

PSALMS

ONE HUNDRED FORTY SIX

I. INTRODUCTION

A. "There are the *Hallelujah* psalms, of which there are ten, and they are psalms [106,111,112,113,135, and 146 to 150]. The special characteristic of these is that each of them begins with the expression 'Hallelu-Jah' (given in our English Version as 'Praise ye the Lord'); and all but two of them [111 and 112] also *end* with 'Hallelu-Jah.' This expression of praise occupied a place as a choral refrain in Hebrew worship"¹

B. "These five psalms are a short course in worship, and God's people today would do well to heed their message . . . The author of this psalm understood that God was not just a part of life but the heart of life. Paul had the same conviction (Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:4)."²

C. "*This* Psalm gives in brief the Gospel of Confidence. It inculcates the elements of Faith, Hope, and Thanksgiving. - *Martin Geier*."³

D. The inscription of the Septuagint reads, "Alleluia, a Psalm of Aggaeus and Zacharias,"⁴ "but in the original Hebrew these Psalms have no such title prefixed to them."⁵ If Haggai and Zechariah wrote the psalm, it would be a post-exilic psalm and may have been sung at the opening of Zerubbabel's temple.

II. PRAISE JAH! PSALMS 146:1,10

A. "Praise Jehovah" is "hallelujah." 146:1,10

1. "A compound word made up of two Hebrew words: *hallel* (an imperative verb meaning 'praise') and *jah* (a contraction of the name for God, Jehovah)."⁶ It is "plural, meaning 'Praise ye [all of you] the Lord.'"⁷

2. "With holy awe let us pronounce the word HALLELUJAH, and by it summon ourselves and all others to adore the God of the whole earth."⁸

3. "The ancient Britons, in the year 420, obtained a victory over the army of the Picts and Saxons, near Mold, in Flintshire, The Britons, unarmed, having Germanicus and Lupus at their head, when the Picts and Saxons came to the attack, the two commanders, Gideon-like, ordered their little army to shout *Alleluia* three times over, at the sound of which the enemy, being suddenly struck with terror, ran away in the greatest confusion, and left the Britons masters of the field. A stone monument to perpetuate the

remembrance of this Alleluia victory, I believe, remains to this day, in a field near Mold. - *Charles Buck*, 1771-1815.”⁹

B. Jehovah is to be praised personally. 146:1

1. “Soul” is “nephesh.” 146:1. Here it refers to the person.
2. “You must worship God yourself. No one else can do it in your place . . . It is correct that worship is also corporate. We do it with others, and it is from the entire people of God, but each one must worship God personally.”¹⁰
3. “Communion with God—from crying out to him to singing his praise—happens from the core of one’s being: life and breath, longing, emotions, the will. All of these are involved in the *nepes*.”¹¹

III. PRAISE JAH! WHEN? PSALMS 146:2

A. The Psalmist will praise Jehovah as long as he lives.

1. This praise is based upon the covenant.
2. “A God who is worthy of praise is one to whom men must dedicate themselves with a dedication which lasts for life . . . He means not only singing but doing and being. Praise, as he understands it, is an attitude of life, not mere words upon the lips. Two great convictions lay behind this attitude. The first was an assurance that nowhere else but in God could salvation be found. The second was a firm belief that no man who turns in humility and sincerity to God does so in vain.”¹²

B. The Psalmist will praise his God in song while he has any being.

1. “God” is “Elohim.”
2. The Psalmist has a personal relationship with God. “My God.”

C. “The form of the Hebrew word” translated, “while I have any being,” “is peculiar. It occurs elsewhere only in”¹³ Psalms 104:33.

D. We have synonymous parallelism in verse 2.

1. “While I live” is parallel to “while I have any being.”
2. God,” “Jehovah,” and “Jah” are synonymous.

E. "A life of praise is free from constant anxiety and discouragement as we focus on the Lord, who is mentioned eleven times in this psalm."¹⁴

IV. PRAISE JAH! WHY? PSALMS 146:3-10

A. Trust in man is futile. 146:3,4. These verses make their point by plays on Hebrew words.

1. There is no help in princes. 146:3

a. "Princes" is from "nadyb (naw-deeb') . . . properly, voluntary, i.e. generous; hence, magnanimous; as noun, a grandee (sometimes a tyrant)."¹⁵

b. "Men are always far too apt to depend upon the great ones of earth, and forget the Great One above; and this habit is the fruitful source of disappointment."¹⁶

2. There is no help in the son of man. 146:3

a. "Man" is "adam (aw-dawm') . . . ruddy i.e. a human being (an individual or the species, mankind, etc.)."

b. Psalms 118:8

c. "For one man to put confidence in another, is as if one beggar should ask an alms of another, or one cripple should carry another, or the blind lead the blind. - *Anthony Farindon*."¹⁷

3. "Help" is from "teshuw` ah (tesh-oo-aw'); or teshu` ah (tesh-oo-aw') . . . rescue" Psalms 60:11; 108:12

4. Man is liable to die at any time. 146:4

a. Death is described as man's breath going forth.

b. Death is described as man's returning to his earth.

c. In that very day his thoughts ["eshtonah (*esh-to-naw'*); . . . *thinking*"] perish.

d. "This is the narrow estate of man, his breath, his earth, and his thoughts; and this is his threefold climax therein, - his breath goeth forth, to his earth he returns, and his thoughts perish. Is this a being to be relied upon? Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. To trust it

would be a still greater vanity.”¹⁸

e. 1 Corinthians 2:6; 3:20

5. Confidence in man instead of God is what is in mind here.

a. “One of Israel’s constant temptations from the time of Solomon on was to put reliance on man and on foreign alliances rather than to trust in the Lord.”¹⁹

b. “It is when faith in men is made absolute, when we forget human frailty and ask the impossible, that human confidence fails. Civilized life demands that we trust one another; but we shall find a broken reed if we lean upon our neighbors as we can lean only on God.”²⁰

B. Trust in God is fitting. 146:5

1. Trust in God brings happiness. 146:5

a. “Happy” is from “‘esher (eh'-sher) . . . happiness; only in masculine plural construction as interjection, how happy!” It is the word with which the book begins (Psalms 1:1).

b. “Heaped up is his happiness. He has happiness indeed: the true and the real delight is with him. The God of Jacob is the God of the covenant, the God of wrestling prayer, the God of the tried believer; he is the only living and true God. The God of Jacob is Jehovah, who appeared unto Moses, and led the tribes of Jacob out of Egypt, and through the wilderness. Those are happy who trust him, for they shall never be ashamed or confounded.”²¹

c. Psalms 33:12; 144:15

d. This beatitude is the “last of twenty-five in the book.”²²

2. Trust in the God of Jacob brings help.

a. “God” is “El” (Strength, Might, Power). This contrasts God with earthly princes in whom there is not lasting strength.

b. “The God of Jacob” references the covenant.

c. “Help” is from “‘ezer (ay'-zer) . . . aid.”

3. Trust in Jehovah brings hope.

a. "Hope" is from "seber (say'-ber) . . . expectation." "The Hebrew word is rare in the psalter, expressing earnest 'looking for,' or 'waiting for.'"²³

b. "Jehovah" references the covenant.

c. The personal relationship with Jehovah as his God ("Elohim") brings hope.

d. Psalms 71:5

4. "In each of the two titles here given, namely, '*the* God of Jacob,' and 'Jehovah his God,' there is a peculiar sweetness. Either one of them has a fountain of joy in it; but the first will not cheer us without the second. Unless Jehovah be his God no man can find confidence in the fact that he was Jacob's God. But when by faith we know the Lord to be ours, then we are '*rich* to all the intents of bliss.'"²⁴

5. "It is a characteristic of these Psalms, to proclaim to all nations which worshipped idols that '*the* God of Jacob,' '*the* God of Zion,' is the Creator and Governor of all things; and to make an appeal to all nations to turn to him. All these Psalms have a *missionary character* and an *evangelical function*. We may compare here the apostolic prayer at Jerusalem . . . (where the words are the same as in the Septuagint in this place) . . . Acts iv. 24,25. The office of these Psalms is to declare to the universe, that Jehovah, and he alone, is *Elohim*; and to invite all to worship him as such, by their oft repeated *Hallelujah*. - *Christopher Wordsworth*."²⁵

C. Trust in Jehovah is firm. 146:6-10. Here one sees the evidence of the strength of Jehovah which causes one to be secure when he places his trust in him.

1. Jehovah's force. He is the Creator. 146:6

a. Psalms 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3

b. Nehemiah 9:6

c. Acts 4:24; 14:15

d. Revelation 10:6; 14:7

e. "Wisely may we trust our Creator, justly may we expect to be

happy in so doing. He who made heaven can make a heaven for us, and make us fit for heaven. He who made the earth can preserve us while we are on earth, and help us to make good use of it while we sojourn upon it. He who made the sea and all its mysteries can steer us across the pathless deeps of a troubled life, and make it a way for his redeemed to pass over. This God who still makes the world by keeping it in existence is assuredly able to keep us to his eternal kingdom and glory. The making of the worlds is the standing proof of the power and wisdom of that great God in whom we trust.”²⁶

2. Jehovah’s fidelity. He is Certain. 146:6

a. “Keepeth” is from “shamar (shaw-mar’) . . . properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to, etc.” “In this clause only the article is prefixed to the participle, probably to denote in a special manner God’s faithfulness to His promises.”²⁷

b. “Truth” is from “emeth (eh'-meth) . . . stability; (figuratively) certainty, truth, trustworthiness.” “This word . . . here connotes promise keeping and covenant faithfulness in His providential sustaining of the created universe.”²⁸

c. “For ever” is from “olam.”

d. Psalms 117:2

e. “He is true to his own nature, true to the relationships which he has assumed, true to his covenant, true to his Word, true to his Son. He keeps true, and is the keeper of all that is true. Immutable fidelity is the character of Jehovah's procedure. None can charge him with falsehood or vacillation.”²⁹

3. Jehovah’s fairness. He is the Judge. 146:7

a. “All that He does is at the same time governed by a principle, and the governing principle is that He ‘upholds justice for the oppressed.’”³⁰

b. “Justice” is from “mishpat (mish-pawt') . . . properly, a verdict . . . pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree . . . divine law”

c. “Oppressed” is from “ashaq (aw-shak') . . . to press upon, i.e.

oppress, defraud, violate, overflow.”

d. Psalms 103:6

4. Jehovah’s favor. 146:7-9

a. He is the Provider. 146:7. He gives food to the hungry. Psalms 37:18,19; 107:5-9; 145:15

b. He is the Liberator. 146:7. He looseth the prisoners. “Since the expression occurs also in Is. 42:7 and 61:1, and there in reference to the deliverance from Babylonian Captivity, perhaps the figurative interpretation is the one to be preferred here. Otherwise Joseph in Egypt might well be thought of.”³¹

c. He is the Healer. 146:8. He opens the blind.

d. He is the Life-Giver. 146:8. He raises up those who are bowed down.

e. He is the Lover. 146:8. He loves the righteous.

f. He is the Preserver. 146:9. He preserves the sojourner.

g. He is the Upholder. 146:9. He upholds the fatherless and widow.

5. Jehovah’s frustration of the wicked. 146:9

a. In contrast (“But”) to preserving and upholding, Jehovah punishes and frustrates the lifestyle of the wicked.

b. “Wicked” is from “rasha` (raw-shaw') . . . morally wrong; concretely, an (actively) bad person.”

c. “Turneth upside down” is from “avath (aw-vath)”; a primitive root; to wrest.”

6. Jehovah is forever. 146:10

a. He will reign as King for ever. A cause for praise.

b. He is the ruler of individuals. “Thy God (“Elohim”). A companion to praise.

- c. His reign is from Zion. This references the covenant. A center from which to praise.
- d. His reign is unto all generations. A cycle of praise.
- e. "Praise ye Jehovah." A call to praise.

ENDNOTES

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