

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXI. Livelihood Provisions And Revering God
(Psalm 111:1-10)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, livelihood needs are great and growing at all levels:

(1) In our own state, "(m)ore than 460,000 Connecticut residents struggle with food insecurity, and more than 112,000 of those are children, according to estimates from Feeding America. People of color are disproportionately likely to experience food insecurity." ("Connecticut delayed in giving our summer grocery benefit for kids," Republican-American, June 27, 2024, p. 7A)

(2) Middle class and upper middle class people often face livelihood stress, too: Recently, a Connecticut company that hires lots of engineers for a NASA contract it landed was found to have badly underbid the contract, so many of its engineers are suddenly without pay as the company has stopped participating in the program!

(3) At the state level, "Connecticut badly needs more housing to reduce the cost of living," but "more housing means more traffic, more children to educate, more strain on municipal facilities, more municipal expense, and potentially more people who cause trouble or can't or won't support themselves." (Chris Powell, "'Fair share' won't persuade suburbs on more housing," Ibid., June 18, 2024, p. 6A)

(4) Livelihood needs affect our nation and many other countries: (a) America, "with an aging population, increasing life expectancy, declining birthrate and entitlements transferring trillions of dollars from employees to retirees, needs lots of legal immigrants to replenish its workforce." (George Will, "On immigration, the too-little-too-late president strikes again," Ibid., June 10, 2024, p. 8A) Enter President Biden's illegal open border policy where migrants facing livelihood stress in their homelands have "headed north . . . (m)any . . . for cities that . . . progressives had declared 'sanctuaries' . . . (Ibid) However, many years "of failed poverty and failed urban policies" like President Biden's immigration policy "have turned" such "cities into concentration camps for the poor and profit centers for the government class, thereby prompting the flight of the middle class to the suburbs." (Ibid., Powell) (b) Besides, the "Biden administration" with its "disastrous open-border policies" has turned "the U. S. labor market into a temporary employment agency for foreigners, leaving American workers behind," and (c) "runaway inflation over the last several years has caused a cost-of-living crisis, requiring many workers to supplement their income with additional work." (E. J. Antoni, "Job market looks good – if you ignore what's really going on," Ibid., June 26, 2004, p. 6A)

(5) If workers leave the crises in the cities for the suburbs, they face other livelihood issues: (a) "(M)ost American homeowners are still sitting on ultralow rates. So while the average interest rate on new mortgages more than doubled between September 2021 and September 2023, the average rate on all outstanding mortgages increased by only a few tenths of a percent," so many homeowners do not want to sell and take on another mortgage for another home with today's higher rates, and that in turn drives up home prices for buyers. (Megan McArdle, "What any economist will tell you (but no Realtor will)," Ibid., June 22, 2024, p. 6A) (b) So, if a prospective homebuyer reacts to the pricey housing market by renting, he leaves himself vulnerable to long-term hardship: a life-long renter will always see his rent rate rise, even in retirement when he is left living off of a fixed income, where one who buys a house at a fixed cost at a fixed loan rate and pays it off leaves himself with only property taxes and upkeep costs.

Need: *So, we ask, "How should we respond to escalating livelihood needs that we face in today's world?"*

- I. **Psalm 111:1-9 praised the Lord for His mighty works "which manifest His power, righteousness, truth, and justice (vv. 2-9) . . ." (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 111)**
- II. **Only two specific examples are named in the psalm of God's works in Israel's behalf, and they both have to do with God's extensive LIVELIHOOD provisions for Israel throughout her history, Psalm 111:5-6:**
 - A. The Lord had many times marvelously provided for Israel's **food** needs, Psalm 111:5:
 1. God had provided "meat" (KJV), the Hebrew noun *terep*, "prey, food" (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 383) for those who revered Him in keeping with His Abrahamic Covenant, Psalm 111:5.
 2. God's provision of this *terep* occurred in multiple times of great need for Israel's people in history:
 - a. When Abram first entered the Promised Land of Canaan only to face a famine there, he had gone to Egypt where the Lord had graciously arranged for Pharaoh to give Abram much livestock, Genesis 20:10-20.
 - b. When the five city-state kings invaded the Jordan Valley cities and captured Abram's nephew Lot and his family, God enabled Abram to defeat these kings and take great spoil from them, Genesis 14:1-24.

- c. When Abraham's son Isaac faced a famine in Canaan, God told him not to go to Egypt, for He would meet his needs in Canaan, so Isaac stayed and God met his needs as He had promised, Genesis 26:1-12.
 - d. When Isaac's son Jacob and his sons faced a severe famine in Canaan, God sent Jacob's son Joseph ahead into Egypt to be a great leader there and to supply grain there to preserve Jacob's family, Gen. 37:1-50:22.
 - e. When God brought Israel up out of Egypt in the Exodus, He miraculously provided manna for them for each day for 40 years until they entered Canaan and began to eat of its food there (Ex. 16:1-35; Jos. 5:12).
 - f. Upon entering Canaan, God gave Israel victory over the Canaanites so they could seize as prey the food of the land once inhabited by their defeated foes! (Numbers 21:10-35; 32:1-42; Joshua 5:10-21:45)
- B. The Lord had also marvelously supplied Israel with **material provisions** to **sustain her livelihood**, Psa. 111:6:
- 1. God had provided Israel the "heritage" (KJV) of the Gentiles, the word "heritage" being translated from the Hebrew noun *nahalal*, meaning "possession, property, inheritance," Ibid., p. 635.
 - 2. God's provision of the *nahalal* of the Gentiles occurred for Israel in several ways and different times:
 - a. When Joseph brought His father Jacob's family into Egypt during the severe, seven-year famine that had afflicted the whole Middle East, Joseph was used of God to move Pharaoh to grant that Jacob's family might live in the most fertile part of Egypt, the land of Goshen in the Nile delta, Genesis 41:54-57; 47:1-6.
 - b. When Israel later left Egypt in the Exodus, God arranged for His people to plunder the Egyptians of their articles of silver and of gold as well as their fine clothing, Exodus 12:35-36 ESV, NIV.
 - c. Then as Israel spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness, God preserved the clothes and even the shoes of the people of Israel so that they did not wear out, Deuteronomy 29:5.
 - d. God later gave Israel the land "flowing with milk and honey" that the Canaanites had possessed, Josh. 5:6.
 - e. However, not only was the land agriculturally highly productive, but when Israel defeated the Canaanites who had previously live there, Israel took possession of great, good cities that the Canaanites had built, and houses full of good furnishings that the Canaanites had built, and vineyards and olive trees that the Canaanites had planted and cultivated (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

III. Accordingly, Psalm 111:10 provided a summary lesson for Israel's people:

- A. Though Psalm 111:1-9 is written as a hymn, verse 10 is formed like a piece of wisdom literature, providing a summary lesson of all that was given in verses 1-9 (H. C. Leupold, *Expos. of the Psalms*, 1974, p. 782-783).
- B. This psalm was likely written when Israel was in a "depressed state" as insight on gaining God's blessing as had occurred throughout Israel's past, that route being to revere the Lord in good understanding, Ibid., p. 783.

Lesson: *When Israel was in a "depressed state," needing insight into returning to a place of God's blessing, the psalmist instructed Israel's people that revering the Lord, what comprises good understanding, leads one to obey Him and thus enjoy His blessings especially of food and housing in accord with His Abrahamic Covenant.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) Though we in the Church do not partake of the Abrahamic Covenant, since God promises to meet our material needs as we revere and obey Him (Philippians 4:18-19), may we revere Him and obey His Word and see Him provide for our livelihood needs throughout life.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

A significant illustration of God's meeting of one's material needs as he reveres and obeys Him even if he faces extensive livelihood stress or insecurity is detailed in **how** God met **Isaac's** livelihood needs in Genesis 26:1-33.

We recall from section "II, A, 2, c" in our sermon notes that God had told Isaac that if he did not leave Canaan for Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan, God would meet his living needs. Isaac thus stayed in Gerar in Canaan, he sowed grain and reaped a hundredfold, and God greatly increased his livestock and servants, Genesis 26:12-14a.

However, the Philistines in Gerar became jealous of Isaac's growing wealth, so they stopped up the wells his father Abraham before him had dug, creating a livelihood crisis for Isaac's large herds and many servants, Gen. 26:14b-15. Also, the Philistine king told Isaac to leave their land because he was too great for them, Genesis 26:16.

Isaac began to move, digging more wells as he went, but the Philistines stopped them up, so Isaac moved so far away from the Philistines to Beersheba that they finally made peace with him, Genesis 26:17-33.

Thus, God blessed Isaac as he obeyed Him regardless if Isaac had to deal with a famine or jealous, obstructive Philistines. If we then revere and obey the Lord, He will meet our living needs regardless what adversities we face.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we revere and obey God's Word to see Him meet our livelihood needs throughout life.