**"THE BOOK OF PSALMS"**

**Book II (42-72)**

**Psalm 50: “God The Righteous Judge”**

**OBJECTIVES IN THIS STUDY:**

1. To appreciate the values of the psalms to the individual and the community.
2. To appreciate the uniqueness of the psalms as scripture and as the voice of God

**Introduction:** The psalm can be divided into an introduction (vss. 1-6), two separate orations in which God testifies against the Jews (vvs. 7-15 and 16-21), and a conclusion. The imagery of the introduction evokes the revelation of the [Ten Commandments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments) at [Mount Sinai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Mount_Sinai), where God's appearance was accompanied by thunder and lightning. God summons the heavens and the earth to act as witnesses, and the rest of the psalm takes the form of a legal proceeding, with God acting as both plaintiff and judge. The same metaphor of a divine tribunal occurs in chapter 1 of the [Book of Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) and chapter 6 of the [Book of Micah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Micah).

In God's first oration, he tells the people that he is not satisfied with [material sacrifices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korban) alone, since he does not require food or drink. Rather, he desires his people to worship him with thanksgiving and sincere prayer. Verse 13, "Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" may be an allusion to the goddess [Anat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anat%22%20%5Co%20%22Anat), since in one fragmentary text Anat eats the flesh and drinks the blood of her brother [Baal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baal), who sometimes appears as a bull.

God's second oration is warning against hypocrisy. Though the hypocrites often recite God's commandments, they inwardly hate them and make no effort to live by them, and God will surely bring them to judgment.

The psalm closes with a final warning against iniquity and a promise that God will bless the righteous and make them "drink deeply of the salvation of God.” This last is an appearance of the common Biblical theme of the "[Messianic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah) banquet," which also occurs in [Psalm 23](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_23), [Psalm 16](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_16), and [Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke) 14, among other places.

**Outline**:

1. The Righteous Judgement of God (1-6)
2. Warning to the godly (7-15)
3. Warning to the wicked (16-21)
4. The Righteous Judgement of God (22-23)

**Questions for reflection (re-read Psalm 50 in 3 different translations):**

1. What does it mean to you to know that God still speaks?
2. How do you know the voice of God?
3. What does it mean to you when you read “God the Mighty One?”
4. How do you know you are “in the presence of God?”
5. What lessons of faith have you learned in the last year during this pandemic?