

Not Forgetting God 2

NOT FORGETTING ...

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT



The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

(Psalm 50:1 NIV)

Psalms 50 / A PSALM OF ASAPH

5 BLESSINGS OF MERCY & GRACE IN GOD'S JUDGMENT

1. BLESSING #1: God presents himself to the entire earth as God ... righteous, majestic, all-powerful and ready to judge.

■ The Mighty One—God the LORD—summons the entire earth and calls for the gathering of his people, 50:1-6.

- (Psalm 50:1-6 ESV) The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. 3 Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is **a devouring fire**, around him a mighty tempest. 4 He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, **that he may judge his people**: 5 “Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!” 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, **for God himself is judge!** Selah
- (Exodus 24:17 ESV) Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was **like a devouring fire** on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.
- (Psalm 18:8 ESV) Smoke went up from his nostrils, and **devouring fire** from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him.
- (Isaiah 29:6 ESV) You will be visited by the LORD of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and **the flame of a devouring fire**.
- (Isaiah 30:27 ESV) Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, **burning with his anger**, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is **like a devouring fire**.
- (Isaiah 30:30 ESV) And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, **in furious anger** and **a flame of devouring fire**, with a cloudburst and

storm and hailstones.

2. BLESSING #2: God speaks to his people and gives testimony to the foolishness of trusting in mere religion.

■ The Mighty One—God the LORD—rebukes his faithful people for their trust in religious ritualism and formalism, 50:7-13.

- (Psalm 50:7-13 ESV) Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, **I will testify against you. I am God, your God**. 8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. 9 I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. 10 For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. 12 “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?”

3. BLESSING #3: God gives his people instructions to deliver them from their dead religion.

■ The Mighty One—God the LORD—calls his people to lives of thankfulness and obedience, 50:14-15.

- (Psalm 50:14-15 ESV) **Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving**, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and **call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me**.

4. BLESSING #4: God speaks to the wicked and outlines the dangerous, evil path they have taken.

■ The Mighty One—God the LORD—scorns and derides the wicked ones for their contemptuous hypocrisy and their corrupt lifestyle, 50:16-20.

- (Psalm 50:16-20 ESV) But to the wicked

God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? 17 **For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.** 18 If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. 19 You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. 20 You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.”

5. **BLESSING #5: God warns the wicked and offers to show them his salvation.**

■ The Mighty One—God the LORD—calls the wicked to thankfulness and honor, 50:21-23.

- (Psalm 50:21–23 ESV) These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. **But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.** 22 Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver! 23 **The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me;** to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!

⚡ EXCELLENT COMMENTARY ... MUST READ ... ⚡

It is hard to think of a psalm that is as relevant to our day as this one. Alexander Maclaren once wrote, “The psalm has as keen an edge for modern as for ancient sins. Superstitious reliance on externals of worship survives, though sacrifices have ceased; **and hypocrites, with their mouths full of the Gospel, still cast God’s words behind them.**” Who can deny the truth of that? It is as descriptive of our time as any, perhaps our time particularly. What we need to do is learn from it by humbling ourselves before God, repenting of our many sins, and honoring God by offering our lives to him. [Boice, J. M. (2005). *Psalms 42–106: An Expositional Commentary* (pp. 421–422). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.]

The sudden focus on God’s own people. **Suddenly there is a surprise. We were**

expecting God’s final judgment on the heathen, but now we discover that the summons is to God’s own people. [Ibid. (p. 417).]

He announces himself to be the God of Israel, that he may recall them to allegiance and subjection, and the repetition of his name is emphatic: **as if he had said, When you would have me to submit to your inventions, how far is this audacity from that honor and reverence which belong to me? I am God, and therefore my majesty ought to repress presumption, and make all flesh keep silence when I speak;** and among you, to whom I have made myself known as your God, I have still stronger claims to homage. [Calvin, J., & Anderson, J. (2010). *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Vol. 2, p. 266). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.]

Right worship, says the psalmist, consists in acknowledging that we have nothing to bring to the creator of the universe that is not already his. Added to this is the realization that God does not need our sacrifices, but that they are entirely for our own benefit. [Wilson, G. H. (2002). *Psalms* (Vol. 1, p. 769). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.]

The Judge breaks silence. In this powerful psalm the imagined scene is a theophany, God appearing in fire and tempest at mount Zion to summon the entire world to his judgment seat. But if all eyes are on him, his eyes are on Israel. 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.** [Kidner, D. (1973). *Psalms 1–72: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 15, p. 203). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

It soon appears that the judgment scene is not for passing sentence but for bringing truth to light and sinners to repentance. Verses 8ff., by their very reassurances, give a more damning picture of mindless religion than would any accusation. [Ibid. (Vol. 15, p. 204).]

Then I will praise God's name
with singing, and I will honor
him with thanksgiving.

(Psalm 69:30 NLT)

For although they knew God, they did not
honor him as God or give thanks to him, but
they became futile in their thinking, and
their foolish hearts were darkened.

(Romans 1:21 ESV)

Through him then let us continually offer up
a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit
of lips that acknowledge his name.

(Hebrews 13:16 ESV)

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and perform your vows to the Most High,
and call upon me in the day of trouble; I
will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

(Psalm 50:14-15 ESV)

The one who offers thanksgiving
as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one
who orders his way rightly I will
show the salvation of God!

(Psalm 50:23 ESV)

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this
is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV)



What can we offer God?