

Psalms 50:0 ¶ A Psalm of Asaph.

This is the first of twelve psalms that identify Asaph as the author, one of the men appointed to lead the musicians in service at the temple.

Psalms 50:1 ¶ The mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

Psalms 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

The psalmist declares that the LORD God has spoken to the whole earth (from east to west) from Zion, the city of Jerusalem. Zion is probably described as “the perfection of beauty” in reference to the temple, the designated place representing God’s presence among His people.

I liked this quote from Maclaren that Guzik used: “The psalm begins with a majestic heaping together of the Divine names, as if a herald were proclaiming the style and titles of a mighty king at the opening of a solemn assize.... Each name has its own force of meaning. *El* speaks of God as mighty; *Elohim*, as the object of religious fear; *Jehovah*, as the self-existent and covenant God.”

Psalms 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

Psalms 50:4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Psalms 50:5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Psalms 50:6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

As a prophet, the psalmist speaks of a future time that God will come like a great fire and a powerful storm to judge His people. He notes that the LORD will separate out His covenant people, the people of Israel. Creation testifies to the righteousness of God as a just judge.

The signs of the times as prophesied in scripture are so evident in the world around us today, that I know this time of judgment is coming soon.

Selah – A pause to think and reflect on these things.

Psalms 50:7 ¶ Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

The psalmist is functioning as a prophet as he tells how God calls out for His people to listen to Him as He testifies against them. This testimony is especially powerful because He is the God of Israel!

As I read through the psalm, it seemed to me that the words admonish and give warning would have been better choices than “against” when looking at the Hebrew.

God's purpose is to admonish and warn them about making sacrifices as part of a ritual and not from a sincere heart.

Psalms 50:8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

Psalms 50:9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

Psalms 50:10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Psalms 50:11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

Psalms 50:12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

Psalms 50:13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

The LORD declared that he would not rebuke His people over the sacrifices or burnt offerings that were offered before Him continually; after all, He was the one that had established the sacrificial system. The purpose of these sacrifices, however, was not because He wanted to take their cattle or goats for Himself because all the animals in the forest and all over the world are His. If He were hungry, He would not need help from His people because the world and everything in it belongs to Him. He does not need the flesh of bulls or the blood of goats for sustenance.

New Bible Commentary: "Pagan religions around Israel thought that their gods were nourished by the sacrifices that were offered. The same error is committed whenever the mere round of religious life becomes important in its own right."

Guzik: "Believers under the New Covenant no longer offer animal sacrifices, but are still tempted to practice their Christian duties in a spirit of ritualism. This must be actively avoided; God is not pleased by our ritualism."

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

Psalms 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

What God wants is for His people to show their sincere thanks to Him for all He has provided for them and to keep the promises they make to Him. When they do that, He will deliver them in their time of trouble, giving them even more reason to glorify Him.

That principle is still true today. God wants our sincere thanks and for us to keep our promises to Him. He is a faithful Father and will deal with us as a good Father accordingly, but our deliverance or salvation is totally rooted in the obedient sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Psalms 50:16 ¶ But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

Psalms 50:17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

Psalms 50:18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

Psalms 50:19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

Psalms 50:20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

Psalms 50:21 These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

I think the CJB reads a bit more clearly: "*But to the wicked God says: 'What right do you have to proclaim my laws or take my covenant on your lips, when you so hate to receive instruction and fling my words behind you? When you see a thief, you join up with him, you throw in your lot with adulterers, you give your mouth free rein for evil and harness your tongue to deceit; you sit and speak against your kinsman, you slander your own mother's son. When you do such things, should I stay silent? You may have thought I was just like you; but I will rebuke and indict you to your face.'*"

The LORD directs His next words to the wicked, those that refuse to accept Him as their God. These are the people that falsely proclaim the LORD as their God yet refuse to follow Him in obedience. They ally themselves with thieves and adulterers. They speak words for evil and deceit, even gossiping and slandering those of their own family. Because the LORD had kept silent, they assumed that He was no different than they, but they were wrong. The time had come for Him to set the record straight.

Christians today make the same wrong assumptions. They assume that all is well between them and the LORD when He is silent, and everything seems to be going well in their lives. They also assume that God is angry with them when they experience times of trouble, especially if such time is extended. Both assumptions are wrong. The LORD always has a purpose for what He allows in the lives of His children whether things are going well or times are hard. The important truth to know is that you have sincerely repented of your sin and accepted the LORD as your Savior. When you know that, you can trust in the fact that God is watching over your life—no matter what.

Psalms 50:22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be none* to deliver.

Psalms 50:23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

The psalmist closes with a word of warning from God. He calls for the people to consider His words carefully. If they continue to reject Him, they can expect His judgment. Those, however, that choose to sincerely offer praise to the glory of God and determine to live their lives in obedience to God will experience His salvation.

This is an admonishment for those under the old testament covenant, not those under the new covenant of grace. Our salvation is solely dependent upon believing that the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross is sufficient to redeem us from sin. Works have no part in our salvation; we cannot earn it. Works of obedience, however, do testify to the sincerity of our belief.

Ephesians 2:8–9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

James 2:14–17 “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

Luke 6:46 “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”