

## Psalm 146

The psalm is paired with **Deuteronomy 32** - the Song of Moses. It probably illustrates **Deuteronomy 32:4** - "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

The title of **Psalm 146** is "Hallelujah!," taken from the first line. The psalm is an exhortation to praise God.

Rabbi Obadiah take it to be an exhortation to the captives in Babylon to praise the Lord.

Others see it as relating to the times of Messiah, especially **verse 10**: "The LORD shall reign for ever..."

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

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

(Similar to **Psalm 104:33**)

"while I have any being" = "while I am" - in this world - short and fleeting as it is - and in the world to come for eternity.

Rashi - as long as I exist

**Psalm 146:3-4** - "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

"help = *teshuw`ah* - safety, deliverance, salvation, or saving power

Expressed previously in **Psalm 118:8-9** - "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."

The prophets denounced Israel for looking to Egypt (**Isaiah 30:2; Isaiah 36:6**), or Assyria (**2 Kings 16:7**) for help. At other times they sought out men of wealth or power. But man cannot save us; he cannot save himself; he cannot save others.

- **Isaiah 2:22** - "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

- **Psalm 62:9** - "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."

- **Isaiah 40:17** - "All the nations are as nothing before Him; He regards them as

nothingness and emptiness."

- **Jeremiah 17:5** - "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

"in that very day his thoughts perish" - The soul does not cease, it merely sleeps until the Resurrection.

"he returneth to his earth" - The 'ground' (*ădâmâh*) from which he was taken, and of which his name (*ădâm* = 'man') reminds him (**Genesis 2:7, 19**).

- **Genesis 3:19** - "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

- **Psalm 103:14** - "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

- **Ecclesiastes 3:20** - "All go to one place: All come from dust, and all return to dust."

- **Ecclesiastes 12:7** - "...the dust returns to the ground from which it came, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

"thoughts" = *eshtonah* - (used only once here) thoughts, from a root that means "to shine, to fabricate or form." This means at death all the purposes and designs of men are at an end; all ambition and regret, our projects and schemes, good or bad, go into the grave with us.

An example is given by Jesus:

- **Luke 12:19-20, 22** - "...and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; but God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee. ...And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."

Such are all the purposes of men!

### **Personal Love and Care of God**

**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" - "Jacob" means "to supplant, circumvent, assail, overreach." Jacob the younger supplanted Esau the elder of his birthright and received his blessing.

The verse urges us to consider how God helped Jacob:

- **Romans 9:13** - "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"

"The God of Jacob" who appeared to him in the vision of the ladder with its foundation on the earth and its top in heaven. The God "who has fed me all my life long to this day" (**Genesis 48:15**), who led him to Rachel and saved him from Laban and from Esau. The Angel that redeemed him from all evil, with whom in the form of a man he wrestled, when he had power over God, and saw him face to face, and received a blessing but also a wounded hip.

- **Jeremiah 17:7-8** - "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He is like a tree planted by the waters that sends out its roots toward the stream."

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

The Creator who made the universe and is sovereign over His creation.

truth = *'emeth* - truth, faithfulness, reliability. Here it refers to God's promises.

Rashi - "Who keeps truth forever": To the end of many generations, He fulfills and keeps the truth of His promise.

- **John 14:6** - " I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

### **Love and Care of God for the Needy**

**Psalm 146:7-9** - "Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."

Restated by the prophets - **Isaiah 61:1** - "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"

And proclaimed as fulfilled by Jesus:

- **Luke 4:21** - "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

This is just a summary of what has been emphasized throughout the Torah - justice and care for those who are vulnerable. It is the gospel of the Kingdom, and a mission statement for the Church.

"but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down." - **Acts 17:6** - in Thessalonica, Christians were derided as "These who have turned the world upside down...acting

contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king — Jesus."

And indeed, there is!

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

Rashi - He will perpetuate His kingdom with the redemption of His children (referring to the Messiah).

Rabbi David Kimchi -"it shall be said he is King over all, after he has executed judgment on the wicked in the valley of Jehoshaphat"

- **Deuteronomy 10:17** - "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe."

- **Revelation 17:14** - "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful"