

Psalms 111:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

Analysis

This verse opens with the emphatic call 'Praise ye the LORD' (Hallelujah), establishing the psalm's theme. The psalmist then makes a personal declaration: 'I will praise the LORD with my whole heart.' The phrase 'with my whole heart' (Hebrew 'be-khol-levav') signifies complete, undivided devotion - not partial or half-hearted worship. This internal disposition ('heart') manifests externally ('I will praise'). The location of this praise is significant: 'in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.' Two terms describe the gathered community - 'the assembly' (Hebrew 'sod') often means intimate council or fellowship, while 'congregation' ('edah') refers to the formal gathered assembly. The psalmist's worship moves from personal resolve to corporate expression. This reflects the biblical pattern that genuine faith naturally seeks community. Personal devotion to God is not privatized but expressed within the covenant community where mutual encouragement and witness occur.

Historical Context

Psalms 111 is an acrostic psalm, with each line beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, demonstrating careful literary craftsmanship likely intended to aid memorization. This structure was common in Hebrew wisdom and worship literature (Psalms 25, 34, 119). The emphasis on corporate worship reflects Israel's covenant community structure. After the exodus, Israel gathered regularly for festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles) where corporate praise and remembrance occurred. The 'assembly of the upright' may refer to the

congregation of faithful Israelites distinct from the wicked. In post-exilic Judaism, the synagogue became the local 'congregation' for Torah reading and prayer. The emphasis on wholehearted praise before the community serves as mutual accountability and encouragement. This verse would have been recited in temple or synagogue worship, where individuals brought their personal devotion into the gathered assembly. The combination of personal commitment ('I will') and communal setting reflects the balance between individual faith and corporate identity in biblical religion.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to praise God 'with my whole heart,' and what divides our hearts from this wholehearted devotion?
2. Why is corporate worship in 'the assembly' and 'congregation' essential rather than merely optional?
3. How does personal resolution to praise God ('I will') relate to participation in gathered worship?
4. What is the relationship between private devotion and public testimony in genuine worship?
5. In what ways does worshipping among 'the upright' provide both encouragement and accountability?

Interlinear Text

הַ לְלוֹ	יְהוָה	אֶפְסֵה	יְהוָה	בְּכָל	לִבִּי ב
Praise	ye the LORD	I will praise	the LORD	H3605	with my whole heart
H1984	H3050	H3034	H3068		H3824
בְּסֹד	יִשְׁרָיִם	וְעֵדָה:			
in the assembly	of the upright	and in the congregation			
H5475	H3477	H5712			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 138:1 (Resurrection): I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

Psalms 109:30 (Resurrection): I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

Psalms 149:1 (Resurrection): Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

Psalms 35:18 (Resurrection): I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

Psalms 89:5 (Resurrection): And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

Psalms 106:1 (Resurrection): Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 89:7 (Parallel theme): God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Psalms 22:25 (Resurrection): My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

Psalms 108:3 (Resurrection): I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

Psalms 106:48 (Resurrection): Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

