

Psalm 116:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

Analysis

I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. Having been delivered, the psalmist fulfills commitments made during crisis. **I will pay my vows** (nedarai ashalem, נְדָרֵי אֲשָׁלֵם) refers to promises made to God, likely during the death-threat described in verses 3-4. Ancient worshipers often vowed offerings if God delivered them (Genesis 28:20-22, Numbers 30:2, Jonah 2:9).

Unto the LORD now (la-Yahweh negdah-na, לְיַהְוֵה נֶגְדָּה-נָא) emphasizes immediate, public fulfillment. Negdah means 'in front of,' 'before,' indicating visible, corporate worship. Na adds urgency: 'now,' 'please,' no delay. Vows weren't private mental notes but public, binding commitments requiring public fulfillment.

In the presence of all his people (neged kol-amo, נֶגֶד כָּל-עַמּוֹ) situates vow-paying within covenant community. Worship isn't merely individual devotion but corporate testimony. When one member fulfills vows, the whole community sees God's faithfulness, strengthening collective faith. This anticipates Hebrews 10:24-25, exhorting believers not to forsake assembling together.

Historical Context

Temple worship included public vow fulfillment. Worshipers brought promised sacrifices (peace offerings, thank offerings) and testified to God's deliverance. These testimonies strengthened community faith and taught subsequent generations. The Hallel psalms were corporate liturgy, sung together at Passover.

Individual testimony ('I will pay my vows') merged with corporate worship ('in the presence of all his people'). This pattern continues in Christian worship where personal testimonies of God's faithfulness build up the body of Christ.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What vows or commitments have you made to God during crisis, and have you fulfilled them after deliverance?
2. Why is public, corporate worship essential for vow fulfillment rather than private, individual practice alone?
3. How does hearing others testify to God's faithfulness ('paying vows' publicly) strengthen your own faith?

Interlinear Text

לְכָל־בָּהֶן אֶתֶּן־לְךָ אֲשֶׁר־מֵתָּה
my vows unto the LORD I will pay
H5088 H3068 H7999 H5048 H4994 H3605

עַתָּה:

now in the presence of all his people
H5971

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 116:18 (References Lord): I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

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

Jonah 2:9 (References Lord): But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

Psalms 56:12 (Parallel theme): Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

Psalms 50:14 (Parallel theme): Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Matthew 5:33 (References Lord): Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

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