

**PSALM 146**  
**CHRISTMAS: RELIEF AND BLESSINGS**

**Praise the LORD on Christmas!**

*Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!*

*While I live I will praise the LORD;*

*I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

All in all, Christmas is a great break in the routine and grind of life. This is not to deny that celebrating Christmas each year as we do brings its own routine and grind! Yet Christmas provides a little relief and happiness—even in the worldly sense—maybe a day off work, a day of special gatherings and feasting, a day of love and concern. But far greater in the spiritual sense. God has sent His Son Jesus to be our Savior, our Ace, to bring you Relief--peace with God in heaven. On Christmas we praise the LORD for all that He has done for us in this life, all with the goal of leading us safely to the next! Hallelujah! Praise the LORD!

**No Help Anywhere Else!**

*Do not put your trust in princes,*

*Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.*

*His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;*

*In that very day his plans perish.*

Apart from the LORD, there isn't much help--in fact no help--for the troubles of this life. You carry a load, don't you? Each has his own. Sometimes it may be a load that others have dumped on you and expect you to carry. Other times it may be a load that you put on yourself. There was a lady from whom we would get a long Christmas letter each year, written out by hand, as she did with all her cards. She felt it important to do so, for her own reasons. A heavy load! (Eventually she converted to a typed and photocopied letter.) Maybe your load is much more serious-- fixation with alcohol or other substances, marriage deviations, over-working to make a lot of the almighty dollar. Man-made loads to carry. Do not put your trust in man to alleviate these loads. Man-made solutions really go nowhere. Man dies and returns to the dirt. That's all we are--dirt! How much dirt do you like in your house, in your clothes, in your food, in your bed? And whatever good a man may seem to accomplish in this life, it is readily abused and misused by others. Guns, medicines, printed material, computers, photographs, etc. This world has a problem. Lord we need Relief; we need Christmas!

**The LORD Made It and Can Fix It!**

*Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,*

*Whose hope is in the LORD his God,*

*Who made heaven and earth,*

*The sea, and all that is in them;*

Our real help is in the Lord. There is no physical problem that He can't fix or take care of. He made this world and physical universe. He knows how to fix it. When King Amaziah of Judah thought he needed army help from his ungodly neighbors, he paid a grand sum of money to hire them. God told Amaziah to send them home, for He, God, would help them. Amaziah was concerned not just about the loss of help when they left but about the loss of the money he had already paid them! *"The man of God answered, the LORD is able to give you much more than this!" (II Chronicles 25:9).* God is the One who can help you solve every problem. What's the load you're carrying today? Is it something the "doctor" can fix, or the "lawyer" can fix? God does give us experts in various fields who help us. Use them! But do not think THEY do it. The LORD who made this world, and who sent His Son to fix the real problem, the sin-problem is the one we praise on Christmas Day. In ways you can't see, he brings Relief and blessings even from unpleasant weather in Christmas season.

### **The LORD's Actions Are in Truth and in Rescue!**

*[The LORD] Who keeps truth forever,*

*Who executes justice for the oppressed,*

*Who gives food to the hungry.*

*The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.*

*The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;*

*The LORD raises those who are bowed down;*

In His Truth, He lifts up those who need Relief. The word “relief” or “relieve” means “to lift up again,” “to lighten the load.” The LORD, in His Truth, lifts your load even this morning. What about “Truth?” When we think of “Truth,” we often think of Lie or No-Lie. Truth is much bigger than simply correct or incorrect information. Consider: If a gun barrel, or a 2x4, or a roadway is true; it is straight. If your vehicle is true, it is dependable. If a friend is true, he is reliable. If a judge is true, he acts with integrity and justice. The LORD in His actions is “True.” He never scorns the oppressed, or discards the hungry, or abandons the prisoners, or lets the blind stumble, or fails to lift the load of those who are burdened. He steps in to Rescue. That’s our joy at Christmas. We have Relief. Whatever physical, psychological, social, financial, or spiritual load under which you are groaning, He’s there to help. He is true. His help is true. He wants what’s best for you, not just in the short term, not just for this life, but for Heaven. On Christmas, know that the oppressive load of sin you carry, whether by deception, or by weakness, or foolishness, is all set aside by the Babe born at Bethlehem. He set aside His honor to alleviate your woes. He went to the cross and was abandoned by the Father into death because He loves you. He is TRUE. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). The Rescuing Lord is your Relief and Happiness on Christmas Day. You are spared!

### **The Righteous-in-His-Eyes Are Next to the LORD's Heart!**

*The LORD loves the righteous.*

*The LORD watches over the strangers;*

*He relieves the fatherless and widow;*

*The LORD loves the righteous.* As much as you want these words to be talking about you, are they? You try to do right, but do you? Are you good enough, so that the LORD loves you? The Bible says, *They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one (Psalm 14:2-3).* And again, *But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).* You are very un-righteous. BUT there is the righteousness that God gives through His Son. *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed . . . even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. (Romans 3:21-23).* Through faith in Jesus, God declares you Righteous! Imagine: You—righteous! In the eyes of God. That is the wonder and blessed relief in our hearts at Christmas! What Relief. We are strangers in this life. The world is not our real home. You are just travelers and pilgrims here. It’s comforting when in a strange and unfamiliar place, unsure of what to do or where to go—a big airport, a big city, a foreign country—and then someone takes you under their wing to guide and direct you. That’s the LORD on Christmas! You are close to His heart. He cares for you in love as if you are an orphan child. He cares for you as if you are a widow having suddenly been bereft of husband. He cares for you. Christmas joy, Christmas Relief in Jesus.

### **Dead End for the Wicked!**

*But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.*

Apart from Jesus, there is no hope, no help, no relief, no blessings---for eternity. All is lost. For them the road turns sharply, is crooked, blocked, and even turned upside down--if not in this life, then in the life to come. Life apart from God is a dead end street. On Christmas do not worry that the wicked seem to have it so good.

### **The LORD Reigns Forever!**

*The LORD shall reign forever—*

*Your God, O Zion, to all generations.*

*Praise the LORD!*

Jesus was born to give you relief. He died--to give you relief, He rose from the grave--to give you relief, He went back to heaven--to give you relief, He will return at the end of time--to give you relief. He is your LORD, the great “He Is,” who reaches out with His mighty arm to rescue you, lift you up, give you relief. He is the great King—the greatest King—born in Bethlehem. HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER! Here is real Relief and Blessing!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---