

Psalm 146

- Praise the LORD, blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD -

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Introduction

- ❖ Psalm 146 is intriguing. The message seems to be clear enough which is why some commentaries do not pay any attention to this Psalm or devote only a line or two to its explanation.
- ❖ The structure of the Psalm is a work of artistry, making use of climatic parallelism, inclusions, contrasts, and enumerations, to make its message clear.
 - “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God.”
 - This is a message of praise, comfort, and encouragement.
 - It is also a call to the righteous to keep following the path of righteousness and a call to the wicked to turn away from their ways because they will be frustrated.
- ❖ The psalmist reveals the character of the LORD and his relation to the covenant community, gathered in Zion with some messianic overtones:
 - “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Mt 11:5; compare Psalm 146:7-9).
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Book of Psalms. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ This psalm belongs to the fifth book of Psalms (Ps 107-150).
- ❖ Psalm 146 takes up the major theme of Psalm 145: praise of the LORD as the universal King:
 - "I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever" (Ps 145:1).
 - "My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever" (Ps 145:21).
 - Psalm 147 presents similar themes:
 - "the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. Extol the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion" (Ps 147:11, 12). This Psalm is also imbued by "creation theology" (Ps 147:4, 5; 8, 9; 15-18).
- ❖ The five final psalms (Ps 146-150) all begin and end with "Hallelujah."
 - "These psalms appear to be placed intentionally at the end of the book to provide a doxological conclusion to the psalter."¹
 - Hossfeld and Zenger write: "'Praise,'" dominates the concluding Psalms 146–150 and, as shown above all by Psalm 148 and 150, evokes the comprehensive praise of the whole cosmos. With this self-exhortation, the "I" of our psalm is integrated into this cosmic laud of YHWH's royal actions."²
- ❖ The Psalm must be read against the background of the Covenant.

Form and structure

- ❖ **A, A'** : Verses 1.a and 10.c provide an inclusio, like Psalm 147-150: "Praise the Lord."
 - "The function of inclusio is obvious and straightforward. The inclusio delimits a poetic unit, providing a strong sense of beginning and closure. Thus the term *inclusio* indicates that everything that is found between the two occurrences is 'included' in the unit."³
- ❖ **B** : This is followed by a call to the first person and an answer.: "I will praise the LORD."

¹ Longman, T., III. (2008, p. 324). *Inclusio*. In Longman, T., III, & P. Enns (Eds.).

² Hossfeld, F.-L., & Zenger, E. (2011, p. 612).

³ Longman, T., III. (2008, p. 323). *Inclusio*. In Longman, T., III, & P. Enns (Eds.).

- ❖ **C** : The Psalmist addresses “you” in the following part: “Do not put your trust in princes.” Instead, if you put your trust in the LORD, there will be a blessing: “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,” the creator of heaven and earth.
- ❖ **D, D’** : This is again, just like **A, A’** an inclusio, stressing that the LORD is faithful “forever” and not like “mortal men.”
- ❖ **E** : The Psalmist gives several examples of the “help” which the LORD will provide.”
 - In this part, he addresses also “**the righteous**” and “**the wicked.**”

A	(Verse 1.a)	Imperative	Praise the LORD.
B	(Verse 1.b)	Person: I – imperative	Praise the LORD, O my soul.
	(Verse 2)	Person: I – answer	I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
C	(Verse 3, 4)	Person: you – call	Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.
	(Verse 5, 6)	Person: he – promise	Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—
D	(Verse 6.c)	Descriptive	the LORD, who remains faithful forever.
E	(Verse 7-9)	Descriptive	He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

D'	(Verse 10.a, b)	Descriptive Emphasis	The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.
A'	(Verse 10.c)	Imperative	Praise the LORD.

- ❖ Verse 10 concludes the preceding verses 7-9 including verses 5-6.

Technical notes and background

Psalm 146 and Isaiah

- ❖ The date of composition is not known but there are several themes found both in Psalm 146 and in Isaiah. The conclusion might be justified that Psalm 146 belongs to the same Messianic tradition.
 - God of Jacob (Isa 2:3 = Mic 4:2) and Zion:⁴
 - Isaiah 2:3: "Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - God is Creator and Saviour:
 - Isaiah 42:5-7: "This is what God the LORD says— he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: 'I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.'"
 - Isaiah 49:8-9: "This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'"
 - Isaiah 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the

⁴ Zion: 154 occurrences in the Old Testament (38 in the Book of Psalms; 47 in Isaiah).

brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn."

Parallellismus membrorum

- ❖ Parallellismus membrorum is a special feature of Biblical literature, especially of the Old Testament Wisdom Literature, i.e. The Book of Job, Psalms and Proverbs. It "is also present, although less prominent, in biblical prose. It can be defined as the repetition of the same or related semantic content and/or grammatical structure in consecutive lines or verses."⁵
- ❖ There are several forms of parallellismus membrorum found in this Psalm:
 - Synonymous parallelism.
 - Two (three, or four) lines express the same thought. Verse 2 is an example. Line 2.a and 2.b give the same thought:
 - A. I will praise the LORD all my life;
 - B. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
 - Syntactical parallelism
 - The second line completes the first line (verse 5) or explains the first line (verse 10):
 - a. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
 - b. (Blessed is he) whose hope is in the LORD his God,
 - Climactic parallelism
 - Two (three, or four) lines express the same thought and end in a climax. A beautiful example is found in verses 3 and 4:
 - a. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men,
 - b. who cannot save.
 - c. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
 - d. on that very day their plans come to nothing.
 - Antithetical parallelism
 - Psalm 146:7-9 shows an intricate example. This part of the Psalm consists of two enumerations and a contrast:

Psalm 146:7-8		Psalm 146:9
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⁵ See for more information: Berlin, A. (1992). *Parallelism*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.)(Vol. 5, p. 155).

He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,	enumeration	The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
the LORD loves the righteous.	<antithesis>	but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

The LORD and the covenant⁶

- ❖ God's character is revealed in the Psalms through several roles. Among these are creator, king/judge, covenant Lord, Father, redeemer/deliverer.
 - *Creator (Ps 146:6)*. The LORD is “the maker of heaven and earth” (Ps 115:15; 124:8; 134:3) by his spoken command (Ps 33:6; 148:5); it is the work of his hands (Ps 100:3; 138:8).
 - *King/Judge (Ps 146:8-10)*. Because God is the maker of the universe, he is its true king (Ps 93:1; 95:3). He rules it with complete sovereignty, and there is nothing to threaten it, most of all not the kings of this earth (Ps 2:4; 59:8 47:1–9). And as king, he is the one who assures that the proper order of things is maintained (Ps 89:14; 98:9; 105:7; Ps 146:7-9). Although it is not incorrect to translate the word for this order as “justice” (*mišpāt*; Ps 146:7), that is only one aspect of a far larger concept. Where there is disorder from the creation plan, there is injustice, oppression, violence and murder. What the psalmists tell us is that where the true king is allowed to rule, there *mišpāt* is to be found (Ps 7:11), and they look forward to that great day when the divine order will, through the Lord’s messiah, prevail over all the earth (Ps 2:7–12; 89:27–28; 96:10; 110:5–6).
 - *Covenant Lord (Ps 146:10)*. **Not only is the Lord the king of the universe, but also he is the king who has entered into covenant with his chosen people** (Ps 78; 106; 146:10 (Zion)). In that covenant he has revealed the *mišpāt* that he has written into his world (Ps 119:149). His instructions are without a blemish, turning a person around (Ps 19:7). To master them and live by them is to come to know wisdom, to inherit the earth (Ps 1:2; 37:30–31; 111:7–10).
 - Psalm 146 is best understood and explained within the context of the covenant.

⁶ This overview is based on: Oswalt, J. N. (2008, p. 249-250). *God*. In T. Longman III & P. Enns (Eds.).

- *Father*. But beyond this covenant relationship the psalms depict Yahweh as one who plays an even more personal role in relationship to his people. He is the Father, who will take up his children when their earthly mothers and fathers forsake him (Ps 27:10; 68:5; 89:26).
 - Psalm 68:5 (See also Psalm 146:9):
 - "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling."
- **Redeemer/Deliverer** As the just king, he will not allow the disorder of sin to prevail in his kingdom. As the covenant Lord, he will bring the blessings of the covenant upon any who will put themselves in the position to receive them:
 - "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God" (Ps 146:3).

As the Father, he is moved with compassion at the plight of his people.

Exposition

Verse 1-2

❖ "Praise the LORD."

- Verse 1 consists of two imperatives (second person). Verse 2 provides the answer ("I will").
 - Keil and Delitzsch comment: "When he attunes his soul to the praise of God, he puts himself personally into this mood of mind, and therefore goes on to say 'I will praise.'"⁷
- "O my soul" = myself, I.
 - "I" belongs to the righteous mentioned in verse 8, who are loved by the LORD.

❖ "I will sing praise" to my God as long as I live."

- "as long as I live" This is not only an action. It is an attitude. See also Psalm 63:4; 71:14, 15. 104:33; 145:1.
 - Alen writes: "His self-encouragement functions as an invitation to them in turn to lift up their hearts in worship"⁸

⁷ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996, Vol. 5, p. 843).

⁸ Allen, L. C. (2002, Vol. 21, p. 378).

- This fourfold use of the verb “praise” (3) and “sing” is a strong invitation to join the psalmist in his praise.
- The reason for this praise:
 - Keil and Delitzsch: “of the God and Kings who, as being the Almighty, Eternal, and unchangeably Faithful One, is the true ground of confidence.”⁹

Verse 3-6

❖ “Do not put your trust in princes in mortal men, who cannot save.”

- Compare ESV: “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, **in whom there is no salvation.**”
- “princes”: people with power, rulers, governors, kings.
 - See also Psalm 118:7, 8; Isaiah 2:22.
 - “It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes” (Ps 118:8-9).¹⁰
- “mortal men”
 - Influential men are like all other men transitory. They come and go.
 - “Naked a man comes from his mother’s womb, and as he comes, so he departs” (Ecc 5:5).
- “salvation” (ESV) = “תְּשׁוּבָה”: **help, deliverance, salvation, victory.**¹¹
 - Also used for help given by God: “from God in various spheres of life: —a) as something which is waited for or hoped for in the future” 3. in contrast to the help given by people.¹²

❖ “When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;”

- This is a sober and realistic observation (Gn 3:19; Ps 103:15, 16).

❖ “on that very day their plans come to nothing.”

- “He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand” (Ecc 5:5).

⁹ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996, Vol. 5, p. 843).

¹⁰ Psalm 118 is a messianic Psalm (Ps 118:22, 23 > Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10, 11; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11).

¹¹ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1801).

¹² Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1801).

- **“their plans”** may be well-intentioned and beneficial to different people and groups. If their plans were not promising, there would be no reason to put trust in princes.
- Keil and Delitzsch remark: “Men easily change their mind and do not keep their word: He, however, is He who keepeth truth or faithfulness, inasmuch as He unchangeably adheres to the fulfilling of His promises.”¹³

❖ **“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,”**

- Hossfeld and Zenger note that in “Old Testament wisdom literature, beatitudes were the preferred form for introducing lessons about life, especially those that call for loyalty or obedience to a divinity or a king and seek to motivate it.”¹⁴ (Ps 2:12; 33:12; 84:12; 112:1; 144:15; Dt 33:29, see also Ps 1:1; 119:1).
- **“help”** is “frequently a parallel to **“salvation”** (Ps 146:3) and (...) has other nuances of meaning: it is not only about comprehensive and enduring protection and support in situations of distress but also about powerful support in undertakings and throughout life itself.”¹⁵
 - Psalm 115:9-11:

"O house of Israel, trust in the LORD— he is their help and shield.
O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD— he is their help and shield.
You who fear him, trust in the LORD— he is their help and shield."
- **“God of Jacob.”** This designation is particularly found in the Book of Psalms (twelve of eighteen occurrences). Isaiah 2:3 (= Mic 4:2) is of special interest:
 - "Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - Psalm 146:7-9 show the ways of the LORD.
 - Zion is mentioned as the center of the Lordship of God (Ps 146:10).

❖ **“whose hope is in the LORD his God, the LORD, who remains faithful forever.”**

- He is **“the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—”** (Ps 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; Gn 1; Ex 20:11; Ac 4:24).
 - Psalm 121:2: "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."

¹³ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996, Vol. 5, p. 843).

¹⁴ Hossfeld, F.-L., & Zenger, E. (2011, p. 613).

¹⁵ Hossfeld, F.-L., & Zenger, E. (2011, p. 613).

- “faithful” = “אֱמֶת”:

1. trustworthiness; 3. faithfulness¹⁶

- His help and faithfulness are illustrated by the creation: “the good king who accomplishes the order of justice and life that he has bestowed on his world and keeps it in motion.”¹⁷ See for the connection between the world order of creation and the law of God, especially Psalm 19.

❖ The following contrasts can be noted:

- mortal men <> the LORD who remains faithful forever
- plans (of mortal men) <> the Maker of heaven and earth
 - These plans cannot always be carried out (when they die) <> the creation of heaven and earth.
 - The plans of princes have local impact <> the creation by God is all-encompassing.

Verse 7-9

❖ See also Psalm 145:13–20.

❖ This part of the Psalm mentions seven groups of deprived people:

- 1. the oppressed; 2. the hungry; 3. prisoners; 4. the blind; 5. who are bowed down; 6; the alien; 7. the fatherless and the widow (which are often mentioned together).
- The two other groups mentioned are 8. the righteous and 9. the wicked.
 - Brueggeman remarks: “Running through that statement of generous advocacy is the quite different theme of righteous and wicked (vv. 8–9), **those who do and do not adhere to Yahweh’s covenant.**”¹⁸

❖ **“He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free,”**

- Compare Luke 4:18, 19 (Isa 61:1, 2): “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

¹⁶ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 69).

¹⁷ Hossfeld, F.-L., & Zenger, E. (2011, p. 614).

¹⁸ Brueggemann, W. (1984, p. 163).

- Proverbs 14:31: “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”
 - Isaiah 49:8-9: “This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'"
 - “He upholds the cause” = “מִשְׁפָּט” (mishpat): ruling (developing in) > legal decision, judgement > case > law, right, claim > what is due to someone in a case¹⁹
 - The oppressed (Ps 103:6).
- ❖ “the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down”
- Messianic promises: Isaiah 42:7; 49:9 > Matthew 11:5:
 - “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”
 - Spiritual blind or physically blind? Hossfeld and Zenger opt for the first solution: “Whoever sits in the dark dungeons of imprisonment has blinded eyes. And the nations that are oppressed and enslaved live ‘in darkness’ and experience their liberation as ‘seeing the light’.”²⁰ See also Isaiah 9:1; 60:2).
- ❖ “the LORD loves the righteous”
- Note that “loves” is different from the preceding actions. The righteous are loved because they walk by faith and follow the ways of the LORD. They take care of the alien, the fatherless and the widow.
 - “righteous” = “צַדִּיק” (tsadik):
 - 4a. social justice, i.e. in respect of the community, true to the community. 5. in a religious sense, just, upright, devout, not to be distinguished too sharply from 4a:
 - a. the upright person, behaving correctly and coping with his life: Is 24:16; 57:1; Hos 14:10; Hab 1:4, 13; 2:4; Mal 3:18; Ps 1:6 (38 times in Ps):
 - b. the pious person, one belonging to the community of Yahweh: Ps 58:11; 64:11; 68:4; 118:20;
 - c. the pious person who has his pleasure in the commandments.²¹

¹⁹ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 651).

²⁰ Hossfeld, F.-L., & Zenger, E. (2011, p. 615).

²¹ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1002-1003).

- Righteous conduct is walking in line with the covenant.²²

❖ **“The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow”**

- The care for the fatherless and the widow, and the alien is an important theme in the Old Testament and the New:
 - Deuteronomy 10:18: "He (the LORD) defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing." (Dt 24:17, 19-21; 26:12, 13; 27:19).
 - James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

❖ **“but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.”**

- **“frustrates.”** The wicked will not succeed in their ways. This contrasts with the help and hope the LORD provides.
- **“wicked” = “רָשָׁע”:**
- **2. guilty in general, essentially before God, guilty, wicked person.**²³
 - The wicked are mentioned in a negative sense in connection with the care of the widow and fatherless, and the alien (Ps 94:6; see also Jer 7:6; 22:3; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:10).
 - Proverbs 15:9: “The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.”
- These wicked are not the same persons as the princes. The wicked belong to the sphere of the covenant, whereas the princes can be any ruler, also foreign.

Verse 10

❖ **“The LORD reigns forever,”**

- **“reigns”** forever concludes the preceding verses. He is King.
 - The LORD reigns. He is the creator of heaven and earth. He is faithful. He will support the needy. He loves the righteous and frustrates the ways of the wicked.
 - Exodus 15:18: "The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

❖ **“your God, O Zion,”**

²² deSilva, D. A. (2008, p. 289). *Honor and Shame*. In T. Longman III & P. Enns (Eds.).

²³ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1295).

- The Psalm is addressed to a wider audience, especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem. See also Isaiah 2:1-5:²⁴
- "The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa 2:3).

❖ **“for all generations.”**

- This is an extension of verse 2: “I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God **as long as I live.**”
- **Praise without obedience is void See also Psalm 103:17, 18.**

Application

Hope

- ❖ Hope is the central message of Psalm 146: “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, **whose hope is in the LORD his God**” (Ps 146:6).
 - Hope.²⁵ People need hope, especially when their present condition hurts or is uncertain due to poverty, hunger, disease, injustice, the fear of war, oppression and persecution. Without hope, people become cynical (hope is an illusion), depressed, and apathetic. This can lead to abuse of alcohol, drugs, and sex to forget the present.
 - The apostle Paul wrote: “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, **without hope and without God in the world**” (Eph 2:12).
 - The modern world still seeks hope in human effort and in a belief in the inevitability of technical progress that assumed everything would naturally get better and better. But nowadays humanity is confronted with worldwide crises, like the climate crisis, the refugee crisis, and political and economic crises.
 - Christian (Biblical) hope offers two perspectives:
 - hope for a new world, a new creation (Rev 21:9-22:5);
 - hope for the near future. This hope is based on the priestly blessing, the revelation of God as Creator, his word and his deed in the context of the covenant. Psalm 146 refers to this hope.

²⁴ Isaiah 2:1-5. (n.d.). <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Isaiah%202.1-5.pdf>

²⁵ McAlister, P. K. (1988, Vol. 1, pp. 996–997). *Hope*. In *Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J., Eds.*

- “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Num 6:24-26).
- The theologian Jürgen Moltmann²⁶ wrote about “the theology of hope.” His theology of hope says that the future is the basis for changing the present. The resurrection of Christ is a strong motivation to love one another within the covenant community (Jn 15:9-12; 1 Pt 1:3, 4a). "Biblical hope is hope in what God will do in the future. At the heart of Christian hope is the resurrection of Jesus."
- Psalm 146 is not meant to say to the oppressed, the hungry, the blind, the alien, the fatherless and the widow to sit down and wait. It is an implicit call to the righteous to act according to the law of the covenant, to protect the oppressed, to serve the hungry... That is the reason why the LORD loves the righteous and frustrates the wicked.
- The model of faith and hope is Abraham. The LORD gave him hope for offspring and he believed the LORD, “and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Gn 15:6). And Paul wrote: “Yet he (Abraham) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness”” (Rom 4:20-22).

Praise

❖ Praise in general

- Stott: “All Christian worship, public and private, should be an intelligent response to God’s self-revelation in his words and works recorded in Scripture.”²⁷

❖ Praise the LORD

- As Creator of heaven and earth who is eternal.
- As King who reigns forever and who loves the righteous and frustrates the wicked.
- As the LORD of the Covenant who is faithful forever.
- As Father who helps the fatherless and the widows.
- As Redeemer of the oppressed, the prisoners, the needy.

❖ Praise Christ

²⁶ Wikimedia Foundation. (2023, March 28). Jürgen Moltmann. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%BCrgen_Moltmann

²⁷ Stott, J. (1972, p. 47-48).

- "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Mt 11:5).

❖ I will praise

- In the church tradition especially in the cloister – all the Psalms were sung every week!
 - Praise is the religious heartbeat of the believer and the church.
- Praise changes the mood, the heart and the mind.

Do not put your trust in princes

❖ Who are the local or national princes?

- Some key words to ponder about: autocratic leaders, political leaders; democracy, leaders of economic businesses, and social institutions.
- In this era, people trust also technical advances and technical solutions to all our problems.
- People trust and put their hope in ideologies: communism; socialism, neoliberalism (study).

❖ Why do people trust princes instead of God?

- Men often trust human leaders more than God. Human leaders and politicians promise a lot before the election, once they are elected they have to deal with a reality which can be stubborn and resistant.

❖ Some people have lost all hope and do not trust help.

The covenant community

❖ How does the LORD support the needy?

- The covenant community provides the context. That is the reason why the righteous are loved and the ways of the wicked are frustrated.
- The church is the new testament covenant community (Mt 26:28).
- Matthew 25:31-40 is illustrative: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

- Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'
- The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'
- Thus the church is called to praise the LORD and to trust him for his help, and its members are called to live a righteous life.

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