

SBC – Oct. 27, 2024
Psalm 50 (NKJV)
“God, the Great Judge”

The setting of Psalm is that of a courtroom scene with God Himself as the Judge. Israel is the defendant and heaven and earth the witnesses.

Psalm 50

“God, the Great Judge”

vv. 1-6 The Supreme Judge Presides
vv. 7-15 – The Charge of Ritualism
vv. 16-21 – The Charge of Rebellion
vv. 22-23 – A Proposed Solution

Psalm 50 (NKJV)
A Psalm of Asaph.

This is the first Psalm listed as a Psalm of Asaph. Asaph was a Levite who was a stand-out singer and musician who served during the time of David and Solomon (cf. 1 Chron. 15:17-19; 16:5-7; 25:6).

He was known as a musical prophet (1 Chron. 25:1; 2 Chron. 29:30).

**1 The Mighty One, God the LORD, Has spoken and called the earth
From the rising of the sun to its going down.**

In this verse we have a heaping up of Divine names to make the point that God is the Almighty Awesome Judge.

Slide # 2

“Mighty One” – El (Supreme Being)

“God” – Elohim (Plural – intensifies God as Supreme One)

“LORD” – YHWH (Eternal/Unchanging God)

The Supreme/Eternal God has spoken, and that ends the argument! When God speaks, that is the end of the discussion.

But here, He summons the entire scope of the earth to hear this case.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.

Zion references the holy district of Jerusalem – the place of God’s special dwelling known as the Temple Mount. It is here that the perfection of beauty is found in the presence of God. It is here that God will shine forth in judgment. Prophetically this is where Jesus will come at the Second Coming.

Slide # 3

Joel 3:16–17 (NKJV)

16 The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

17 “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

It is impossible to understand what in the world is going on with Israel and Jerusalem if you don’t understand the reality of spiritual warfare. This is the most special place in the world in the eyes of God and Satan is doing everything he can to destroy it –the chosen people, the chosen land, and the chosen temple mount.

It is there (prophetically) where the perfection of beauty as represented in God shining forth will reside.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; A fire shall devour before Him, And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

The Jews knew Zion as the HOLIEST of places in all the earth. It is a reference to this special place that God will come – and He will not come silently – but rather in fiery judgment and tempestuously. It will come as a time of great purging.

Slide # 4

Malachi 4:1–2 (NKJV)

1 “For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” Says the LORD of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

This will be a time of great purging!

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, And to the earth, that He may judge His people:

In effect, God calls heaven and earth to witness this judgment against His people.

Slide # 5

1 Peter 4:17 (NKJV)

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if **it begins with us first**, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

There are various lines of application here. But in reference to Israel – there is coming a worldwide judgment and Israel will be the number one target. This first and foremost will be what is called “***the time of Jacob’s trouble***” (Jer. 30:7).

5 “Gather My saints together to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

The word “saints” is translated as “godly ones” (NASB) or “faithful ones” (ESV). These are those who are in a covenant relationship with God by sacrifice. As OT saints this looked back to Mount Sinai where God’s covenant relationship with His people was ratified by blood sacrifice (cf. Ex. 24:3-8). This ultimately was a foreshadowing of a greater covenant that would be made by a greater sacrifice – namely the new covenant which was ratified by the blood of Jesus.

The saints are those who are in covenant relationship with God, which is ratified by a blood sacrifice.

6 Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is Judge. Selah

The heavens declaring God's righteousness is a poetic way of emphasizing the exalted standard of God's righteousness. God Himself is Judge – the exalted righteous Judge!

Selah represents a meditative PAUSE – stop and think about the awesome Judge that He is as the one Whose righteousness is as high as the heavens.

As God presents His ruling here is the basis of His judgment.

7 “Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God!”

Israel is the one chosen nation! They are uniquely “God's people” in that sense. God wants them to listen up! He has a problem with them. As their God this is what He testifies against them and He wants the whole world to listen in.

8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices Or your burnt offerings, Which are continually before Me.

The issue was not their sacrifices which were prescribed according to the Mosaic Law – the issue was that for so many it had become mere formalism and ritualism with no heart behind it. That has always been an ongoing problem – mere formalism versus true heart worship.

This was afterwards the sin of the Pharisees, is still of the Papists, and of too many carnal gospellers, who think they have served God, for they have been at church, done their devoir [duty], for they have said their prayers, etc.” - *John Trapp*

9 I will not take a bull from your house, Nor goats out of your folds.

God doesn't charge them with a lack of sacrifice – they did that all the time, but God wants them to know that is not the issue. God does not need more animals to be sacrificed to Him. Rather, God has a problem with their continual ritualism – their emptiness of mere religious ceremonies. God explains...

10 For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.

Think about it! God does not lack for animals.

He doesn't need more animals presented to Him. That is not the problem!

This story is often told and there is debate about some of the details but here is one rendition of it.

Shortly after [Dallas] Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost folded. It came to the point of bankruptcy. All the creditors were ready to foreclose at twelve noon on a particular day. That morning, the founders of the school met in the president's office to pray that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he said in his refreshingly candid way, "**Lord we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money.**"

Just about that time, a tall Texan in boots and an open-collar shirt strolled into the business office. "Howdy!" he said to the secretary. "I just sold two carloads of cattle over in Fort Worth. I've been trying to make a business deal go through, but it just won't work. I feel God wants me to give this money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check," and he handed her a check for \$10,000 dollars (which was a huge amount in the 1920s). This was the exact amount need.

The secretary took the check and, knowing something of the critical nature of the hour, went to the door of the prayer meeting and timidly tapped. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and president of the school, answered the door and took the check from her hand. When he looked at the amount, it was for the exact sum of the debt. Then he recognized the name on the check as that of the cattleman. Turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "**Harry, God sold the cattle.**"

11 I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

God knows all the birds that abound and all the wild beasts are His! He has no need of anything.

12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.

They were treating God like they were doing Him a favor in bringing these animal sacrifices – as if God needed them for some reason. Thus, they completely missed the idea of intended worship behind them!

How easy it is to just go through the motions and miss the real point!

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats?

God is not hungry for dead animals, and even if He were, He wouldn't tell us. All is already at His disposal. Again, God does not in any way need to eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats.

Instead, here was what God really wanted – of which the offerings were simply to be a symbol. He wants TRUE worship!

14 Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”

Right here in verses 14 and 15 is what God is really looking for. He wants thanksgiving offered to Him! The offerings and sacrifices served various purposes related to worship, but certainly, what was involved was to be an expression of thanksgiving for God's provision.

God wants His people to fulfill their vows. In their various commitments, they would vow to God as the Higher Power to do this or that. In honor of their commitment to God they would fulfill those vows. It was a recognition of their belief and surrender to God. This takes commitment to God serious!

Slide # 6

Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 (NKJV)

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. **Pay what you have vowed**—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

And then God says, “**Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you**”. God works through trouble. A recognition of God is to call upon Him. It recognizes His sovereign authority and power and that He can do something about the situation. And then as He answers prayer – He is glorified in the situation.

Slide # 7

2 Corinthians 1:10–11 (NKJV)

10 who **delivered** us from so great a death, and does **deliver** us; in whom we trust that He will still **deliver** us,
11 you also helping together in prayer for us, **that thanks** may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

God is a God of deliverance to the end that He may be glorified. He allows difficult situations to come upon us so that we might call upon Him and He might deliver us. This happens again and again – and in this God is glorified. He is glorified in our dependence upon Him!

All three of these actions (thanksgiving, paying of vows, calling on God) are really **matters of worship**. They all three properly honor God. All three of these bring glory to God. David got it! He understood what God really wanted.

Slide # 8

Psalm 51:16–19 (NKJV)

16 For **You do not desire sacrifice**, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

17 The **sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart**— These, O God, You will not despise.

18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 **Then** You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; **Then** they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

This is what God wants – He wants to be properly recognized and appreciated for Who He is as GOD!

This is the great issue with God! He is not interested in people just going through the motions – in formalism or ritualism. He wants true worship! He wants people to recognize Him for Who He is.

Slide # 9

Genesis 17:8 (NKJV)

8 Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and **I will be their God.**”

Exodus 29:45 (NKJV)

45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and **will be their God.**

Slide # 10**Jeremiah 24:7 (NKJV)**

7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and **they shall be My people, and I will be their God,** for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

Slide # 11**Zechariah 13:8–9 (NKJV)**

8 And it shall come to pass in all the land,” Says the LORD, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:

9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, **‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’**”

Slide # 12**Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)**

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and **they shall be His people.** God Himself will **be with them and be their God.**

All the way through the Bible this is the GREAT issue! God wants to be recognized as God. The very first commandment under the law was, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Ex. 20:3)

In the NT Jesus plainly said what God was looking for...

Slide # 13

John 4:23 (NKJV)

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

The sacrificial system properly understood was to be a system of WORSHIP! As intended by God it was to be an expression of worship but the Jews had largely turned into mere ritualism without true heart worship!

Now indeed, God always has a remnant and in God addressing His “saints” in verse 5 we see they were certainly represented in the mix, and yet at the same time the people of Israel were largely lost in their dead formalism.

God as Judge had two charges against His people. 1) Dead formalism, and 2) Open rebellion. He has addressed the former, now the latter...

16 But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth,

God’s statutes are His "mandates," "precepts," or "rules". They are God’s authoritative rules given to guide. Religious people can act so pious claiming to speak the Word with authority. But God says to the wicked they have no claim on His statutes -they have no claim to covenant truth. In truth they are not even in saving relationship with God. They are all talk!

Not only is God opposed to mere “formalism” He is also very offended by the “hypocrisy” that develops from it. People can talk a good talk but not walk the walk! God is interested in what comes out in the life – not just what comes out of the mouth. Talk is cheap!

17 Seeing you hate instruction And cast My words behind you?

Here is the real tell all! They declared God’s Word (v. 16) – they claimed to have a covenant relationship with God (v. 16), but in truth they had no regard for His Word! In reality they had a problem with God being God in their lives. In practical reality they rejected His Lordship! They didn’t want Him running their lives. That is why they hated His instruction and showed total disregard for His Word!

I had an old professor who used to say, “What you think of God’s Word is what you think of God. You can’t separate God and His Word!” How true! How we live tells the true story on our hearts!

18 When you saw a thief, you consented with him, And have been a partaker with adulterers.

19 You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit.

20 You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.

Here's what they were really all about in PRACTICE! They were in partnership with thieves. They were involved in adultery. They were breaking God's commandments like crazy! They had no conviction about keeping the law! They were given over to flagrant rebellion!

The mouth tells on the heart! Their mouth was given to evil talk and their tongue poured forth deceit. They were chronic liars. They run down their brother and slander even those closest to them. They were a mess!

These are representative of a wicked people who are as a lifestyle constantly and flagrantly breaking the law – showing no regard for God. Oh, they had “religion”. They were quick to bring a sacrifice to pacify God – as they supposed. But this living a double life condemned them!

And here was the real problem...

21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.

People misunderstand the silence of God! When they seemingly continue to get away with sin they think God doesn't really care. People do things wrong and after a while it just seems to go away. They think they got away with it – after all it didn't seem like any consequences came their way. After a while – life just move on.

In some ways this was their greatest sin, losing sight of the holiness of God. The main idea behind the concept of the *holy* is separation. In thinking that God **was altogether like them**, they considered Him more like a super-man instead of who He actually is: a holy God, enthroned in the heavens. They had become too casual and easy in their relationship with God. – **David Guzik**

They came to have a very low view of God. They saw Him to be kind of like them. God just forgets about it after a while and life just moves on! But in this they were DEAD wrong!

God says, “I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes.” The day of accountability is coming! The day of reckoning is coming and when God deals with them it will be seen they didn’t really get away with anything!

God in grace gives space for repentance. The goodness of God leads to repentance – but the wicked don’t get this.

There was a wicked woman in the church at Thyatira and Jesus says...

Slide # 14

Revelation 2:21 (NKJV)

21 And **I gave her time to repent** of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

Wicked people presume on the grace of God! They don’t understand He is giving space for repentance, but at some point the day of grace runs out and then comes judgment! The wise will take this to heart.

Slide # 15

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, **not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**

And this brings God to the conclusion of the matter which is a challenge to get right with Him while they can. The door of grace is still open, but it is a limited-time offer. As Isaiah 55:6 says, “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”

22 “Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, And there be none to deliver:

Consider this – get this – understand this you who forget God! To forget God is to live like God doesn’t matter. It is godless living that pays no attention to God and carries on like He doesn’t exist – like there is no threat of judgment! That is a very dangerous place to be.

Those that persist in forgetting God face being torn to pieces – which is to say being destroyed in judgment by Him! And when destroying judgment comes there will be no one to deliver! God will have His way with them! There is no more wonderful place to be than in the love of God – there is no more terrifying place to be than in the wrath of God!

Slide # 16

Psalm 2:11–12 (NKJV)

11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, **lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.** Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.”

In contrast to the wicked (v. 16) this is descriptive of those who are right with God – who really know God. They don't merely go through the motions – rather they offer up true praise that glorifies God. Again, it is true heart worship! They are not open rebels but rather order their conduct aright.

Ordering your conduct aright is not the means of salvation, but it is the fruit of true repentance. This speaks to the life that has forsaken mere formalism (just going through the motions) and open rebellion. This is elsewhere called REPENTANCE! These people have a true God-honoring faith, and it shows in their life.

How one lives is telling on where they are at with God! The person who shows this kind of God fruit will see the salvation of God in all its fullness! He answers prayer in this life and He delivers fully in the next!

Those who can claim the salvation of God are those who are characterized by the descriptions in verses 14-15 and verse 23.

Slide # 17

Indicative of the true people of God...

Thanksgiving
Pay your vows
Call upon God for deliverance

Praise that glorifies God
Order their conduct aright

People can be very religious, but God is the JUDGE and He says that people are known by their fruit!

Slide # 18

1 John 3:10 (NKJV)

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Slide # 19

**Holiness is the
visible side of
salvation.**

C.H. Spurgeon



Those given over to mere ritualism and lifestyle rebellion are not really God's people. They are just playing "religion". Those characterized by sheer hypocrisy are not really God's people! They live a double life and, in the end, hear the Lord say, "I never knew you – depart from Me!"

God, the Judge of all, has made it clear: He is looking for true worshipers! This begins with a true faith commitment in the heart to Jesus as Lord and Savior! That ushers in a changed life! That is the essence of Psalm 50. Those that truly know God live accordingly!

Indeed, may we "**consider this**" as Psalm 50 says to do!