generations. Praise the **LORD**¹⁹.

¹ Psalms 146-150 constitute the last Hallel ("praise") collection. These five Hallelujah psalms have the characteristic genre of the hymn of descriptive praise. These psalms were used at some point as a part of the daily prayers in the synagogue worship. The other two collections are the Egyptian Hallel psalms (113-118) and the Great Hallel (120-136). (EBC)

² This phrase begins and ends each of the psalms from 146-150 (BKC)

³ The Lord is worthy of praise of the whole person (soul) and the whole life (NBC)

⁴ "Let me praise... let me sing" is the heart call for the psalmist... life is to be lived for the purpose of praising the Lord

⁵ The speaker's affirms his determination to offer lifelong praise. It is a measure of his appreciation of YHWH (WBC)

⁶ a positive way of renouncing humanism and of abandonment to a God-centered way of life (EBC)

⁷ Judah was under the control of foreign rulers. Their creatureliness spells the transience of their policies: in spite of their apparent power, from a long-term standpoint they are powerless. Salvation isn't what these are about...

⁸ Mankind is unable to provide "salvation" because a man may die at any time. (EBC)

⁹ put their trust in the One who is infinitely more powerful than mortal man, who cannot save. A person's plans die with him. At death the spirit of man departs and the body returns to dust (cf. 104:29; Ecc. 3:20). So one who trusts in man will have no reason for praising. (BKC)

¹⁰ In contrast with the warning not to trust in man (v. 3) the psalmist blessed anyone who trusts in the sovereign Lord (BKC)

¹¹ Jacob = Heelgraber (swindler)... Our God is the God of untrustworthy swindlers... sinners (yet he also grasped The Lord)

¹² Trust in him, the first stage of praise, will never find disappointment. He has power, the power of the creator traditionally celebrated in Zion. His creative power guarantees that, whereas the creaturely rulers of earth plan and resolve, he performs and achieves. (WBC)

¹³ since he cares for creation at large, his care for them will be so much greater (EBC)

¹⁴ None shall find his promise vain" was Isaac Watts' felicitous interpretation in his paraphrase of the psalm. Yahweh, whose nature is faithfulness, is ever the answer to his people's needs (WBC)

¹⁵ Upholds, gives, sets, gives sight, lifts up, loves, watches... progression from weakness to strength. Sustains and frustrates is a symmetrical contrast...

¹⁶ The defenseless can find in him their royal champion – He lives up to the highest ideas of kingship (WBC)

¹⁷ He upholds the moral values of the covenant and requites with frustration any who flout them (WBC)

¹⁸ The Lord is the Great King who has promised to dwell in the midst of his people, purposing to deliver them (cf. Exod 15:17; Pss 29:10; 132:13-15). (EBC)

¹⁹ To Him they have brought such needs and from him they have received resources in return. To him must praise be given back (WBC)