

June 16

Scriptures: Read Psalms 145 & 146

Key Verse: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised...”. (Psalm 145:3)

Overview

Psalm 145 is an acrostic poem that serves as an introduction to the final section of the psalter which is called the Hallelujah psalms (146-150). The theme of Psalm 145 is found in verse three (key verse). All the praises that the psalmist offers to God are because of His greatness. Although David rightly expresses that the totality of God’s greatness is unsearchable (Rom. 11:33), he does a wonderful job in searching it out and illustrating it. His remarkable insight, of course, came with the help of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration.

God’s greatness is to be greatly praised, which David does in every way possible. He desires his praises to God to be exemplary so that others may hear them and join him. He extols, blesses, meditates, declares, speaks, utters, talks, and every day makes known with his mouth the praises of the Lord (145:1,2,5,6,7,11,12,21). Who is more fitted to do so than the king whom the Great King had appointed as leader under Him? Praising the King of kings includes telling others of His mighty acts which have been personally experienced or which were experienced by others. David’s generation made an effort to tell God’s mighty deeds on behalf of the nation to the next generation. This was done through memory (oral transmission) and through singing songs (145:4, 7).

The greatness of God is further illustrated in His wonderful attributes of grace, compassion, slow to anger (long-suffering), and mercy (145:8). God is good and shows general grace to all His creation. Indeed, God sends the rain on the just and the unjust alike and all His creation depends on Him for life and only in Him can there be ultimate satisfaction (145:9, 15-16; Matt. 5:45). The created realm praises the Lord and the saints of God both praise and bless Him. To do this they must talk of His glory and power to all mankind, including the glories of His everlasting Kingdom (145:13).

When those who love and fear God cry out to Him, He will certainly be near and He will hear, save, and preserve them. In these very gracious and righteous works of God, His greatness is once again evident. Another righteous way of the Lord, however, is in bringing just punishment upon the wicked. God cannot tolerate evil. At the appointed time, He will abolish evil from the face of the earth and then all flesh will perform the duty for which they were created, namely to “bless His holy name forever and ever” (145:21).

The last five psalms of the psalter from a small collection called the “Hallelujah Psalms”. Since they are dedicated to praising the Lord, they all begin and end with the exclamation of “Hallelujah” (Praise Yahweh”). This is a wonderful and joyful note upon which to end the Book of Psalms. Although they are all similar, each one has a different emphasis.

In Psalm 146, the writer calls upon the congregation to praise the Lord and to show that he practices what he preaches. He vows that as long as he has breath, he will praise the Lord. He speaks from personal experience when he warns the people not to trust in princes (or noblemen,

a term commonly used of rich and powerful men), nor in any human being for help since they cannot be reliable. At any time a person could die, for life is so fragile. But the Lord “Who keeps truth forever” is eternal and all-powerful. Upon Him we can depend, and the one whose hope is in Him is happy. God never lets us down. He is called the “God of Jacob”, which implies that He loves and redeems the helpless sinner.

In the psalmist’s description of God, we can see that Jesus Christ on earth did these very things. He not only gave sight to the physically blinded and healed those who were “bowed down” (Matt. 9:30; Luke 13:30), but He also opened the eyes of the spiritually blinded and raised up those whose spirits were low, as He still does today. God’s compassion is the driving force which causes Him to give justice to the oppressed, food to the hungry, relief to the needy and protection to the traveler or the one lonely. Over and over again, we read of the loving-kindnesses of the Lord. This should reinforce to believers who desire to be like Jesus, that we too must show the compassion and love of God.

Prayer

Lord God, thank You for Your inspired Word which is a revelation of Yourself to us. Your greatness is made evident to us in so many ways, and we cannot help but praise You. May we always sense Your presence as You dwell in the midst of our praises.