

“BEHOLD YOUR JUDGE”

Psalm 50

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

When God speaks to you, you had better listen!

There may be times in your life when you knowingly go astray and it may appear that you are getting away with sin without any serious consequences. However God’s patience and long-suffering have a limit, and he alone knows what that limit is. He reminds us in verse 21 that his silence is not forever. He is not a man and is not like us! He will correct us and put right before our faces the wrongs that we have done and continue to do. And when he does then we had better respond, because if we do not he will be to us like a ravenous lion who will tear us to pieces (22).

But this is not God’s desire. He wants more than anything to receive from us **a sacrifice of thanksgiving**; he wants us to truly honor him and bring him glory. And when we do order our way correctly according to his divine ordinance, he will **show us the salvation of God** (23).

This is what the Lord wants. He doesn’t want to continually point out your faults and to bring you correction and to discipline you for your bad attitudes and behavior. God loves you as his child called into a relationship with him through the New Covenant through the blood of Christ (v. 5). But all too often we do not listen to his voice and we disobey his Word. But when God takes action, it is a solemn scene to which he calls the entire world’s attention.

This entire Psalm is presented in the form of a legal courtroom proceeding.

- I. THE COURT GATHERS (1-6)
- II. THE PROSECUTION SPEAKS (7-21)
- III. THE VERDICT IS PASSED (22-23)

God confronts his people with two primary offenses:

- 1) The emptiness of their external religion (7-15).
- 2) The hypocritical practice of wickedness (16-21).

How genuine is your religion? How sincere as your worship? How consistent is your lifestyle?

YOU MUST OFFER GOD THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING AND CALL UPON HIM IN GENUINE FAITH.

- I. THE COURT GATHERS(1-6)-- that he might judge his people (4b)
 - A. The solemnity of the scene-- triple divine names: God, Elohim, Yahweh (1)
 - B. The summoning of all the earth’s inhabitants, and Heaven’s inhabitants (1b; 4)
 - C. The splendor of his courtroom—Zion, perfection of beauty; “He shines forth his glory as at Sinai.

- D. His silence is broken with consuming fire and tempestuous storm with lightning and thunder (3).
- E. His saints are gathered (5).
 - The objects of his *grace* and *loyal love* who owe loyal love in return.
 - They have entered God's covenant. They have offered their sacrifice.
 - Therefore they are totally accountable to God.
- F. His subjects declare his righteousness—**For God, he himself is judge!** (6)

II. THE PROSECUTION SPEAKS (7-21)

- A. The Judge's Authority (7)
 1. The judge himself speaks and gives **testimony**—against you.
 2. They are His people
 3. He is God, their God!
 4. The words are spoken with the solemnity of the SHEMA in Dt. 6:4-5!
- B. The First Accusation: *The emptiness of their external religion* (8-13)
 1. Your fault is not that you don't have religion (8).
 2. You have a **distorted view of Me!** (9-13)
 - I need no bulls or goats (9).
 - I own every beast of the forest and all the cattle on the hills (10).
 - In my omniscience I know every bird in the mountains and own everything that moves in the field (11).
 - Even if I were hungry I wouldn't tell you-- I own the whole world and everything in it (12).
 - Do you really think I need to eat steak or drink the blood of goats? What kind of a god you think I am? (13)
- C. The Second Accusation: the hypocritical practice of wickedness (16-21)
 - The emptiness of such worship led to wicked behavior.
 - "Wicked" comes from a verb that means "loose, ill regulated."
 1. You put on a fine outward show (16)
 - You *name and number and talk about* my statutes-- but you don't keep them!
 - You talk about your relationship with me by covenant, the one we established at Mount Sinai—but you don't live that way!
 - **What right do you have?**
 2. You hate discipline—don't want to listen to my teachings (17).
 3. You cast my words behind you as though it were garbage (17b).
 4. You consistently break the 10 Commandments (18-20).

You are whom you associate with:

 - a. You are pleased with thieves.
 - b. You associate with adulterers-- "misery loves company".
 - c. You slander and associate with slanderers—you lie about others and try to hurt them (19-20).
 - You have a loose mouth.

- You have a forked tongue—“framing deceit.”
 - You comfortably sit and speak against your own brother.
 - You don’t even spare the son of your own mother –slander him.
- D. The Prosecution Rests its Case (21).
1. I will be silent no longer.
 2. I am not like you-- I take sin seriously, it bothers me, and I will deal with it.
 3. I rebuke you for your behavior and I call you to account!
 4. I’m setting your sins right before your face where you can’t avoid them.

III. THE VERDICT IS PASSED (14-15; 22-23)

- A. **You who forget God**, as shown by your vain worship and ungodly lifestyle-- take it to heart before I tear you apart and no one can deliver you (22)!
- B. **You who will humble yourselves before me**, here is what I demand:
1. Have a thankful heart and offer me the sacrifice of Thanksgiving (14, 23).
 2. Keep your promises and commitments—your vows to me! (14).
 3. Obey Me--order your way aright (23).
 4. Trust me, and call upon Me in your day of trouble (15).
 5. In this way you will honor—**glorify me** (15, 23).
- C. **I Will Save those who give me proper worship** (15b; 23b)
- I will rescue you (15).
 - I will show you **the salvation of God** (23).

CONCLUSION

Let’s apply the two primary accusations to our lives in a personal way.

- 1) How genuine is your worship? Singing, prayers, ordinances, sermons, etc. Are you for real?
- 2) How consistent with your religious claims is your daily life? Are you a practical atheist?

How long do you think that God will put up with your empty, vain, hypocritical worship, and carnal lifestyle? He will be silent no longer. You had better respond now before it is too late!

YOU MUST OFFER GOD THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING AND CALL UPON HIM IN GENUINE FAITH.