

## PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

### Psalm Fifty - Illustrating True And False Worship

(Psalm 50:1-23)

#### I. Introduction

- A. There is much discussion in Evangelical circles on what constitutes true worship. Some believe that we must try different music forms, different liturgy, even different sermon styles to evoke better worship.
- B. Well, God "holds court" over Israel's temple worshipers in Psalm 50:1-23, and in this psalm distinguishes between worship in which He delights and worship He **condemns**. We note the psalm for insight in what kind of worship pleases Him (as follows):

#### II. Illustrating True And False Worship, Psalm 50:1-23.

- A. God is presented in His power coming to "hold court" in judgment of His temple worshipers in Ps. 50:1-6.
  - 1. Fire is a picture of judgment, and God is seen coming with a devouring fire before Him, Ps. 50:3b, c.
  - 2. God summons the earth and heavens for judgment of His people in accord with the liturgical summons presented in the Mosaic Covenant that had jurisdiction over Israel, Ps. 50:1,4 with Dt. 4:26.
  - 3. This judgment deals with those who worship at His temple, Ps. 50:5.
- B. In judgment of temple worshipers, God clarified the good and the bad as follows, Ps. 50:7-21:
  - 1. First of all, God is unimpressed with the rituals of worship themselves, Ps. 50:7-13.
    - a. If God had a problem with Israel's worshipers, it did not have to do with their rituals, Ps. 50:7-8.
    - b. In fact, they were a neutral matter: if God was really that hungry, since He owns the animals of the earth, He would help himself to them without waiting for the offerings at the temple, Ps. 50:9-13.
  - 2. Rather, God is deeply concerned about the **attitude BEHIND** the sacrifices as follows, Ps. 50:14-21:
    - a. On the one hand, He delights in the worshiper who offers his sacrifice out of deep gratitude to God's having answered a prayer for his help and bailed him out during the week from distress, 50:14-15.
    - b. However, God is very angry with the person who is going through the sacrificial ritual while living a double life of sin during the week before the worship service, Ps. 50:16-21: (a) God argues that the wicked don't have a right to recite the liturgy in the worship service, v. 16. (b) He complains that they hate His instruction and liturgy as they live horrible lives away from the temple, v. 17-20. Instead of living rightly, during the week they steal, are immoral, they lie and slander their brethren. (c) Such worshipers felt God would gloss over the week's sins and be thrilled with their sacrifices like they would were they in His shoes. Not so: God is upset with such hypocrisy, Ps. 50:21.
- C. Accordingly, God offers a fair warning and admonition to the worshipers in Israel, Ps. 50:22-23:
  - 1. If the sinful do not consider this warning and adjust, God will administer judgment, Ps. 50:22.
  - 2. However, those who worship God with genuine expressions of appreciation to Him for what has happened in their godly lives during the week, God will cause him to see more blessings of similar deliverances from trouble during the week, P s. 50:23.

***Lesson:*** (1) As Creator of the universe's massive glories, our artistically perfect God is not impressed with worship expressions in themselves: His expertise is too vastly superior to ours to impress Him. (2) However, He IS interested in what we DO during the week as that reflects the HEART quality of our worship. (a) If during the week we steal, are immoral in thought or action and deceive and slander others, forget about impressing Him in worship services! (b) On the other hand, if we express appreciation and honor to God as an overflow of our interaction with Him during the week, God delights in our worship, no matter what worship expression is used!

***Illustration:*** Following John and Lisa Politz's wedding, when the photographer took the Nepaug Church group picture, someone in the group began singing "Amazing Grace" until the whole Church joined in. Unchurched onlookers were deeply moved. Why? It came from people who knew God as an overflow of their walk with Him. It didn't matter that they were untrained musicians performing without the London Philharmonic as accompaniment! The Holy Spirit made the expression acceptable, and a powerful witness. That kind of worship pleases the Lord!