

**\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: The Psalms \***  
**\* Topic: Instructions on Worship \* Psalm 50 \* 9/7/25 \***

MAIN POINT

God instructs His people to obediently worship Him with our whole hearts, in spirit, and in truth.

INTRODUCTION

**When you were growing up, were you ever summoned to the principal's office? If so, how did you feel about it? If not, how would you have felt if you had been called to the principal's office?**

**What about now, in adulthood? When you get called into a meeting with your boss or stand before a judge (i.e., disputing a traffic ticket), are you more likely to be confident or nervous? Why?**

Psalm 50 is classified as "a Psalm of Instruction". It begins with a summons from God. This summons, however, wasn't for just one person; God called all of Israel to stand before Him for judgment. The topic He was addressing was their worship of Him. God goes on to instruct them about the kind of worship He requires. As believers in Christ, we can stand before God in confidence knowing that our salvation is complete and secure in Christ, but we also need to understand that God calls us to obediently worship Him with our whole heart, as opposed to just going through the motions of religious rituals.

UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 50:1-7

**What names or titles are used for God in verse 1?**

The Mighty One, God, LORD. The Hebrew is, "El, Elohim, Jehovah." El is the shortened form of the word "God". The King James version translates this word as "God" the large majority of the time it is used in the Old Testament. "Elohim" is the Hebrew word for God. The King James version translates this word as "God" the large majority of the time it is used in the Old Testament. And Jehovah is the Hebrew word for God's name. It is closely related to the description God gave to Moses of Himself as "I Am who I Am". Both terms are based on the Hebrew root word, "Hayah". This describes God as the eternally self-existent one.

**What tone is Asaph setting by using all three of these terms in verse 1?**

God, the Eternally Self-Existent God. Using three names for God here shows the divine completeness of God, emphasizing the fact He alone has complete authority, and there is no other.

**What legal terms do you see in the first six verses?**

- Summons (Verses 1 and 3): to authoritatively call on someone to be present, especially in a law court.
- Judge (verb) (Verse 4): to decide a case in court.
- Judge (noun) (Verse 6): one who decides a controversy.
- Testify (Verse 7): to bear witness.
- Charges (Verse 8): to decide or convict.

**What point is God making by using these legal terms?**

We see a courtroom scene, where God (verses 1-4) has a charge to bring against His people Israel (Verses 4, 5, and 7). God is the judge, Israel is the defendant, and all creation is the jury (verses 1 and 4). The charge is related to how they are worshipping Him (Verses 7-8).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 50:8-15

**What is the charge God is bringing against His people as described in verses 8-9?**

God is not pleased with their worship. By external appearance, they are offering all of the sacrifices they are supposed to bring. But there still is something wrong.

**What point is God making in verses 9-13?**

The people were offering their sacrifices with the wrong attitude. The physical act of offering an animal as a sacrifice to God does nothing to aid God. He owns all the animals in all of creation anyway. It's not like He's hungry and desires to eat these sacrificial animals. We need God. God doesn't need us.

**What instructions does God give them in verses 14-15?**

Three actions were required to correct this problem.

1. They needed to offer thank offerings (Be thankful to Him).
2. They needed to fulfill their vows to God (Be obedient to Him).
3. They needed to call on God in the day of trouble (Depend on Him rather than themselves).

God desires heart-felt gratitude, obedience, and dependence on Him.

APPLYING THESE THREE ACTIONS TO OUR WORSHIP OF GOD

1. BE THANKFUL TO GOD

*Note to study leader: The thank offerings and vows were not required by the Law (Lev. 7:12; 22:29). They were voluntary offerings offered out of gratitude to God.*

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ COL. 3:16 1 THES. 5:16-18, AND HEB. 12:28-29

**What do you think it means to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God as Christians?**

We need to be intentionally aware of what God has done for us, is doing for us, and will do for us. And we need to make a habit of thanking God for these things.

2. BE OBEDIENT TO GOD

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ROMANS 12:1-2

**We often think of worship as the time on Sunday morning when we sing praises and pray together as a family of believers. What does Romans 12:1 add to this understanding of worship?**

Offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. "This is truly the way to worship Him" (NLT).

**What does Romans 12:2 add to our understanding of what is included in offering our bodies as living sacrifices?**

Don't conform to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our sinful flesh and the philosophy of this world run contrary to God. We need to be transformed. This statement implies we are not naturally attuned to God. We need to let God's sanctifying word work in our lives.

*"I've got to be reading God's word; I've got to be praying. Why...? Because my eyes, my ears, my heart are not attuned to God's voice." Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024*

### 3. DEPEND ON GOD RATHER THAN OURSELVES

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-11 AND TITUS 2:11-14

**What do these verses add about why it is so important for us to rely on God rather than on our own strength as we worship Him and as we live our lives as Christians?**

It is God's grace that teaches us to be obedient to Him. And as sinful weak humans, we can't use the flesh to try and fix the flesh.

*"Relying on God has to begin all over again everyday as if nothing had yet been done." C. S. Lewis*

*"Fear arises when we imagine that everything depends on us." Elisabeth Elliot*

*"God's not trying to see how strong you are, He's trying to see how much you can lean into Him."*  
*Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024*

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 50:16-23

**What wrong actions and attitudes is God calling out in these verses?**

We now see a shift in the instructions God is providing. He has been talking to people who may have been unintentionally missing the heart of true worship. He now shifts his instructions to people who have been deliberately choosing to live in sin ("To the wicked person... you hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers" etc.)

**To these wicked people, God is saying they have no right to recite God's laws. What modern parallels do you see to these verses?**

There are "churches" that talk of Jesus' love but ignore everything the Bible says about having to repent. These people would do well to heed the words of this Psalm.

**What contrasting outcomes of the two types of worship—heartless and heartfelt—did God describe in Psalm 50:22-23?**

Those who come to worship God while rejecting Him have no place before Him. Those who come to worship God with humble gratitude are blessed by experiencing true fellowship with Him. God detests fake and fleshly worship; the worship He wants is true and pure, coming from holy and humble hearts.

APPLICATION

**Is there an area in my life where I need to choose to be obedient to Christ as an act of worship?**

**What can I do to remember to be truly thankful to God for what He has done for me?**

**Is there an area in my life where I need to depend on God rather than my own abilities?**

PRAYER

Praise God that He alone is God, the Mighty One, the Great I AM, who alone is worthy of our worship. Invite Him to judge the attitudes of our hearts and reveal to us any areas where we need to align our worship and our lives to worship Him in the manner He requires.

## COMMENTARY

### Psalm 50

50:1-2. This psalm begins with Asaph describing a heavenly courtroom scene in which God himself, the Judge, who comes to preside and render his verdicts. Three names are used for God: the Mighty One, God, and the Lord. This is the God who summons the earth to appear in the judgment before him.

50:3-6. God comes to act in judgment over the earth and will not be silent. When the Lord speaks, a fire devours those before him who await his decree. He summons heaven and earth to his courtroom to judge them, even his own people who made a covenant with him. As he speaks, the heavens speak with one voice, proclaiming his righteous judgments, because God is judge—and none other.

50:7-13. The actual words of God speaking to his people in judgment, correcting and reproving them, are recorded: Hear, O my people, and I will speak and testify against you. What is the divine charge? He did not rebuke the people for their sacrifices but because they wrongly assumed that the Lord had need of their bull or goats. All the sacrificial animals already belonged to God, even the cattle on a thousand hills. Every bird and all creatures of the field belong to God. Even if God were hungry, he would not tell his people, as if he were dependent on them. Such is not the case. God does not eat the flesh of animals as if he needed them for sustenance.

50:14-15. God wants his people to acknowledge their dependence on him, not vice versa. They must offer thank offerings to God for his abundant mercies to them, fulfill their vows to him, and call upon God when in trouble. The thank offerings and vows were not commanded in the Law, but were voluntary offerings of gratitude (Lev. 7:12; 22:29). These offerings were to be eaten by those giving the offerings because they symbolized communion and fellowship with God. Only after these prerequisites were fulfilled would God deliver his people because they had honored him.)

50:16-17. With increasing intensity God rebuked the wicked who recited his laws and agreed to his covenant without any genuine conviction. These religious hypocrites, in spite of their presence in public worship, actually hated God's instruction and rejected his word.

50:18-21. God exposed several examples of sin in these religious pretenders. They joined in the sinful practices of a thief and adulterers and those who spoke against their brother. Chief among their sins was the tragic illusion that God was like sinful man, a blasphemous trivialization of a holy God. Such desecration of God's flawless character draws his rebuke.

50:22-23. God addressed those who forget God. The stinging indictment of these pseudo-worshippers is that God will tear them to pieces and leave no one to rescue them. But the true worshiper who sacrifices thank offerings will be honored by the Lord.