

Why Clinging to Psalm 146:3 Is America's Only Hope

In recent hours, the nation has witnessed the inauguration of our 45th president. Like all presidential inaugurations, the event should have elicited respect, new anticipation and a fresh feeling of patriotism. Unlike previous inaugurations, we've been dismayed by scenes of massive protests, needless violence and societal divide, unprecedented in our lifetime.

Still, many people of faith are announcing a new sense of hope for our nation based on the Christian leanings and conservative values of the new president and vice president. (I cannot vouch for President Trump, but I do know that Vice President Pence attends a solid Bible-preaching church led by a good friend and one of our key voices in The 6:4 Fellowship.)

The Bible makes it clear that all political leaders are worthy of our honor, faithful prayers and lawful cooperation. But, I fear that in the enthusiasm of the moment, we could be misplacing our confidence. This is a prime occasion to clarify and affirm the real object of our hope as followers of Jesus Christ.

A Paramount and Powerful Focus

After directing us to give passionate and life-long praise to God (vv. 1, 2), Psalm 146 instructs, "Do not put your trust in princes" (v. 3a). This is a clear command, followed by some powerful rationale. So while we pray for our elected officials and seek to exhibit a respectful, law-abiding and Christ-honoring life, we must embrace the truth that men are not the object of our hope. Here are the reasons:

Political leaders cannot save us from our deepest problems – Psalm 146 continues by clarifying that we do not place our

hope in leaders because, as politically great as they may seem, they are mere men “in whom there is no help” (v. 3b). Politicians can help solve a number of issues, but they cannot save us from sin – which is the source of our greatest problems of immorality, hatred, violence, family breakup and a myriad of other cultural ills.

The solutions of political leaders are temporary – The psalmist affirms the transient nature of every leader because “His breath leave him, and he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish” (v. 4). We’ve all witnessed the back-and-forth of political parties, the erasure of executive orders and the toppling of partisan influence.

Only hope in God provides ultimate and lasting help – “Blessed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (v. 5). Meditate on this powerful promise of blessing. Consider a similar teaching passage in Psalm 20, which is a prayer for David the king of Israel. In that intercessory psalm, we find these words: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” (Ps. 20:7). Certainly this an affirmation that King David must trust in God above any political or military prowess. It is also a reminder to the people of that day, and to us, that our hope is not in a king or political system but in the “name of the Lord our God.”

He is our ultimate hope because He created us – The creator and designer of any object or system has the best insight as to how to fix the problems of his creation. Our God is the one “who made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (v. 6a), and He alone has the ultimate power and wisdom to solve the deepest problems of mankind.

He is our ultimate hope because He alone is faithful – Our God “keeps faithfulness forever” (v. 6b). As another version states, “He always keeps his promises” (GNT). Unlike many politicians, God’s word is sure, reliable and unchanging. All

His promises are “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:20).

He is our ultimate hope because His justice is perfect – Our God “executes justice for the oppressed” (v. 7a). His decrees and discernment about any issues or needs are all-wise and all-good.

He is our ultimate help because He is a sufficient provider – Our God “gives food to the hungry” (7b). He knows the needs of humanity and has the power to provide for their needs. He wills to do this through His church.

He is our ultimate hope because He brings true freedom – “The Lord releases the prisoners” (v. 7c). Countless individuals in our society are enslaved, addicted and in bondage. The power of Christ’s gospel is the great truth that can make them free indeed (John 8:32,36).

He is our ultimate hope because He heals our blindness – “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind” (v. 8a). In a world blind to truth, love and grace, only the gospel can ultimately remedy our spiritual darkness.

He is our ultimate hope because He raises up the oppressed – “The Lord raises those who are bowed down” (v. 8b). Millions are discouraged, depressed and hopeless. They need the life-changing and enduring good news of Christ.

He is our ultimate hope because He is always right – “The Lord loves the righteous” (v. 8c). The right living that “exalts a nation” (Proverbs 14:34) comes only from a righteous God who has the power to make hearts truly righteous by the power of the cross.

He is our ultimate hope because He provides for the strangers – He gives his people, the church, divine wisdom and compassion to respond to those who come into our nation, looking for hope because “the Lord preserves the sojourners”

(v. 9a).

He is our ultimate hope because He cares for the disadvantaged – He alone calls and empowers His church to practice “true religion” (James 1:27) because He “lifts up the fatherless and widow” (v. 9b).

He is our ultimate hope because He destroys wickedness – As we see the acceleration of evil in our society, we preach the good news while still knowing that ultimately “on the way of the wicked He brings disaster” (v. 9c). The gospel of our risen Lord ultimately wins.

He is our ultimate hope because His reign is eternal – “The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, unto all generations” (v. 10a). He will never be dethroned, impeached or diminished in any way by popularity polls. He is “the eternal, immortal, invisible King, the only wise God,” and to Him alone we give “honor and glory forever” (1 Tim. 1:17).

Let's Just Praise the Lord!

So regardless of our political affiliation or our feelings about the state of affairs in our nation—let us put our hope in Christ! When we do this, we can begin and end each day declaring like the Psalmist – with firm conviction and abounding confidence—“Praise the Lord!” (vv. 1, 2, 10c). {eo}

Copyright ©2017 Daniel Henderson. All rights reserved. As a senior pastor for over two decades, Daniel brought prayer-based revitalization to several mega-churches. Today he is dedicating his full-time efforts to help congregations across the country experience renewal and turn-around as he speaks to thousands each year at conferences and prayer events. He is president of Strategic Renewal, which exists to ignite personal renewal, congregational revival and leadership restoration for Christ's glory.