

# Psalm Sundays

Text  
Psalm 146

Topic  
Don't put your trust in prince's  
who are mere men that die

Title  
***"The Prince's Died"***

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When Nick Fury wanted to know how Loki used the Tesseract to turn "two of the sharpest men I know into his personal flying monkeys," Captain America perked up.

Having been frozen for 70 years, Cap (that's what we call him) was understandably ignorant of most of the pop culture references being made by his fellow Avengers.

When Fury mentioned "flying monkeys," Thor said, "Monkeys? I do not understand."

An excited Captain America blurted out, "*I do!* I understood that reference."

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In another of the films we see the page of a notebook on which Steve Rogers keeps a to-do list of pop culture he needs to get caught-up on. Things like disco, and both *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*.

I'm guessing almost everyone here 'gets' the flying monkeys as a reference to *The Wizard of Oz*. That's quite an achievement for a book published in 1900, and made into a feature film in 1939.

Here are a few more references from Oz still in common use today:

- 👤 "Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."
- 👤 "Lions and tigers and bears, O my!"
- 👤 "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain."
- 👤 "There's no place like home."

The "We're not in Kansas anymore" line is so iconic that it was #4 on a list of the top 100 movie quotes of all time that was compiled in 2005 by the American Film Institute.

One critic noted, "The list of television series that *haven't* borrowed the line might be shorter than the list of those that have."

When you use an iconic pop culture reference, everyone familiar with it 'gets' it.

Something like that is going on in Psalm 146. To really 'get' Psalm 146, we need to remember something about Second Temple Hebrew culture. It is this:

**The Old Testament prophets had more to say about the coming Kingdom of God on earth than anything else.**

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Psalm 146 describes, among other things, a time during which there will be no poverty, and no physical handicaps, e.g., blindness.

**These are iconic phrases. A Jew would recognize these as referring to conditions that will prevail on earth in the future Kingdom.**

We need to read Psalm 146 looking ahead to the Kingdom. Only then will it *comfort* us in the present, rather than *confuse* us.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 The Coming Kingdom Provokes Praise**, and **#2 The Coming Kingdom Provides Perspective**.

### **#1 - The Coming Kingdom Provokes Praise (v1-2)**

Pop culture references only work when we share a common background.

I find that out a lot when I share a sermon title, or a reference in the study, that no one gets.

Before we get to iconic, Kingdom phrases, the psalmist - and we don't know who he is - sets the scene. It's praise.

Psa 146:1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

Psa 146:2 While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

The five psalms that conclude this great hymnbook are known as the Hallelujah Psalms. They begin with "Praise the LORD" and end with "Praise the LORD," which is, of course, "Hallelujah."

🧑 "Halel" means *praise*, or *tell someone that they are very great*.

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- 👤 The “u” means *all of you!*
- 👤 “Jah” most Bibles translate as “LORD” with four capital letters.

The psalmist mentions the “soul.” He meant to elevate our thinking to living for eternity. Our bodies will die, and corrupt in the grave (or worse). But our soul will go on.

In verse two, the psalmist says he will praise the LORD both “while I live,” and “while I have my being.”

- 👤 “While I live” sounds like his life on the earth.
- 👤 “While I have my being” sounds like *after* life on the earth ends, on into eternity.

Now and forever, he would praise the LORD.  
Praise would permeate his life.

I’ve noticed that at either end of the spiritual spectrum, praise can cease:

- 👤 In times of *blessing*, we drift from the Lord, not sensing our need.
- 👤 In times of *buffeting*, we find it hard to praise Him, since we sort of blame Him.

We have a couple of praise choruses that nail this:

- 👤 “Blessed Be Your Name.” *Every blessing You pour out, I’ll turn back to praise; When the darkness closes in, Lord still I will say, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*
- 👤 “Trust in You.” *When You don’t move the mountains I’m needing You to move, When You don’t part the waters I wish I could walk through. When You don’t give the answers as I cry out to You, I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in You!*

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“Hallelujah” means *all of me telling the LORD He is very great*; and that implies doing it all the time.

**E**ver play charades? Think of your daily life - language and body language - as a kind of worthy charade, in which people can easily guess that you are a believer whose life is dedicated to all-the-time Praising the LORD.

## #2 - The Coming Kingdom Provides Perspective (v3-10)

Dr. J. Vernon McGee said of the prophets, “It was their theme song. They sound like a stuck record, saying over and over that the King is coming, the Kingdom is coming, and great blessings will be on this earth.”

- 👤 The prophets made much of the coming King and Kingdom.
- 👤 John the Baptist announced the King was on scene.
- 👤 Jesus offered the Kingdom.
- 👤 The disciples expected Jesus to establish the Kingdom. It was a constant theme in their thinking, and in their questioning the Lord.

When John and Jesus talked about the Kingdom, the Jews knew exactly what they meant, with little explanation.

The Kingdom isn’t an allegory for something else. We mean a literal reign of Jesus over the current earth, sitting on David’s throne in Jerusalem.

- 👤 Looking back, we must acknowledge that the prophecies of the Bible that have been fulfilled were done so literally.
- 👤 Looking forward, we must acknowledge that the prophecies of the Bible that have yet to be fulfilled will be done so literally.

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We more commonly call it the Millennial Kingdom, or the Millennium. In the Revelation, in chapter twenty, we're told no less than six times that the Kingdom will last one thousand years. In Latin, "thousand" is *millennium*.

Just to be clear: There will be a visible Second Coming of Jesus to the earth to establish and reign over the Kingdom for a millennium.

For the remainder of the psalm, the psalmist assumes a future perspective as he lives in the present.

(Or should we say, "the palmist?").

Psa 146:3 Do not put your trust in princes, *Nor* in a son of man, in whom *there* is no help.

- 👤 "Princes" are anyone in a position of authority.
- 👤 "Son of man" indicates the princes are merely men.

This doesn't mean leaders are to be disregarded as unimportant. It serves as a reminder to not lose sight of the future King of kings. For a Jew, it meant keeping Messianic hope alive.

Our hope is a little different. The Jews rejected Jesus, and therefore rejected His offer to right then and there establish the Kingdom. Jesus ascended into Heaven, promising to return and establish the Kingdom.

The time in between Jesus' ascension and Second Coming - our time - is the Church Age. We have our own iconic phrases, e.g., "In the world you will have tribulation," and, "Our light affliction is but for a moment."

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**Our** hope is to be resurrected or raptured; and that event is imminent.

This is a good word for us, having just come through an election. Rather than apply it for you, I'll just ask this: Mediate on the words, "Do not put your trust in princes, *Nor* in a son of man, in whom *there is* no help." Let the Holy Spirit use them to bring you peace in these weird, turbulent times.

Psa 146:4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish.

Leaders have their plans. Some of them are good, beneficial, or are at least they are meant to be. FDR's New Deal; JFK's New Frontier; LBJ's Great Society... All meant for good.

Hitler's Final Solution was a plan, too; a hideous, satanic plan.

Those leaders have perished. Their plans perished with them. MAGA seems on the brink of perishing, giving way to Build Back Better. It, too, will perish.

The LORD's plan cannot fail. By His providence, it will play-out just as prophesied from Genesis through the Revelation. He came; He is coming.

Psa 146:5 *Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,*

"Jacob" means the Jews; the nation of Israel. The story God tells throughout the Bible centers around the nation He established through Abraham, from which the Messiah would come to save and bless the world.

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God - the almighty God; YHWH; Jehovah. He is the only One who can save and sanctify and glorify you. He must therefore become "the LORD **[your]** God."

Psa 146:6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that *is* in them; Who keeps truth forever,

"Keeps truth forever" can be translated, *is faithful forever*. God created the universe, and put man in a beautiful Garden paradise. Adam and Eve ruined it. But God promised, immediately, to fix it. He has revealed how He will do that in the Bible. He's been faithful up til now; He will be faithful to the end.

The Second Coming of Jesus ends the seven-year Great Tribulation. At His coming, there will be human survivors on the earth. A judgment will take place. Nonbelievers souls will be consigned to Hades. Believers will remain on the earth, in their human bodies, to live in and populate the Kingdom.

The topics in verses seven, eight, and nine would be understood as referring to the coming Kingdom.

*No Israelite would confuse them for conditions that could exist unless and until the Messiah had come.*

Once we recognize these references are from the future Kingdom, we won't be confused about why there are still blind people; or why there is poverty.

Remember: The current Church Age has its own characteristics.

Psa 146:7 Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.





- 👤 "Justice" will be characteristic of the Millennium. Isaiah said, "But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist" (11:14-15).
- 👤 Poverty will be abolished. Jeremiah said, "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the LORD For wheat and new wine and oil, For the young of the flock and the herd; Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all" (31:12).
- 👤 Captives will be released: Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound..."

Psa 146:8 The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind; The LORD raises those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous.

Isaiah said: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (35:5-6). There will be no disabilities; all will be healed.

Doing what is right will permeate global society. John Walvoord summarized this, saying, "Taken as a whole, the social and economic conditions of the Millennium indicate a Golden Age in which the dreams of social reformists through the centuries will be realized, not through human effort but by the immediate presence and power of God and the righteous government of Jesus Christ."



There is something here for your devotional life. Alexander Maclaren wrote, "All these classes of afflicted persons are meant to be regarded literally, but all may have a wider meaning and be intended to hint at spiritual bondage, blindness, and abjectness."

In the Millennium, God will open blind eyes - physically. He's not doing that now, not always. But we extrapolate from this future characteristic that God can heal another kind of blindness. He can open the eyes of the spiritually blind - freeing their will to receive Jesus.

Next the psalmist said, "But the way of the wicked He turns upside down" (v9). If it's the Kingdom, where do "the wicked" come from?

Think of all the people who will be born to Tribulation survivors over a thousand years. I'm too dumb to do the math. But I do remember the math problem in which you double pennies everyday and after 31 days it amounts to over \$10mil.

ANYWAY... Multitudes of the people born in the Millennium will reject Jesus as Savior. It's incredible. Nevertheless, we read in the Revelation,

Rev 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

Rev 20:8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

Rev 20:9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

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Rev 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Rev 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Perfect conditions on the earth... Utopia, as it were... Can *reform*, but not *transform*, the sinner.

Psa 146:10 The LORD shall reign forever - Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

Back to the present, but with a Kingdom perspective. The coming reign of the God of Jacob, of Zion, is assured. Not just for a thousand years, but "To infinity, and beyond."

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**A**fter the Millennium comes eternity. The apostle John wrote, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:1-2).

Jesus promised you, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

To which we with *Hallelujah's!* respond, **"There's no place like home."**

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