

“Judgment upon the House of God”  
Psalm 50  
(Preached at Trinity, December 12, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to **Psalm 50** we read that it is a “Psalm of Asaph.” This is the only psalm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Book with this designation but when we get to Book III we’ll find an entire section under his name—eleven in all.  
Asaph was appointed by David as one of the chief leaders of music.  
**1 Chronicles 15:16** – “And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy. <sup>17</sup> So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah;”
2. **Psalm 50** is a psalm of judgment. In God’s perfect justice He will condemn all that is wicked. He is the Judge of all the earth.  
But this psalm speaks of a particular judgment. This is a judgment that should cause all of us to stand up and take notice. This psalm is speaking of judgment upon the house of God.  
**Psalm 50:4** – “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.”
3. This may sound puzzling to us.
  - A. The Psalmist is speaking of the covenant community.  
**Psalm 50:5** – “those that have made a covenant with me”
  - B. Would God condemn His people?  
The answer is No and Yes.  
God will never condemn His holy people but not all who are attached to the covenant community are true believers.  
Paul says in Romans 9  
**Romans 9:6** – “For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:”
4. Within the external covenant community there has always been a mingling of the true people of faith and the counterfeit. This situation also exists within local churches today.  
God will judge and purify His church.  
**1 Peter 4:17** – “For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?”
5. This is the essence of church discipline. Church discipline is judgment within the community of faith.  
**1 Corinthians 5:11-13** – “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? <sup>13</sup> But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

6. The context of this psalm deals particularly with worship.  
**Isaiah 29:13** – “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me . . .”  
**Matthew 15:7-9** – “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. <sup>9</sup> But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.”
7. The psalm is divided into four sections
- Declaration of God coming in judgment – **Verses 1-6**
  - Judgment upon the half-hearted religious – **Verses 7-15**
  - Judgment upon the hypocrites – **Verses 16-21**
  - Concluding considerations – **Verses 22-23**
- I. Declaration of God’s judgment – **Verses 1-6**
- A. The Psalmist announces the source of the judgment – he announces the coming of the Righteous Judge.
1. “The Mighty God” is speaking
    - a. Psalm 50 is noteworthy for using the various titles for God – seven in all—three in Verse 1 – El, Elohim, Yahweh
    - b. NAS, ESV – “The Mighty One, God, the LORD”
  2. He shines forth out of Zion, the holy city, the dwelling place of God
  3. **Verse 3** – He is coming! He will not be silent. He cannot be silent.
- B. The scene is familiar  
 “a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.”
1. We saw it in Exodus  
**Exodus 19:18** – “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”
  2. For all who do not remember their commitment before this God He will come quickly as a consuming fire.  
 Moses gave the warning in Deuteronomy  
**Deuteronomy 4:23-24** – “Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. <sup>24</sup> For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.”
  3. We read the same thing in the Book of Hebrews  
**Hebrews 12:28-29** – “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: <sup>29</sup> For our God *is* a consuming fire.”

- C. The focus of this judgment is directed upon those who have called upon His name
1. Notice they are called “His people”  
**Psalm 50:4** – “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.”
  2. It is directed to those who come before Him in worship  
**Psalm 50:5** – “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”  
**Psalm 50:7** – “Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.”

II. Judgment upon the half-hearted religious – **Verses 7-15**

**Psalm 50:7** – “Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.”

- A. The first group involves those who are only outwardly religious
1. They weren’t being rebuked because of a religious failure
    - a. They were faithful in their religious duties. They brought their sacrifices on schedule.
    - b. God tells them that His rebuke is not because of their sacrifices  
**Psalm 50:8** – “I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.”
  2. Their sin was in thinking that God *needed* their sacrifices.
- B. God has need of nothing
1. All things belong to God – **Verses 9-12**  
All things come from God. Anything we give Him is simply being returned.
  2. This is the problem with many church members today
    - a. They attend the services of the church. They tithe. They try to live a holy life.
    - b. God does not take issue with them because of their failure to give themselves to their duty
    - c. So what’s the problem? The problem is it is all just religious activity. But their heart isn’t in it. There’s no passion for serving God because God is most glorious. It is nothing but formalism
    - d. Their hearts are not overflowing with gratitude. Gratitude is the fuel that fires worship.  
**Psalm 50:14** – “Offer unto God thanksgiving”
  3. The main issue is there is no love for God. Any religious duty not performed from a motive of love ultimately degenerates into a merit based work—a work with the goal of earning something from God.
  4. Mere religion can give us the false notion that God is well-pleased with us when in fact He is not.
    - a. This was the problem with the Pharisees
    - b. This is the problem with many church members. Surely God must be pleased with them because they come to church. It all becomes a work based religion

- C. God condemns them for not having hearts in full submission and dependence upon Him

**Psalms 50:15** – “And call upon me in the day of trouble”

1. We are absolutely dependant upon God
2. No one shall approach God without receiving His mercy  
We are sinners dependent upon His mercy. Such mercy can only come through Christ.
3. To find such mercy ends the mere ritual of religious service. To find such mercy is a transforming grace whereby we now find Him glorious in His person.

III. Judgment upon the hypocrites – **Verses 16-21**

**Psalms 50:16** – “But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?”

- A. In other words, what right do you have to call yourself one of My covenant people
  1. They were unconverted, stiff-necked, hard hearted
  2. They were only God’s covenant people only by the words of their mouth, not the actions of the heart.
- B. God brings His charge against their hypocrisy
  1. **Verse 17** - They hate His Word
    - a. “Seeing thou hatest instruction”  
The word here refers to correction or chastening  
The hypocrite despises when the Word of God is held before him.
    - b. “and castest my words behind thee.”  
He ignores the plain teaching of Scripture
    - c. This is the nature of the hypocrite. We see it often in churches today. The pastor preaches the Word of God and a member takes it personally and is offended.
  2. **Verse 18** – They are most comfortable with the lifestyles of corruption
    - a. When given the choice they would rather associate with the wicked than with God’s people
    - b. Our society is filled with the lust of sexual perversion. It’s all around us
  3. **Verse 19** – Their tongues speak all manner of corruption  
**Matthew 15:18-19** – “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”
  4. **Verse 20** – They are filled with slanderous lies
    - a. They use their tongues to sow discord with their lies
    - b. No one is immune from the poison of their slander  
“thou slanderest thine own mother's son.”
  5. Notice **Verses 17-20** speak loud and clear concerning God’s Law  
**Verse 18** – The 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> commandments  
**Verse 19-20** – the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment
  6. God is a moral God. He demands obedience to His Law  
The hypocrite hates the Law of God

- C. The folly of the hypocrite is he thinks God doesn't care about his actions
1. He thinks God's silence means God's approval – **Verse 21**
  2. They see God as being just like they are
  3. They don't realize they are under God's judgment  
*"but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."*
- IV. Concluding considerations – **Verses 22-23**
- A. A word to the hypocrites – Those who forget God
1. Consider these things carefully
  2. God sees and knows. He is poised for judgment
  3. It's a dangerous thing to toy with God. God demands absolute allegiance to Him. It's a dangerous thing to profess to one of His people while continuing to follow your wicked heart.  
**Psalm 50:22** – "Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear *you* in pieces, and there be none to deliver."
- B. The blessing of a true heart for God
1. The one who heart is filled with gratitude – the one that sees God as worthy of his love
  2. The one who order's his way according to righteousness
  3. He will find deliverance from God

**Conclusion:**

1. **Psalm 50** should be heard loud and clear today.  
 Because the Gospel has been so perverted today and because the many of the methods of evangelism today are unbiblical churches are sometimes weakened by large numbers of unconverted.
2. The dangerous thing today is many of these are being encouraged in their delusion. And often when a church corrects an individual they simply move to a church down the street.
3. God says in this psalm:  
**Verse 22** – "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there* be none to deliver."