

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

God, the Sovereign Judge, cites before his throne all his people, and the priests and the judges, Psalm 50:1-6; and reproaches them for their vain confidence in the sacrifices they had offered, Psalm 50:7-13; and shows them the worship he requires, Psalm 50:14, Psalm 50:15; and then enters into a particular detail of their hypocrisy, injustice, and union with scandalous transgressors; all of whom he threatens with heavy judgments, Psalm 50:16-22. The blessedness of him who worships God aright, and walks unblamably, Psalm 50:23.

In the title this is said to be A Psalm of Asaph. There are twelve that go under his name; and most probably he was author of each, for he was of high repute in the days of David, and is mentioned second to him as a composer of psalms: Moreover Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the WordS of David, and of Asaph the Seer. His band, sons or companions, were also eminent in the days of David, as we learn from 1 Chronicles 25, etc. Asaph himself was one of the musicians who sounded with cymbals of brass, 1 Chronicles 15:19. And he is mentioned with great respect, Nehemiah 12:46: And in the days of David and Asaph of old there were Chief of the Singers, and Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving unto God. He was certainly a prophetic man: he is called a seer - one on whom the Spirit of God rested; and seems from this, his education, and natural talent to be well qualified to compose hymns or psalms in the honor of God. Persons capable of judging, on a comparison of those Psalms attributed to Asaph with those known to be of David, have found a remarkable difference in the style. The style of David is more polished, flowing, correct, and majestic, than that of Asaph, which is more stiff and obscure. He has been compared to Persius and to Horace; he is keen, full of reprehensions, and his subjects are generally of the doleful kind; which was probably caused by his living in times in which there was great corruption of manners, and much of the displeasure of God either threatened or manifested. It is not known on what particular occasion this Psalm was written; but at most times it was suitable to the state of the Jewish Church.

Verse 1

The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken - Here the essential names of God are used: **אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה** (Elohim Jehovah), hath spoken. The six first verses of this Psalm seem to contain a description of the great judgment: to any minor consideration or fact it seems impossible, with any propriety, to restrain them. In this light I shall consider this part of the Psalm, and show: -
First, The preparatives to the coming of the great Judge. El Elohim Jehovah hath spoken, and called the earth - all the children of men from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, **מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת** (michlal yophi), the beauty where all perfection is comprised), God hath shined, Psalm 50:1, Psalm 50:2.

1. He has sent his Spirit to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

2. He has sent his Word; has made a revelation of himself; and has declared both his law and his Gospel to mankind: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת**, Psalm 50:2. For out of Zion the law was to go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3.

Secondly, The accompaniments.

1. His approach is proclaimed, Psalm 50:3: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת**.

2. The trumpet proclaims his approach: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת**.

3. Universal nature shall be shaken, and the earth and its works be burnt up: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת**, Psalm 50:3.

Thirdly, The witnesses are summoned and collected, and collected from all quarters; some from heaven, and some from earth.

1. Guardian angels.

2. Human associates: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת**, Psalm 50:4.

Fourthly, The procedure. As far as it respects the righteous, orders are issued: **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֲנִי מִצִּיּוֹן מִיְּבוּשֶׁת** those

who are saved from their sins and made holy, "together unto me." And that the word saints might not be misunderstood it is explained by "those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice;" those who have entered into union with God, through the sacrificial offering of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the rest are passed over in silence. We are told who they are that shall enter into the joy of their Lord, viz., only the saints, those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. All, therefore, who do not answer this description are excluded from glory.

Fifthly, The final issue: all the angelic hosts and all the redeemed of the Lord, join in applauding acclamation at the decision of the Supreme Judge. The heavens (for the earth is no more, it is burnt up) shall declare his righteousness, the exact justice of the whole procedure, where justice alone has been done without partiality, and without severity, nor could it be otherwise, for God is Judge himself. Thus the assembly is dissolved; the righteous are received into everlasting glory, and the wicked turned into hell, with all those who forget God. Some think that the sentence against the wicked is that which is contained, Psalm 50:16-22. See the analysis at the end, and particularly on the six first verses, in which a somewhat different view of the subject is taken.

Verse 7

Hear, O my people - As they were now amply informed concerning the nature and certainty of the general judgment, and were still in a state of probation, Asaph proceeds to show them the danger to which they were exposed, and the necessity of repentance and amendment, that when that great day should arrive, they might be found among those who had made a covenant with God by sacrifice. And he shows them that the sacrifice with which God would be well pleased was quite different from the bullocks, he-goats, etc., which they were in the habit of offering. In short, he shows here that God has intended to abrogate those sacrifices, as being no longer of any service: for when the people began to trust in them, without looking to the thing signified, it was time to put them away. When the people began to pay Divine honors to the brazen serpent, though it was originally an ordinance of God's appointment for the healing of the Israelites, it was ordered to be taken away; called nehushtan, a bit of brass; and broken to pieces. The sacrifices under the Jewish law were of God's appointment; but now that the people began to put their trust in them, God despised them.

Verse 8

I will not reprove thee - I do not mean to find fault with you for not offering sacrifices; you have offered them, they have been continually before me: but you have not offered them in the proper way.

Verse 10

Every beast of the forest is mine - Can ye suppose that ye are laying me under obligation to you, when ye present me with a part of my own property?

Verse 12

The world is mine, and the fullness thereof - Ye cannot, therefore, give me any thing that is not my own.

Verse 13

Will I eat the flesh of bulls - Can ye be so simple as to suppose that I appointed such sacrifices for my own gratification? All these were significative of a spiritual worship, and of the sacrifice of that Lamb of God which, in the fullness of time, was to take away, in an atoning manner, the sin of the world.

Verse 14

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High - זָבַח (zebach), "sacrifice unto God, זָבַח" (Elohim), the זָבַח" (todah), thank-offering," which was the same as the sin-offering, viz. a bullock, or a ram, without blemish; only there were, in addition, "unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil; and cakes of fine flour mingled with oil and fried," Leviticus 7:12.

And pay thy vows - זָבַח" (nedareycha), "thy vow-offering, to the Most High." The neder or vow-offering was a male without blemish, taken from among the beeves, the sheep, or the goats. Compare Leviticus 22:19 with Psalm 50:22. Now these were offerings, in their spiritual and proper meaning, which God required of the people: and as the sacrificial system was established for an especial end - to show the sinfulness of sin, and the purity of Jehovah, and to show how sin could be atoned for, forgiven, and removed; this system was now to end in the thing that it signified, - the grand sacrifice of Christ, which was to make atonement, feed, nourish, and save the souls of believers unto eternal life; to excite their praise and thanksgiving; bind them to God Almighty by the most solemn vows to live to him in the spirit of gratitude and obedience all the days of their life. And, in order that they might be able to hold fast faith and a good conscience, they were to make continual prayer to God, who promised to hear and deliver them, that they might glorify him, Psalm 50:15.

From the Psalm 50:16 to the Psalm 50:22 Asaph appears to refer to the final rejection of the Jews from having

any part in the true covenant sacrifice.

Verse 16

But unto the wicked - The bloodthirsty priests, proud Pharisees, and ignorant scribes of the Jewish people.

Verse 17

Seeing thou hatest instruction - All these rejected the counsel of God against themselves; and refused to receive the instructions of Christ.

Verse 18

When thou sawest a thief - Rapine, adulteries, and adulterous divines, were common among the Jews in our Lord's time. The Gospels give full proof of this.

Verse 21

These things hast thou done - My eye has been continually upon you, though my judgments have not been poured out: and because I was silent, thou didst suppose I was such as thyself; but I will reprove thee, etc. I will visit for these things.

Verse 22

Now consider this - Ye have forgotten your God, and sinned against him. He has marked down all your iniquities, and has them in order to exhibit against you. Beware, therefore, lest he tear you to pieces, when there is none to deliver; for none can deliver you but the Christ you reject. And how can ye escape, if ye neglect so great a salvation?

Verse 23

Whoso offereth praise - These are the very same words as those in Psalm 50:14, *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַּח*; and should be read the same way independently of the points, *zebach todah*, "sacrifice the thank-offering." Jesus is the great eucharistic sacrifice; offer him up to God in your faith and prayers. By this sacrifice is God glorified, for in him is God well pleased; and it was by the grace or good pleasure of God that he tasted death for every man.

Ordereth his conversation - *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַח* (*sam derech*), Disposeth his way. - Margin. Has his way There, *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַח* (*sham derech*), as many MSS. and old editions have it; or makes that his custom.

Will I show the salvation of God - *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַח* (*arennu*), I will cause him to see *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַח* (*beyesha*), into the salvation of God; into God's method of saving sinners by Christ. He shall witness my saving power even to the uttermost; such a salvation as it became a God to bestow, and as a fallen soul needs to receive; the salvation from all sin, which Christ has purchased by his death. I shall see him, the heale of God; that is Jeshu, that he see him in the fairehed of his majeste - Old Psalter.