

Psalm 116:18

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 (נְדָרֵי לְיִהְוָה אֲשָׁלָם, nedarai la-YHWH ashallem)—Neder means vow, promise; shalam means pay, fulfill, complete. **Now in the presence of all his people** (תְּגִדְּהַנָּא לְכָל־עַמּוֹן, negdah-na le-khol-ammo)—Naged means before, in front of, in the presence of.

Psalm 116 is a thanksgiving psalm for deliverance from death (vv. 3-8). David vowed something during distress and now publicly fulfills it. Vow-paying was done at the temple with sacrifices (Leviticus 7:16, 22:21). The public nature matters—testimony strengthens community faith. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 warns against making vows carelessly: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it... Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

Historical Context

Israelite vows typically involved sacrifices or service pledges made during crises. Hannah vowed her son to temple service (1 Samuel 1:11). Jacob vowed tithes at Bethel (Genesis 28:20-22). The temple courts hosted vow-fulfillment ceremonies where individuals testified to God's deliverance while offering sacrifices.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What vows or promises have you made to God during times of distress?
2. Why is public fulfillment of vows important rather than private compliance?
3. How does the warning in Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 shape your approach to making spiritual commitments?

Interlinear Text

לְכָל־בָּעֵד אֲשֶׁר־לִיהְיוֹן בְּעֵדִי
my vows unto the LORD I will pay
H5088 H3068 H7999 H5048 H4994 H3605

עַמּוֹ:

now in the presence of all his people

H5971

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 116:14 (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.

Psalms 76:11 (References Lord): Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.