

Hosea (Osee) 6:3-6

6:6 for it is love that I desire, not sacrifice

This does not mean self-sacrifice is not wanted; but that a sacrifice such as killing a cow does nothing for our God.

In disjunctive propositions, it is a Semitic peculiarity to express one member negatively so as to lay more stress on the other, saying “not A but B” where the sense is “not so much A as B” or “B rather than A”. A well-known example is Hos 6:6, where the author himself indicates the sense of the idiom by the parallel second member: “I desire mercy and *not* sacrifice; and the knowledge of God *more than* holocausts.”¹

Knowledge is like hearing.

Psalm 50: 1, 8, 12-13, 13-15

The *Lectionary* has, ‘...**then** call upon me in time of distress...’ The Nova Vulgata (NV)² has *et invoca me*. While *then* is a better translation than *and*, the idea connotes “Offer to God praise as your sacrifice and fulfill your vows to the Most High” *and then* “call upon me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall glorify me. There is almost a casual nature both to the Divine Commandments and their results. “So, call upon me and won’t you be surprised”

The Responsorial Antiphon has “To the upright I will show the saving power of God.” Rather than the word connoting just for *upright*, the NV uses *immaculatus* for *upright*.

Stuhlmüller has some interesting comments on this Psalm.³

At once some serious problems face us with this explanation of praise as happily giving to God. Do people really give anything to God? prophets

¹ Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994, page 150.

² Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita Iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4

³ Carroll Stuhlmüller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, page 28.

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like Amos and Jeremiah lashed out at this smug idea, for it includes an attitude of bribing God, or cajoling God to look away from one's sins. Psalm 50, composed under strong prophetic influence, lashes out at this ridiculous but dangerous and prevalent mentality:

Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;
your burnt offerings are continually before me.
I will not accept a bull from your house,
or goats from your folds.
For every wild animal of the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.
I know all the birds of the air,
and all that moves in the field is mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and all that is in it is mine (Psalm 58:8-12).

Holocausts and sacrifices give nothing to God that God does not already possess: "every wild animal of the forest is mine." Neither does praise give anything to God that does not belong to God.

What is praise then? What does one do in praising God? Praise, we propose, is a wondrous, joyful way of recognizing the wonders of God's powerful love in our regard. Praise contagiously draws others into this happy rhythm. Praise is a public community act by which people are absorbed into a cycle like rain and snow. These come from the heavens and, once soaking the earth, return to the heavens in the form of trees, vegetables, and flowers. Such in fact, is the metaphor used by the prophet Isaiah to describe the word of God (Isaiah 55:10-11).

In the psalms of praise God's wonders can penetrate our hearts and minds—wonders that have become memories and traditions of what God did for the Israelites, wonders that reach across the universe in bursts of splendor from distant stars ...

Romans 4:18-15

Abraham's faith preceded the law, so Jesus superceded the law. In a word, it is alright to relax, just follow the Commandments.

cf. Luke 4:18

Matthew 9:9-13

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“*Follow me*” the verb for follow, ακολουθω, is close to the verb for hear ακουω.⁴ While we may not be able physically to follow Jesus, we are able to hear his word. The Latin does not have the word-similarity the Greek does. The notion of following carries with it a notion of “over hill, over dale ... those caissons keep rolling along.” Listening seems much easier.

The *Lectionary* has “While he was **at table** ... sinners came and **sat** with Jesus.” The Greek for *at table and sat* is ανακειμενου and συνανεκειντο which carries with it the notion of *recline at table*, which is how people ate at the time of Jesus. A sense of the casual is present here.

Zerwick comments on the Greek word for sinners, αμαρτωλοι⁵ “especially of those who did not observe the Law strictly.”⁶ Those relaxed and casual?

The Antiphon carries the notion of the Mass, “To the upright, I will show the saving power of God, namely to us as children of Abraham, believing in what Abraham believed, offering love from the heart rather than only sacrifices from the pocketbook, a love based on hearing/following Jesus, wherever that love and those words may lead.

May my soul rest in peace in the saving promises of Abraham as fulfilled in Jesus and His followers.

⁴ Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996), page xxix.

⁵ *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII, page 21.

⁶ Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996), page 26.