

## Praise the Lord, O My Soul!

*"While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being!"—Psalm 146:2*

### PSALMS 146 TO 150

THE Psalms is one of the most beautiful and majestic books of all Scripture. These words cover every aspect of the Truth—from the highest conception of Yahweh as Creator and Sustainer of all—to prophecy—to things of Christ—to the great plan of man's redemption; and to illustrate that perfect faith, confidence and oneness that man can attain with God.

The Hebrew name of the book of Psalms is Tehillim, meaning Praise. This is the basic theme of the whole book. We are exhorted over and over again to praise God. Psa. 147:1—

*"Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."*

Psa. 95:2-3—*"Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms."*

*"For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods."*

Psalm 50:23 gives us the personal application—

*"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the Salvation of God."*

To praise God is to glorify Him. Praise should come from the innermost part of our being, and not just from the lips. God's whole plan and purpose in Creation is that ultimately His Name might be glorified. The final completion will come when—

*"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."*

We all often speak and pray about God's glory filling the earth. This is what we all SAY we look and long for. If this IS our innermost desire, then our walk and conduct in the Truth will show it. We will glorify God in every way, in all circumstances. We will read and study and learn more of His glorious truths. Our every action, our whole lives, will be dedicated to glorifying God. Anyone who is not doing all they can from the heart, will not be "shown the Salvation of God" in the form of eternal life.

It is not enough to just KNOW God's will. Today, with so many books available on the Truth, it could easily be conceived that knowledge is the principal thing. But it is not. The will of God not only must be known but DONE. It must be engraved on the mind, and issue from the heart in deep longing for God and His ways. Thru this means, we will find our highest joy in obedience. David said—

*"I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy Law is within my heart."*

This is the only way and true basis of obedience. It is the only way we can keep the commands of God. If our heart and mind are blended in conformity with God's will, our delight will be in doing His service. The words of inspiration pondered in the heart, will be as a stream flowing from the fountain of life. As David says (Ps.36:9):

*"With Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light we shall see light."*

There are many beautiful thoughts and exhortations that can be extracted from the Psalms if we allow ourselves to see and use them. The words were written and recorded that we might profit from them and become obedient to God's ways, purified and beautified in our lives and characters. Obedience is the best sacrifice we can offer in our hope for mercy.

*"Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy."*

By fearing or reverencing Him, David says, God will look down upon us and extend His mercy. This is the only course we can follow if we wish His mercy to rest upon us. The natural mind will not tell us this, and if we heed it, we will wander out of the way of understanding. By heeding things spiritual and developing the spiritual mind, we will not wander. This book of praise, if we lovingly obey its words, will be a light before our eyes. It can truly be said that everyone will find in the Psalms words that will suit every occasion in their walk to the Kingdom.

The last 5 Psalms are truly Psalms of Praise to God. Each begins:

*"PRAISE YE THE LORD"*

—and ends the same way. The Psalmist is deeply moved to praise God in thankfulness for all things. He is determined, while he lives, to constantly praise the Creator and extol His Name—

*"Praise ye the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!"*

*"While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being"*  
(Psa. 146:1-2).

As the Psalmist says, our lifetime is the time we are given to praise and serve God. We often sing this in Hymn 142—"Life is the time to serve the Lord." For in death there is no opportunity (v.4)—

*"His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish."*

Do we remember this as we arise to face each new day? We should give thanks for the new opportunity to serve God and praise Him. We should begin the day with prayer, seeking forgiveness for all our past sins, with earnest determination to use the day before us in obedience and service to God. This is the purpose of each new day, why it is provided. As we use it rightly, it will help us both now and in the day of judgment.

V.3—"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help"  
(margin—salvation).

It is a shortcoming today that people are more and more placing confidence in their own personal aspirations. But we, as children of God, must not do so, for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. No human scheme by us, no matter how marvellous it may seem, will ever help us to attain salvation.

We must place our trust and faith in God alone. God only knows all our needs, and He is the only One who can provide, if we ask in faith. Our faith must be in the One God of Jacob, our hope for deliverance in Him. The more we draw to Him in prayer and reading of His Word, the more help we receive in the renewal of inner strength, joy and peace.

V.5—"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,

*"Which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever."*

The Psalmist gives the reason why we must not trust in man: he soon dieth. And he contrasts that with why we should trust in God: God created the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything in it. If He has such great power to create and sustain all the universe, surely, we can trust His promise that His Word will not fail, His Truth will endure forever.

Let us think upon this. Perhaps we should consider more the unsearchable wisdom and power of Him that hath—

*".. stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth."*

Astronomers tell us from their observations—

*"The moon revolves around our earth; the earth, with its associate planets, revolves around the sun.*

*"All the infinite host of heaven is grouped into clusters and systems that revolve, orbit within orbit, and world around world, until a firmament of millions of suns is balanced by another as great, and all go sweeping together around some mightier centre.*

*"And so suns, whose light has been millions of years in reaching us, are all rushing as though driven by hurricanes of infinite power around some mysterious centre."*

The vast heavens above us go beyond our mortal comprehension. Yet we read in Psalm 147:4-5—

*"He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.*

*"Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite."*

This introduces the beautiful thought of the Psalmist (Ps. 8:3-4) —

*"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;*

*"What is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?"*

In consideration of such immense greatness and power, it is only fitting that we praise Him. He has called us to be a part of His great purpose of filling the earth with His glory.

The number of stars is used in Scripture to typify a countless number, like the sand of the sea. The stronger the telescope man invents, the more stars he can see—and still there is no end. The sun itself is a star. Being close to the earth, it acts as its source of light and heat.

Spiritually, stars represent individuals given immortality—

*"As one star differeth from another in glory, so is the resurrection of the dead."*

And Daniel was told (12:3)—

*"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. . . They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."*

At the Creation, the angels are spoken of as "morning stars" singing together as, at the bidding of God, they brought light and life to a dead earth. Morning stars are those whose rising heralds the dawn. Jesus is THE bright and morning Star, the Sun, the ruler of the heavens.

Ps. 147:8—*"Who covereth the heaven with clouds.. "*

Clouds, in their natural state, are a dense concentration of water droplets suspended in air. They oftentimes hold thousands of tons of moisture necessary for watering the earth. If clouds are lacking in any area, then there is no rain, and all things wither. We see that this is so from many dry climates where the earth is a desert. There must be clouds and rain for life. Elihu asked Job (37:16)—

*"Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds? The wondrous works of Him Who is perfect in knowledge?"*

We should ask ourselves this same question and draw from it spiritual thoughts. Clouds are used in a spiritual sense as the medium of God's manifestation and operations. At the transfiguration of Jesus (the manifestation of the glory of his kingdom) a bright cloud overshadowed.

When he was taken into heaven a cloud received him.

It is promised he will come "in the clouds of heaven." These clouds are the clouds of saints—the cloud of immortal ones, drawn up by the Sun of Righteousness, changed into Spirit nature, ready to pour out the judgments of God.

When we let our minds dwell upon God's Creation and its spiritual significance as revealed, we find much promise and beauty in God's presence manifested in the clouds. Continuing Ps. 147:8—  
". . . *who prepareth rain for the earth.*"

As God blesses the earth with rain, so He blesses us with His Word:

*"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven. . . watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be"* (Is. 55:10).

And Deut. 32:1-2—

*"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth the words of My mouth.  
"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."*

The rain from heaven is the Word of God, the Water of Life. Just as the rain makes the grass to grow, so God's Word brings forth fruit. It is recorded that God showers the rain on the just and the unjust. All have it, but only a few really know its benefit. It is a necessity to life, for without it all things would wither and die. So, it is with us, in relation to God's words. They are as a shower and we have the opportunity of drinking heavily from them. Psa. 147:9-10—

*"He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.  
"He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man."*

The whole animal creation is seen and cared for by God. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him knowing it. It is God that gives all creatures strength. Therefore, God is not pleased that men should be proud and boastful of their physical power. He delights not in the horse's proud and haughty way (in that he is powerful), or in the pride of man because of human strength. God is pleased when man acknowledges that all he is and has, is from God, and thus holds his Creator and Provider in fear and reverence. Psa. 147:16—

*"He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes."*

Again, these verses emphasize God's power and control of the elements. Having considered rain, clouds and stars, let us now consider briefly the snow. Snow affords much evidence of God's love of beauty and order. Each flake is perfectly made, and there are never two exactly alike. God teaches Job by asking—

*"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"*

There is comfort and peace in thinking on these things. Our God is great and glorious. Goodness, beauty and joy are the eternal pattern of all His works. All things that mar that beauty and joy are but passing shadows that will be swept away when their brief purpose is accomplished.

Snow represents purity and the pure whiteness of those who would be in harmony with God. Each snowflake is a separate and individual and beautifully intricate design: yet altogether they are one glorious, pure, white unity. So are the Redeemed: each one a beautiful individual character of marvellous design, but all are part of a vast, shining, Sun-lit, holy unity in God.

Psalms 148:1-6 speaks further of God's creation: the heavens, the stars, the clouds, etc. Then in v. 7 is the command—

*"Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps:"*

As we read in Psa. 146:6—

*".. the sea and all that therein is."*

After looking at God's wonders in the heavens above, our attention is turned to the earth, to the deep places, and to the sea and all that is therein. So, in Psa. 95:4-5—

*"In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land."*

Why should the "deep places" of the earth be mentioned more than the flat or wide-open places? There seems to be a reason. If there is any time when we are able to feel our own absolute insignificance, it is when we have to do with the deep places of the earth. Standing on a cliff, or on mountain edges, looking over the mighty crags into the depths below, where ships and great rocks are like small specks, we powerfully feel how great is He and how entirely and implicitly we are in His Hand.

So also, with the strength of the hills. Psalm 148:9 calls on the mountains and all hills for praise. The great mountains overwhelm us with God's stupendous power. His greatness is unsearchable. It is staggering to our poor capacities. We can but recognize it and yield the feeble attribute of praise and thankfulness.

To many, thoughts as these are called weak and "soft." True this may be, but it is the way we must be. Softness is the opposite to hardness, and hardness is the quality we are divinely warned against. It is natural to be self-assertive and hard-hearted, but it is wrong in God's sight. May we further develop within ourselves a softer and gentler and more loving attitude. Psa. 148:8—

*"Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His Word."*

Fire and hail represent the righteous judgments of God against the unrighteous and disobedient. It is good we remember both the goodness and severity of God. God is love, but He is also a consuming fire to the wicked. We cannot presume upon His mercy and go our way. We must strive always to be obedient and to seek forgiveness of our shortcomings after we have tried our hardest to obey. For after we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants and must seek the Father's mercy and love.

*"Stormy wind, FULFILLING HIS WORD."*

The same word is used in Scripture for both "wind" and "spirit." All is of God. The wind both literal and spiritual plays an important part in fulfilling God's will and accomplishing His purpose. As the wind is in the natural heavens, so is the Spirit in the spiritual heavens. The wind is a mighty, unseen power of God, ranging from the gentle, refreshing breeze to the terrible, destructive hurricane and tornado.

The basic power behind natural wind is the sun: so, the power behind the Spirit is God. God is the Centre, Source and Basis of all. Ps. 149:1-3—

*"Praise ye the Lord! Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.*

*"Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

*"Let them praise His Name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp."*

David here invites the Children of Israel to rejoice as he reigns over God's Kingdom in Jerusalem. But it has a higher application to the Messiah of whom it is written—

*"My praise shall be to thee in the great congregation."*

The world has not yet seen this great sight when Christ gives the signal for an outburst of praise such as never heard on earth.

Psa. 149:4—*"For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation."*

God is pleased with the meek, those poor in spirit, who in their lifetime gave glory to Him. In the acknowledgement of God's greatness, we are humbled, made meek. There is no room for pride of the flesh. Meekness is patience, calm, gentle, humble; not aggressive or self-assertive. It is cheerfully putting up with wrong and present disadvantages for the sake of eternal good. Meekness is self-control. It is crucifying the lusts of the flesh and learning the spirit of Christ (who was meek and lowly of heart).

Psa. 149:5-9—"*Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds!  
"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.  
"To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;  
"To bind their kings with chains, their nobles with fetters of iron;  
"To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord!"*

The honour of saints is to execute judgments on the nations. They will go against the Russian Gog and the Roman Harlot, putting down all wickedness and setting up God's Kingdom in Jerusalem with Christ as their King. With such promises, with such a glorious hope, such a high calling, let us "Praise the Lord!"

Psalm 150 is summed up in verse 6—

*"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."*

Wisdom calls our attention to the lessons found in the Tehillim. We are shown the unescapable conclusion that hope, joy and praise are appropriate among the company of saints—God's Elect. Therefore, let us, as described in Psalm 147:7—

*"Sing praises WITH UNDERSTANDING."*

This is the whole spirit of the Psalms. The Psalms speak certainly upon every phase of the divine purpose and human welfare. They turn every aspect into praise and glorification of God. To worship in holiness and to praise with understanding is the highest destiny and joy we can attain to. We have the supreme example, at the heart of many psalms, in the one we are to remember this morning, Christ Jesus—

*"In the volume of the book it is written of me,  
I DELIGHT TO DO THY WILL, O GOD!"*

May we faithfully remember these words, and may we ever delight ourselves in doing God's will. —D.C. —February 1973 Berean

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