

Part 4 – Hear and Fear the Lord

In part 3 we learned that it is befitting for us to bless our Heavenly Father. And we do so by loving, trusting in and obeying Him *wholeheartedly*. Yet, we also do so by praising His mighty and holy name, which also means sharing the truth (even the Gospel) with others, as the opportunities arise. And we also learned that, when we love, trust and obey our Heavenly Father, He not only protects us, but also makes sure that we don't fall back to habitually sinning (rebellious against Him) again. Though we all fall short and sin at times, His chastisements (so long as we don't harden our hearts to them) will help us not to go back to Satan's rebellion. And that's why the Psalmist began to speak about God's chastisements. And he used a really good analogy to explain it. For just as silver has to be heated up *really* hot (in fire) in order to get the 'slag' (i.e. 'dross') out (which is the useless junk), so too do we need to go through hard times in order to get the sin out of our heart and mind. Hard times not only cleans us but also make us humbler and help our faith (and trust) in our Heavenly Father to grow. They also help us become stronger; teaching us how to be 'can do' type people – i.e. NOT wimps! And, this analogy of cleansing people as silver can also be applied to nations too. Which is why the Psalmist then went on to point out how God allowed Israel to be enslaved or subdued by heathen nations (at times) but He always liberated them once they'd had their 'dross' (or 'slag') cleansed. And, we'll now pick up with Psalmist speaking of 'paying his vows', which includes the 'praise promised' part of the Psalm...

Psalm 66

13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

When the Psalmist says he'll go into God's 'house', he is referring to the Temple of God. However, ordinary people were not actually allowed to actually go *into* the house; they could only go to the *door* of the tabernacle when giving their sacrifices to God (Lev 1:1-5). Only the Levites, who were of Aaron's seed line, were allowed to actually go *into* the Tabernacle/Temple of God and that was to minister to Him (Ex 28:1). So, the Psalmist either means that he'll go to the door of God's house, or he is actually in the priesthood. And the words '**burnt offerings**' are one Hebrew word that means **ascending** as stairs do and is even called a **holocaust** due to the *going up of the smoke from the burnt offerings* (#5930). In the study, **The Different Blood Sacrifices and What they Mean to Us Today** [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1094>], we learned that the "**burnt offering**" was to be without blemish and a **voluntary offering** (Lev 1:3) where the *entire animal* was burnt in fire (Ex 29:19). **There was no thought of sin in this offering but it was given out of love and devotion to God.** It is thus symbolic of the way God wants to be **worshiped**, for He wants our *total devotion* and wants it to be *voluntary*. And, **because it was voluntary, it was a 'sweet savor' to God** (Lev 1:9). Lev 1 explains how the animal for a burnt offering had a particular order it was to be cut up and laid onto the fire, which teaches us a lot through symbolism, for it explains how God wants us to **approach Him in prayer**. Just as the

animal was to be cut open and its innards taken out, washed and carefully laid on the altar... so too are we to ‘spill our guts’ to God in prayer, allow His Spirit and Word to cleanse us (John 15:3) and lay our desires (will) on the altar to Him (thus submitting to His will for us). He wants us to sincerely look inside at our thoughts, intents, emotions and actions. We must be willing dissect our own mind and soul (and cut out any sins we see) and allow God’s Holy Spirit to spiritually burn us with conviction, just as the animal was dissected and then wholly burnt in fire. Thus, with the burnt offering ***nothing is held back nor reserved for oneself***. This indeed is how God wants us to worship Him -sincerely, ***unselfishly and with truth in our heart and mind*** (John 4:23-24).

So, this ‘burnt offering’ is very much in line with what this (and the past few) Psalms have been teaching us. Which is that our Heavenly Father *truly* wants our ‘inward worship’ *much more* than our ‘outward worship’. Which brings up another point. While back in the days these Psalms were written, they were *supposed* to offer animal sacrifices, we are not to do so today. As Col 2:14 and Eph 2:15 explain, when Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He fulfilled *all* the blood sacrifices, rituals and ordinances, just as He said He would in Mth 5:17. And Heb 10:10 also reiterates this, pointing out that Jesus’ dying on the cross once, was enough to pay for our sins *for all times*. So, His death on the cross pays for our sins ‘once and for all’ – i.e. forever. So, we should not (less we be blasphemous) offer any blood sacrifices anymore; doing so is telling God that you don’t believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah – that you don’t think Jesus was holy and without sin and able to pay for our sins... so we definitely do not (in any way, shape or form) want to offer blood sacrifices anymore... not ever. As such, we should also not support anyone else doing so, for that is also blasphemous to our Heavenly Father and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, with that said, in the latter part of this 13th verse (here in Ps 66), the Psalmist declares that he will pay God his vows. The word ‘**pay**’ means (in the context of this verse) ***to be completed*** (#7999) and, of course, the word ‘**vow**’ means (in the context of this verse) ***a promise to God*** (#5088). And this is very important. As Num 30:2 says, *if a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth*. And then Deut 23:21-22 says: *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee*. Now, even today people often ‘swear by God’ to prove they really mean what they say. And, at certain times this is not bad. Such as if you are swearing to tell the truth in a court case or swearing to uphold the Law when being sworn in a governmental office, or in the military. So, there are times this is needed because people should swear to God that they will do something that is very serious; such as protecting our nation, governing it or in court cases where justice is on the line. But, in normal everyday life, swearing shouldn’t be the norm. Yet, back in the days before Jesus Christ came, it was a common thing for people to make a vow to God when asking for His help with something (i.e. Judges 11:30-40). And they apparently did so at times they felt like they *really* needed God’s help, and thought vowing was a way to ‘secure’ His help. And, as we’ve often seen in these Psalms, people also swore to praise our Heavenly Father, something

David was very faithful to do. So, the Psalmist here (of chapter 66 in the Psalms) is promising that he will not break His Word, he will fulfill all His vows. Which is as it should be. But again, we should be really be careful about making vows. It should not be done lightly. And, as Jesus taught us in Matt 5:33-37 (and Eccl 5:4-5 and James 5:12 reiterate), we really shouldn't swear (make vows) at all to our Heavenly Father, nor should we swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem or even our own head. If we need God's help we should simply ask Him in prayer (in Jesus' name, of course - John 14:13-14, John 15:17, John 16:23-26) for help. And simply explain *why* you need help and remind Him of the promises He has made you (Isa 43:26). If you are not doing 'your part' needed to obtain His help (seeking, trusting and obeying Him), He will help you see your sins and faults, if you are really sincerely seeking Him. However, if you are doing 'your part' needed to obtain His promises, then *He will indeed help you*. There's no need to make promises or vows to Him because, as Jesus pointed out in Mth 5, sometimes we can't fulfill our obligations no matter how sincere we were when we made the promise. So, simply say 'yes' or 'no' and leave it at that. And if you are praying to God, simply ask Him for help wholeheartedly. He knows when you really need help and if you are really sincere. There's no need to try and bribe Him into helping you by making vows! But, back in the days these Psalms were written, vows were pretty common and so people often did so when they were in very serious (such as a life threatening) situations. And, apparently this Psalmist had done so, which is why he promises to pay God his vows, which he will continue on to speak of in the next verse...

Psalm 66

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

And now we see more details given about the 'vow' the Psalmist made; he apparently promised to offer burnt offerings to the Lord (YHVH) in return for God's helping him with his trouble (vs 13-14). However, parts of this translation is a bit hard to understand. The *Moffet Bible* renders this verse as: "***fat beasts I will offer thee, the odorur of burning rams, bullocks and goats in sacrifice***". And, when it says burnt sacrifices (which is the same Hebrew word as burnt offerings back in verse 13) of fatlings, it's speaking of the *best* of the herd/flock, as was commanded by the law (Lev 1:3,10, 3:1,6, etc.). So, the Psalmist promised not to give the skinny, sickly or blemished animals but the healthiest, fattest and totally 'without spot'... even the ones that would make good breeding stock. This implies that the trouble the Psalmist was in (vs 14) was pretty serious. And the words 'incense of rams' is actually speaking of (as *Moffet's* translation shows) the *odor* of the burning rams, which God considers to be a 'sweet savor' (Lev 1:9, 13, 17, etc.). Our Heavenly Father saw the burnt offerings as an act of love and thus considered it to be as 'sweet incense'. And then we see that there are three animals that the Psalmist promised to offer when he was 'in trouble' (vs 14). The fact that he offers *so much* also implies that his trouble was quite serious and that he was deeply grateful for his prayer to be answered.

But, we should always remember, our Heavenly Father does not want any animals sacrificed now, because Jesus Christ has already fulfilled **all** those sacrifices *once and for all* when He died on the cross (Heb 10:10). As Ps 40:6-8 points out, what our Heavenly Father *really* wants from us is to have His Law in our heart so that we 1) know *how* to obey Him and 2) *want* to obey Him. So, He simply wants us to humbly obey Him, from the heart. That's what He desires much more than any animal sacrifices. As Rom 12:1 says, we should be a 'living sacrifice' by living our life to fulfil God's Will, not our own (1 Pt 4:1-2). And that means to share God's Word whenever you get the chance to do so (Eph 5:15-16, Col 4:5-6) as well as to use our God given gift(s) for Him as well (Mth 25:14-30).

Now, this verse also ends with a 'selah', which always means to 'stop and think' about what has been said (vs 13-15) with what is about to be said (vs 16). So, it connects the Psalmist fulfilling his vow to offer burnt offerings to the Lord (YHWH) with His vow to praise and honor God with his lips. The *Companion Bible* also points out that the 'selah' also connects verse 5 (which said to 'come and see') with the next verse (16, which will say 'come and hear'), which the outline of the chapter in the *Companion Bible* shows...

Psalm 66

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

Now the Psalmist calls for all those who 'fear' (and revere, #3373) God (#430, Elohiym) to come and 'hear' (with attention, #8085) so he can 'declare' (recount, celebrate #5608) all that God has done for his soul (his self, #5315). So basically, the Psalmist is testifying to God's power and wonderful works that he has personally experienced. While earlier in the Psalm, he testified what God had done for His people, Israel, he's now testifying what God has done for him *personally*. And, this is really quite natural because our personal witness (at the right time, not trying to force it on others) can be quite convincing. When we have personally experienced God's amazing grace, abundant mercy, compassion and lovingkindness then those who do not yet believe in Him are more inclined to listen. So, even though the Psalmist is calling for those who do fear (and revere) God to listen to him, it's also befitting to share your experiences with unbelievers, *with discernment*, which means when you discern when someone is actually interested in hearing what you have to say. Otherwise, it usually is not received very well. As Peter advises us in 1 Peter 3:15, we should *and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...*

Psalm 66

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

The word '**cried**' here doesn't mean to weep but rather, **to call out to** (#7121) and the word '**extolled**' is actually two Hebrew words. One of which means *to raise* (#7311) and the other

means **exaltation** or **praise** (#7318). The *Moffet Bible's* translation is quite helpful on this verse. It renders it as: “*no sooner had I called to Him than I was praising Him for answering me*”. So, the Psalmist apparently had gotten an answer to his prayers very quickly and he did indeed keep his vows of making sacrifices and praising God. He must have been deeply grateful for God's help. And this is certainly understandable! As David wrote in Ps 18:2-3: *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.* Our Heavenly Father truly is the only one we can count on in times of distress. While good friends and family, who can be trusted, are a blessing from God, they don't replace our Heavenly Father. Only He can help us out of **all** of our troubles. As 1 Cor 10:13 promises, so long as we remain firmly committed to Him, He won't let us be tested or tempted above which we are able to endure or resist. He'll always give us the strength and understanding we need to make it through the hard times. So long as we don't forsake Him, He'll never forsake us!

Psalm 66

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Now this is a very important verse that we should never forget. And notice how the Psalmist changes from using God's 'title' of **Elohiym** (#430) - which means our *Creator* and the *Supreme* God – to using God's *Sacred* Name. Unfortunately, if you look this word 'Lord' up in the *Strong's Concordance*, it will show the word 'Lord' here as '*Adonay*' (#136) but the *Companion Bible* points out that this is one of 134 places where God's Sacred Name was altered by the ancient custodians (Sopherim) out of mistaken reverence for God's Sacred Name. So, the word 'Lord' really is God's Sacred Name **Yehovah** (#3068), which means (the) *self-Existent* or *Eternal*. While 'Elohim is God as the Creator of all things, Yehovah is the same God in covenant relation to those whom He has created. And the reason the Psalmist changes from **Elohiym** (#430) to **Yehovah** (#3068) is because, those who do regard iniquity in their heart are not doing 'their part' to keep the covenant with God. The word '**regard**' means *to see* (#7200) and the word '**iniquity**' means *vanity* or *wickedness* and specifically refers to **idolatry** (#205). If we have idols in our heart (Ezek 14) then there's no room for God's Law, which is what we *should* have in our heart (Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10, 10:16). In other words, if we want the Lord (YHVH) to hear (and answer, #8085) our prayers, we *must* be willing to hear Him (Prov 1:22-33). That means we must study God's Word and sincerely try to kick our sins out – not keep lustful (or other sinful) desires and thoughts in our heart (desires, emotions, intentions, motivations). Again, the *Moffett Bible's* translation is enlightening on this verse, for it renders it as: '*Had I been thinking secretly of sin, the Lord would never have listened to me*', which is why the Psalmist goes on to say...

Psalm 66

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Interestingly, the Psalmist goes back to using **Elohiym** (#430) - which means our *Creator* and the *Supreme* God. So, because the Psalmist was doing His part to keep a covenantal relationship with our Heavenly Father, his prayers were heard by our Creator, who is the Supreme God. If we feel our prayers are not being heard, we should always do some self-examining to see if we're really being sincere with God or if there's some 'secret sin' we are hiding in our heart. Now, there really are no 'secret sins' with God because He can see what's in our heart and mind (1 Chron 28:9, 1 Kings 8:39, Ps 11:4-5, Prov 5:21, Ps 44:20-21, Ps 90:8, 1 Cor 3:20, Heb 4:12, Rom 8:26-27, 1 John 3:20-21; Heb 4:12-13). But, we can fool ourselves into thinking we are righteous. As Prov 16:2 says, *all the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits*. So, we all have a tendency to overlook our sins but see them very clearly within others (Mth 7:3-5). But, if we have examined our inner man (heart and mind) and don't see any sins we have not repented for, then we should pray again to our Heavenly Father. As Isa 43:26 says, our Heavenly Father wants us to come to Him and humbly ask for help. And if we are not getting an answer, then be forthright with Him and tell Him you think you are doing 'your part' in keeping the covenant with Him. If there's something you need to change, or repent of, the Holy Spirit will help you to see it, especially if you keep studying His Word (Heb 4:12). But if not, then perhaps you just need to be patient. Our Heavenly Father will always help us, one way or another. It might not be in the way we were expecting or when we'd like, but He'll always help us, as this Psalmist is testifying. Jesus gave us a really good parable about this...

*1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, **that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;***
2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
*7 And **shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?***
*8 I tell you that **he will avenge them speedily.** Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*
 Luke 18:1-8

This parable teaches us that we won't always get an 'answer' when we'd like one, or in the way we are expecting (or wanting). But, if we remain humble and continue to ask (making sure we're keeping our part of the covenant with God to seek, trust and obey Him wholeheartedly) then He will *always* help us. And when He does decide to do so, His vengeance upon our enemies can be

quite speedily and severe. And, an earlier chapter in the Gospel of Luke also gives us some more helpful information concerning this...

*9 And I say unto you, **Ask**, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you.*

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

*13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: **how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?***

Luke 11:9-13

When we have children, we enjoy giving them ‘good gifts’. And our Heavenly Father loves to do so to us, as well. But, He’s not going to give us something we ask for if it will hurt us. For example, having a lot of money might very well corrupt our spirit (1 Tim 6) so, unless we can handle it (and will use it for His will, not our lusts) then He won’t give us a lot of money. But, Jesus also told us that we should ‘ask’, ‘seek’, and ‘knock’ as well. As verse 8 says: *For every one that asketh **receiveth**; and he that seeketh **findeth**; and to him that knocketh it shall be **opened***. This means, we should not only be asking Him in prayer but also seeking the answers *through His Word*. And **if** we do *diligently* study His Word to find the answers (2 Tim 2:15) and we still don’t have an answer, then we should ‘knock’ and ‘it shall be opened’. But, what does that mean? The word ‘**knock**’ in the Greek means **to rap** (#2925). And while we usually think of this in terms of rapping on a door with our hand, the word ‘rap’ actually has a quite insightful (yet less known) meaning: as a transitive verb it can mean **to talk freely and frankly to someone**. And to be ‘frank’ with someone means to speak with *free, forthright, and sincere* expression. So, to be able to ‘knock’ on our Heavenly Father’s heart – i.e. to get Him to open His heart to us and help us – we must speak freely, honestly, sincerely and without guile, as well as humbly. And that means we must also be open to what He has to say to us.

And that’s essentially what God said in Isa 43:26 when telling us to ‘put Him in remembrance’ of His promises so He knows we’re sincerely trying to ‘claim’ His promises by obeying Him. And He promises, when we do this (ask, seek and knock – and stick with it in prayer) that He’ll give us more of His Holy Spirit to help us through the problems we’re having. As Paul explained in his second letter to the Corinthians, God gave him a ‘thorn in the flesh’, which was a ‘messenger of Satan’ to keep Paul humble, because he had been taken to the ‘third heaven’ (paradise) where he heard ‘*unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*’. But, this ‘thorn in the flesh’ really bothered Paul. So much so that he asked three times for the Lord to remove it from him. Yet, God simply said that: *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in*

weakness. In other words, God knew Paul needed something to keep him humble and the Lord promised to help Paul despite this ‘thorn in the flesh’ – so that Paul would know that the mighty things God did through Paul were *because of the Holy Spirit within him*, not because of his own ‘greatness’. And Paul responded to this by saying: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: **for when I am weak, then am I strong*** (2 Cor 12:2-10). So, there might even be times our Heavenly Father will not at all answer our prayers because He does not want to. But, as with Paul, it will be for our benefit. And we should continue to trust and obey Him, wholeheartedly, just as Paul did. Despite our weaknesses, we’ll be able to serve our Heavenly Father because of the Holy Spirit within us (Rom 8:26). But, this Psalmist did receive a quick answer from God and that’s why he went on to write...

Psalm 66

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

As 2 Thess 3:3 says, *the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil*. And 1 Cor 10:13 also promises that *there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it* (1 Cor 10:13). So, no matter what our problems are, there’s nothing we won’t be able to endure when we have the Holy Spirit in us. As David told his son, Solomon, shortly before he took the throne: *know thou the God of thy father; and **serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind**: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: **if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever*** (1 Chron 28:9). Again, so long as we don’t forsake our Heavenly Father, He’ll never forsake us!

Psalm 66

To the chief Musician on Neg'-i-noth

Now, this great Psalm ends with a ‘subtitle’ we’ve seen several times before in our studies in the Psalms. So, by now we know that the words ‘*To the chief Musician*’ means ‘*to He that **has** the victory*’ or ‘*to He that **gives** the victory*’ – which, of course, is Jesus Christ (apx 64). And we’ve also learned that the word ‘Neginoth’ means ‘smittings’ as in to **strike** or **smite**. And, in all of the Psalms that have this subtitle, it denotes deliverance from some *personal* ‘smiting’ (i.e. Ps 3:2, 5:6, 53:1, 54:3, 60:3,5,11, 66:10-12 and 75:4-5). So, ‘Neginoth’ also refers to God’ smiting the wicked ones with words *and* acts. That’s why, in chapter 3, in response to people who told David that God wouldn’t help him during Absalom’s rebellion (vs 2), David called for the Lord (YHVH) to ‘smite’ them on their cheek bones and crush the teeth of the ungodly (vs 7). And then in chapter 5, in response to those who spoke falsehoods (vs 6) and flattered lies with their tongues (vs 9), David called upon God to destroy them and bring to nought the wicked counsels

of those who rebelled against Him (vs 10). And then in chapter 53, we saw God's response to the depravity of the fool (vs 1), and 'eating up' His people as 'bread' (vs 4), was that He promised to 'smite' them with great fear (vs 5), scatter their bones (vs 5) and put them to shame (vs5) because they have truly despised HIM in their persecution His innocent children, *especially* those who love and fear Him. And then in chapter 54, we saw God's response to the profane ones who were unjustly seeking to David (vs 4) was to reward evil to them by cutting them off, even from life itself (vs 5) as happened to Saul. And then in chapter 60 we saw David's assurance that Israel (who was being smitten by the Edomites in Joab's southern campaign) would do valiantly *because* the Lord would help them (eventually) tread down their enemies (vs 11-12). And now in this chapter (Ps 66) we saw how the Lord's 'smiting' Israel with chastisements was for their own good, to clean (purify) their inner man. And even though the Psalmist was having some personal smiting's (vs14), he too was delivered (vs 17-19) because he sincerely called upon God for help and had a sincere (clean) heart.

So, the 'common theme' of all the 'Niginoth' Psalms (Ps 3, 5, 53, 54, 60, 66, 75 and Hab 3) is that our Heavenly Father WILL 'smite' the wicked ones for their evil persecutions of God's innocent, and righteous children, in one way or another. And we must remember this truth because the spiritual war is about to get *really* hot. And we *need* to know how to overcome the wicked ones, who are not truly seeking to kill our flesh body, but our very *soul*...

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

*10 And **they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.***

Ps 9:9-10

AMEN.