

## **God summons His people to court!** (A Study of Psalm 50)

**Intro:** I hope this lesson serves as a compliment to our morning study about the nature of God.

### **An overview of the psalm**

*God calls the nations to witness His testimony to Israel (v. 1-6)*

In theophany God is presented as summoning the people of the entire earth and the heavens for a court case.

They are gathered to Zion, the place where God has made His name dwell and from where His glory has shown forth as the God of Israel. The people of Israel welcome His coming; and they are eager for Him to break the silence, to hear His judgments, for they are thinking that God's judgment will be spoken against the nations being summoned and they are eager to hear His condemnation of them.

However, they are perhaps surprised to learn that this summons of the nations has not been to judge them but in order that they may witness God's judgment of His own people! God is summoning those who have "made a covenant with Him by sacrifice" (the illusion is to Mt. Sinai where Israel entered into covenant with God.

Kidner comments, "The whole psalm is addressed to the covenant people, speaking first to the unthinkingly religious, and then to the hardened and hypocritical, to bring them a sharp breath of reality".

*God's indictment of the outwardly obedient (v. 7-15)*

God announces that this summons is not to judge the nations around Israel, but to judge Israel herself. He has the right to do this because He is their God.

God does not judge Israel for failing to offer sacrifices (v. 8). They have done that continuously.

God's complaint seems to center on the attitude with which Israel offered their offerings to God. It is as if they think they are doing God a favor to sacrifice to Him—that they are giving Him something that He could not have without them.

God responds, everything belongs to me! Can you in your worship do something for me? Do you think you are meeting some need of mine by your worship?

**What God really wants are:**

*Sacrifices of thanksgiving (not sacrifices that appear to meet God's needs but sacrifices that honor God because He's met our needs!)*

*Paying vows (keeping promises we make to Him)*

*Call upon Me in the day of trouble (not feeling that God is dependent upon us but realizing that we are dependent upon God and that we honor Him in worship)*

*What we learn is that even when we are doing the right things, God is concerned with our attitude and motivation in doing them. If the mechanically pious folk of verses 7-15 needed reminding that God is spiritual, the hardened characters of 16-21 must face the fact that He is moral.*

***God's indictment of manifest sinners (v. 16-21)***

**God's complaint is that these can reel off every command of God; but then do not do them! They are undisciplined by the teaching God gives and ignore it.**

**Their lack of devotion to God's teaching is seen in their attitude toward sinners. Even if they do not practice evil themselves, they act in approving ways toward those who disobey God.**

**They do not control their tongue resulting in dishonesty and slander of their brothers.**

**They took God's silence as evidence that He saw things like they did. They made the classic error of making God in their image! "You thought I was just like you!"**

**And so now God speaks up and makes it clear that He did not approve of how they were living!**

***Exhortation to all (v. 22-23)***

**God will judge those who "forget" Him.**

**God will show His salvation to those who honors Him with inward praise and thanksgiving and who orders His way according to God's teaching!**

**Lessons learned**

***God's judgment begins with those in covenant with him!***

**We often fail to remember that God's judgment begins first with His people!**

**For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)**

***Our conceptions of God affect our worship and service to God.***

**When we have a misconception of God our worship and service to God are corrupted by it. The NT urges us to a proper view of God so that proper service will be forthcoming.**

**Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28-29)**

***God seeks not only correct form but correct motivation in worship and service.***

**What God seeks from us is heart-felt thanksgiving and holy living.**

**Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13:15-16)**

*God promises to respond with His salvation!*

**What incentives God gives us to honor Him! He will “deliver us”!  
The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me  
safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever.  
Amen. (2 Timothy 4:18)**

**Conclusion: Let us not forget God as did Israel; but instead constantly remember  
His spiritual and moral nature and live the life that honors and obeys Him!**

**And a word is fitting for those who are not Christians and who are listening to  
God’s challenge to us! 1 Pet. 4:17-18**