

**Psalm 50**

**"God's Conviction of Israel for Formalism in Worship and Hypocrisy in Living"**

A Psalm of Asaph

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**A1 GOD'S SUMMONS TO COURT 50:1-6**

**B1 The Announcement of His Summons 50:1-3**

C1 God's Summons of All the People of the Earth to His Court of Law 50:1-2

D1 His utterance: {1} The Mighty One, God, the LORD, has spoken,

D2 His summons of the earth

E1 The breadth of his summons: And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

E2 The origin of his summons: {2} Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth.

C2 The Response of Asaph 50:3

D1 May God speak: {3} May our God come and not keep silence;

D2 He is frighteningly awesome!

E1 Fire devours before Him,

E2 And it is very tempestuous around Him.

**B2 The Initial Purpose of His Summons -- Judgment of Israeli Worshipers 50:4-6**

- C1 God's Subpoena of the Heavens and the Earth as Witnesses 50:4
  - D1 {4} He summons the heavens above, <sup>1</sup>
  - D2 And the earth, to judge His people:
- C2 God's Summons of the Defendants to the Bar 50:5
  - D1 His description of them: {5} "Gather My godly ones <sup>2</sup> to Me,
  - D2 His definition of them: Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."
- C3 God's Statement of the Heavens as Witness of His Righteous Judgment:
  - D1 The content of their witness -- His righteousness: {6} And the heavens declare His righteousness,
  - D2 His own role in the trial -- Judge! For God Himself is judge. [Selah]

**A2 GOD'S INDICTMENT AGAINST FORMALISM IN WORSHIP <sup>3</sup> 50:7-15**

**B1 God Calls His People to Hear His Indictment 50:7**

- C1 His Identification of His Audience
  - D1 {7} "Hear, O My people, and I will speak;
  - D2 O Israel, I will testify against you;
- C2 His Identification of Himself: I am God, your God.

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<sup>1</sup> 50:4 - heavens ... earth: Allen P. Ross, *TBKC*, believes it is the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth who are called as witnesses. This interpretation is possible, but not assured. K & D do not agree, opining that the physical heavens and earth have been here the longest, and are called as witnesses.

<sup>2</sup> 50:5 - godly ones (NASB). NIV, "consecrated ones"; AV, "saints." In context, these appeared godly. Outwardly, they kept the Law, and they observed the sacrificial requirements. The problem, identified subsequently, was that their hearts weren't in it.

<sup>3</sup> 50:7-15 - Formalism in Worship: Outwardly these Israelis appeared to be model citizens. they obeyed the Law (Torah) and they observed religiously all the feasts and sacrifices. They had one major problem -- their hearts were not in their worship. They were merely going through the motions of worship - they were not worshipping God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). They were obligatorily going through the outward motions of worship, but they were not truly thankful to God (50:14), nor did they personally address God and plead with Him to help them when trouble arrived (50:15) and so God did not help them and they failed to honor him (50:15). We might say today that they attended all the church services but they were sadly deficient in a sincere prayer life -- they had no vital fellowship with God. (I borrow the phrase "Formalism in Worship" from Allen P. Ross, *TBKC*. He also suggests that the failure of these Israelis was in violating the first half of the Decalogue, worship of God.)

**B2 He Does Not Indict Them for Their Sacrifices 50:8**

- C1 {8} "I do not reprove you for your sacrifices,
- C2 And your burnt offerings are continually before Me.

**B3 He Does Not Need Their Domesticated Animals, for He Owns Countless Undomesticated Animals in the Wild 50:9-13**

- C1 God will take none of their domesticated animals: {9} "I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. 50:9
- C2 God owns countless animals in the wild 50:10-11
  - D1 Animals in the forest: {10} "For every beast of the forest is Mine,
  - D2 Cattle on the hills: The cattle on a thousand hills.
  - D3 Birds in the mountains: {11} "I know every bird of the mountains,
  - D4 Everything moving in the fields: And everything that moves in the field is Mine.
- C3 If God were hungry He wouldn't need their animals, but He never gets hungry anyway! 50:12-13
  - D1 If God were hungry He would not tell them, for He owns the world and all its contents! {12} "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.
  - D2 That He should eat animals in any event is unthinkable! {13} "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats?

**B4 What God Truly Desires of Them 50:14-15**

- C1 A Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: {14} "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
- C2 A Payment of Their Vows: And pay your vows to the Most High;
- C3 A Dependence upon Him in Trouble 50:15
  - D1 Calling upon Him: {15} Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
  - D2 His rescue of them: I shall rescue you,
  - D3 Their consequent honor of Him: and you will honor Me."

### A3 GOD'S INDICTMENT AGAINST HYPOCRISY IN LIVING <sup>4</sup> 50:16-22

#### B1 God's Challenging of the Lip Service of the Wicked 50:16-17

- C1 Their Illegitimate Quotations from the Law: {16} But to the wicked <sup>5</sup> God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth?"
- C2 Their Denial of His Words: {17} "For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you.

#### B2 God's Evidence Against the Wicked 50:18-21

- C1 Their Pleasure with a Thief: {18} "When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, 50:18a
- C2 Their Association with Adulterers: And you associate with adulterers. 50:18b
- C3 Their Evil Speech 50:19-20
  - D1 Evil: {19} "You let your mouth loose in evil
  - D2 Deceit: And your tongue frames deceit.
  - D3 Slander: {20} "You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.
- C4 Their Misinterpretation of God's Silence 50:21a
  - D1 {21} "These things you have done and I kept silence;
  - D2 You thought that I was just like you;
- C5 God's Voluble Accusation: I will reprove you and state *the case* in order before your eyes. 50:21b

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<sup>4</sup> 50:16-22 - Hypocrisy in Living: These Israelis were not emphasizing worship services, but they did at least employ the words of the Torah superficially, perhaps using them as a good luck charm (50:16). Unlike the formalists, they made little outward attempt to obey the commands of the Law (Torah). They are called "The Wicked" because they believed they could get away with stealing and approved of adultery (50:18), violations of the 8th commandment and at least the spirit of the 7th. They committed great violence in their speech, slandering and bearing false witness even against their own full brothers (!) (50:19-20), thus violating the 9th commandment. These were evil people who reinvented God in their own image and figured He approved of their evil because He did nothing to them (50:21). (I borrow the phrase "Hypocrisy in Living" from Allen P. Ross, *TBKC*. Ross also suggests that these hypocrites' biggest failure was in violating the second half of the Decalogue -- Duty to Man)

<sup>5</sup> 50:16 - wicked: God clearly identifies these Israelis as wicked. Their flaunting of the Law, to which they gave lip service, was obvious.

**B3 God's Warning Against the Wicked 50:22**

C1 The Promise of Judgment: {22} "Now consider this, you who forget God,  
Or I will tear *you* in pieces,

C2 The Absence of Deliverance: and there will be none to deliver.

**A4 GOD'S SUMMARY OF THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS 50:23**

**B1 Genuine Worship (Not Formalism) Honors God:** {23} "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;

**B2 Genuine Obedience (Not Hypocrisy) Results in Salvation:** And to him who orders *his* way *aright* I shall show the salvation of God."

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF PSALM 50

Prepared by James T. Bartsch

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Email Contact: [jbartsch@wordexplain.com](mailto:jbartsch@wordexplain.com)

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