## PSALM 50

## **INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 50**

## A Psalm of Asaph

This psalm is called a psalm of Asaph; either because it was composed by him under divine inspiration, since he was a prophet and a seer, (Chronicles 25:2 Chronicles 29:30); or because it was delivered to him to be sung in public service, he being a chief musician; (see Chronicles 16:7); and so it may be rendered, "a psalm for Asaph"; or "unto Asaph" which was directed, sent, and delivered to him, and might be written by David; and, as Junius thinks, after the angel had appeared to him, and he was directed where he should build an altar to the Lord, (Chronicles 21:18). The Targum, Kimchi, and R. Obadiah Gaon, interpret this psalm of the day of judgment; and Jarchi takes it to be a prophecy of the future redemption by their expected Messiah; and indeed it does refer to the times of the Gospel dispensation; for it treats of the calling of the Gentiles, of the abrogation of legal sacrifices, and of the controversy the Lord would have with the Jews for retaining them, and rejecting pure, spiritual, and evangelical worship.

**Ver. 1**. *The mighty God*, etc.] In the Hebrew text it is "El", "Elohim", which Jarchi renders the "God of gods"; that is, of angels, who are so called, ("Psalm 8:5 97:7); so Christ, who is God over all, is over them; he is their Creator, and the object of their worship, ("Hebrews 1:6,7); or of kings, princes, judges, and all civil magistrates, called gods, ("Psalm 82:1,6); and so Kimchi interprets the phrase here "Judge of judges". Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords, by whom they reign and judge, and to whom they are accountable. The Targum renders it "the mighty God"; as we do; which is the title and name of Christ in ("The Tasiah 9:6); and well agrees with him, as appears by his works of creation, providence, and redemption, and by his government of his church and people; by all the grace, strength, assistance, and preservation they have from him now, and by all that glory and happiness they will be brought unto by him hereafter, when raised from the dead, according to his mighty power. It is added,

[even] the Lord, hath spoken: or "Jehovah", Some have observed, that these three names, El, Elohim, Jehovah, here mentioned, have three very distinctive accents set to them, and which being joined to a verb singular, rbd, "hath spoken", contains the mystery of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine Essence; (see Joshua 22:22); though rather all the names belong to Christ the Son of God, and who is Jehovah our righteousness, and to whom, he being the eternal Logos, speech is very properly ascribed. He hath spoken for the elect in the council and covenant of grace and peace, that they might be given to him; and on their behalf, that they might have grace and glory, and he might be their Surety, Saviour, and Redeemer. He hath spoken all things out of nothing in creation: he spoke with. Moses at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai: he, the Angel of God's presence, spoke for the Old Testament saints, and spoke good and comfortable words unto them: he hath spoken in his own person here on earth, and such words and with such authority as never man did; and he has spoken in his judgments and providences against the Jews; and he now speaks in his Gospel by his ministers: wherefore it follows,

and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof; which may be considered as a preface, exciting attention to what is after spoken, as being of moment and importance; (see Touteronomy 32:1); or as calling the earth, and so the heavens, (Touter Psalm 50:4), to be witnesses of the justness and equity of his dealings with the Jews, for their rejection of him and his Gospel; (see Touteronomy 4:26); or rather as a call to the inhabitants of the earth to hear the Gospel; which had its accomplishment in the times of the apostles; when Christ having a people, not in Judea only, but in the several parts of the world from east to west, sent them into all the world with his Gospel, and by it effectually called them through his grace; and churches were planted everywhere to the honour of his name; compare with this (Malachi 1:11).

**Ver. 2**. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*.] Or "shall shine" <sup>f667</sup>; the past for the future, as Kimchi observes; or "the perfection of the beauty of God hath shined out of Zion" <sup>f668</sup>; that is, Christ; he is the perfection of beauty; he is fairer than the children of men; he is more glorious than the angels in heaven: as Mediator, he is full of grace and truth, which makes him very lovely and amiable to his people: he is the express image of his Father's person; and the glory of all the divine perfections is conspicuous in his work of salvation, as well as in himself: now as he was to come out of Zion, (\*\*\*PAT\*\*Psalm 14:7); that is, not from the

fort of Zion, or city of Jerusalem; for he was to be born at Bethlehem; only he was to be of the Jews, and spring from them; so he shone out, or his appearance and manifestation in Israel was like the rising sun; (see Malachi 4:2 \*\* Luke 1:78,79); and the love and kindness of God in the mission and gift of him appeared and shone out in like manner, (\*\*Titus 3:4); or else the Gospel may be meant, which has a beauty in it: it is a glorious Gospel, and holds forth the beauty and glory of Christ. All truth is lovely and amiable, especially evangelical truth: it has a divine beauty on it; it comes from God, and bears his impress; yea, it is a perfection of beauty: it contains a perfect plan of truth, and is able to make the man of God perfect; and this was to come out of Zion, ( Isaiah 2:3); and which great light first arose in Judea, and from thence shone out in the Gentile world, like the sun in all its lustre and glory, (Titus 2:11); or, according to our version, "God hath shined out of Zion"; which, as Ben Melech on the text observes, is the perfection of beauty; (see Lamentations 2:15); by which is meant the church under the Gospel dispensation, (\*\*\*Hebrews 12:22); which, as in Gospel order, is exceeding beautiful; and as its members are adorned with the graces of the Spirit, by which they are all glorious within; and especially as they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and so are perfectly comely through the comeliness he hath put upon them and here it is that Christ, who is the great God, and our Saviour, shines forth upon his people, grants his gracious presence, and manifests himself in his ordinances, to their great joy and pleasure.

**Ver. 3**. *Our God shall come*, etc.] That is, Christ, who is truly and properly God, and who was promised and expected as a divine Person; and which was necessary on account of the work he came about; and believers claim an interest in him as their God; and he is their God, in whom they trust, and whom they worship: and this coming of his is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh; for though that was promised, believed, and prayed for, as these words are by some rendered, "may our God come" yet at his first coming he was silent, his voice was not heard in the streets, (ADDO) Matthew 12:19); nor did any fire or tempest attend that: nor is it to be interpreted of his second coming, or coming to judgment; for though that also is promised, believed, and prayed for; and when he will not be silent, but by his voice will raise the dead, summon all before him, and pronounce the sentence on all; and the world, and all that is therein, will be burnt with fire, and a horrible tempest rained upon the wicked; yet it is better to understand it of his coming to set up his kingdom in the world, and to

punish his professing people for their disbelief and rejection of him; (see Matthew 16:28 Hebrews 10:37);

and shall not keep silence; contain himself, bear with the Jews any longer, but come forth in his wrath against them; (see Psalm 50:21,22); and it may also denote the great sound of the Gospel, and the very public ministration of it in the Gentile world, at or before this time, for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom in it;

a fire shall devour before him; meaning either the fire of the divine word making its way among the Gentiles, consuming their idolatry, superstition, etc. or rather the fire of divine wrath coming upon the Jews to the uttermost and even it may be literally understood of the fire that consumed their city and temple, as was predicted, (\*\*\*ECC\*\* Zechariah 11:1) (\*\*\*\* Matthew 22:7);

and it shall be very tempestuous round about him; the time of Jerusalem's destruction being such a time of trouble as has not been since the world began, (\*\*PEL\*\*Matthew 24:21).

**Ver. 4**. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth*, etc.] To hear what he shall say, when he will no longer keep silence; and to be witnesses of the justice of his proceedings; (see Tsaiah 1:2 Deuteronomy 4:26). The Targum interprets this of the angels above on high, and of the righteous on the earth below; and so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, explain it of the angels of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth:

that he may judge his people; not that they, the heavens and the earth, the inhabitants of either, may judge his people; but the Lord himself, as in (\*\*\*TIS\*\*Psalm 50:6); and this designs not the judgment of the whole world, nor that of his own covenant people, whom he judges when he corrects them in love, that they might not be condemned with the world; when he vindicates them, and avenges them on their enemies, and when he protects and saves them; but the judgment of the Jewish nation, his professing people, the same that Peter speaks of, (\*\*\*TIS\*\*IT Peter 4:17).

**Ver. 5**. *Gather my saints together unto me*, etc.] These words are spoken by Christ to the heavens and the earth; that is, to the angels, the ministers of the Gospel, to gather in, by the ministry of the word, his elect ones among the Gentiles; (see \*\*Matthew 24:30); called his "saints", who had

an interest in his favour and lovingkindness, and were sanctified or set apart for his service and glory;

those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice; or, "who have made my covenant by, or on sacrifice" f670; the covenant of grace, which was made with Christ from everlasting, and which was confirmed by his blood and sacrifice; this his people may be said to make with God in him, he being their head, surety, and representative: now these covenant ones he will have gathered in to himself by the effectual calling, which is usually done by the ministry of the word; for this is not to be understood of the gathering of all nations to him, before him as a Judge; but of his special people to him as a Saviour, the "Shiloh", to whom the gathering of the people was to be, (\*\*Genesis 49:10) (\*\*\*Zechariah 10:8).

**Ver. 6**. *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness*, etc.] That is, either the heavens shall bear witness to his justice and equity in judging his people; or the angels, the ministers of the Gospel, shall declare his justifying righteousness, which is revealed in it, to the saints and covenant ones they shall be a means of gathering in: or rather the justice of Christ in the destruction of the Jews shall be attested and applauded by angels and men, just as the righteousness of God in the destruction of the antichristian powers is celebrated by the angel of the waters, (\*\*GOS\*Revelation 16:5,6);

for God [is] Judge himself. And not another, or by another; and therefore his judgments must be just and righteous, seeing he is just and true, loves righteousness, and is righteous in all his ways and works.

*Selah*; on this word, (see Gill on "Psalm 3:2").

**Ver. 7**. *Hear, O my people*, etc.] This is an address to the people of the Jews, whom God had chosen to be his people above all others, and who professed themselves to be his people; but now a "loammi", (\*\*\*Hosea 1:9), was about to be written upon them, being a people uncircumcised in heart and ears, refusing to hear the great Prophet of the church, him that spake from heaven;

and I will speak: by way of accusation and charge, and in judgment against them for their sins and transgressions;

*O Israel, and I will testify against thee*; or "to thee" <sup>f671</sup>; to thy face produce witnesses, and bring sufficient evidence to prove the things laid to thy charge,

*I [am] God, [even] thy God*; which is an aggravation of their sin against him, and is the reason why they should hearken to him; (see \*\*\*Psalm 81:10-12).

**Ver. 8**. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices*, etc.] For the neglect of them; this they were not chargeable with; and had they omitted them, a charge would not have been brought against them on that account, since these were not what God commanded when he brought them out of Egypt, (AUTO) Jeremiah 7:22); and were now abrogated; and when they were in force, acts of mercy, kindness, and beneficence, were preferred unto them, (AUTO) Hosea 6:6);

**Ver. 9**. *I will take no bullock out of thy house*, etc.] That is, will accept of none; such sacrifices being no more agreeable to the will of God, (\*\*UD\*Hebrews 10:5,6,8); the "bullock" is mentioned, that being a principal creature used in sacrifice; as also the following,

[nor] he goats out of thy folds; the reasons follow.

**Ver. 10**. For every beast of the forest [is] mine, etc.] By creation and preservation; and therefore he stood in no need of their bullocks and he goats;

[and the cattle upon a thousand hills; meaning all the cattle in the whole world.

**Ver. 11**. *I know all the fowls of the mountains*, etc.] God not only knows them, but takes care of them; not a sparrow fails to the ground without his

knowledge, and all the fowls of the air are fed by him, (\*\*Matthew 10:29 6:26); and therefore needed not their turtledoves and young pigeons, which were the only fowls used in sacrifice;

**Ver. 12**. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee*, etc.] Or "say to thee" for anything

for the world [is] mine, and the fulness thereof; with which, was the former his case, he could satisfy himself; (see \*Psalm 24:1).

**Ver. 13**. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?] That is, express a pleasure, take delight and satisfaction, in such kind of sacrifices, which can never take away sin: no, I will not; wherefore other sacrifices, more agreeable to his nature, mind, and will, and to the Gospel dispensation, are next mentioned.

Ver. 14. Offer unto God thanksgiving, etc.] Which is a sacrifice, (\*\*PD\*\*Psalm 50:23 Psalm 116:17 Hebrews 13:15); and the Jews say <sup>674</sup>, that all sacrifices will cease in future time, the times of the Messiah, but the sacrifice of praise; and this should be offered up for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; and unto God, because they all come from him; and because such sacrifices are well pleasing to him, and are no other than our reasonable service, and agreeably to his will; and then are they offered up aright when they are offered up through Christ, the great High Priest, by whom they are acceptable unto God, and upon him the altar, which sanctifies every gift, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God. Some render the word "confession" f675; and in all thanksgivings it is necessary that men should confess their sins and unworthiness, and acknowledge the goodness of God, and ascribe all the glory to him; for to him, and him only, is this sacrifice to be offered: not to man; for that would be to sacrifice to his own net, and burn incense to his drag;

and pay thy vows unto the most High: meaning not ceremonial ones, as the vow of the Nazarite; nor to offer such and such a sacrifice, since these are distinguished from and opposed unto the sacrifices of the ceremonial law before mentioned; and much less monastic ones, as the vow of celibacy, and abstinence from certain meats at certain times; but moral, or spiritual

and evangelical ones; such as devoting one's self to the Lord and to his service and worship, under the influence and in the strength of grace; signified by saying, I am the Lord's, and the giving up ourselves to him and to his churches, to walk with them in all his commands and ordinances, to which his love and grace constrain and oblige; (see Constrain and oblige; (see Constrain Section 1) and particularly by them may be meant giving God the glory and praise of every mercy and deliverance, as was promised previous to it; hence those are put together, (Constrain 65:1). This Scripture does not oblige to the making of vows, but to the payment of them when made; (see Constrain 1) Ecclesiastes 5:4,5); and may refer to everything a man lays himself in a solemn manner under obligation to perform, especially in religious affairs.

**Ver. 15**. *And call upon me in the day of trouble*, etc.] This is another part of spiritual sacrifice or worship, which is much more acceptable to God than legal sacrifices. Invocation of God includes all parts of religious worship, and particularly designs prayer, as it does here, of which God, and he only, is the object; and which should be performed in faith, in sincerity, and with fervency; and though it should be made at all times, in private and in public, yet more especially should be attended to in a time of affliction, whether of soul or body, whether of a personal, family, or public kind, (\*\$955\$James 5:13); and the encouragement to it is,

*I will deliver thee*: that is, out of trouble: as he is able, so faithful is he that hath promised, and will do it. The obligation follows,

and thou shall glorify me; by offering praise, (\*\*Psalm 50:23); ascribing the glory of the deliverance to God, and serving him in righteousness and true holiness continually.

**Ver. 16**. *But unto the wicked God saith*, etc.] By whom are meant, not openly profane sinners; but men under a profession of religion, and indeed who were teachers of others, as appears from the following expostulation with them: the Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors among the Jews, are designed; and so Kimchi interprets it of their wise men, who learnt and taught the law, but did not act according to it. It seems as if the preceding verses respected the truly godly among the Jews, who believed in Christ, and yet were zealous of the law; and retained legal sacrifices; as such there were, (\*\*PD\*\*Acts 21:20); and that these words, and what follow, are spoken to hypocrites among them, who sat in Moses's chair, and said, and did not;

were outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly full of wickedness, destitute of the grace of God and righteousness of Christ;

what hast thou to do to declare my statutes; the laws of God, which were given to the people of Israel; some of which were of a moral, others of a ceremonial, and others of a judicial nature; and there were persons appointed to teach and explain these to the people, as the priests and Levites: now some of these were abrogated, and not to be declared at all in the times this psalm refers to; and as for others, those persons were very improper to teach and urge the observance of them, when they themselves did not keep them; and especially it was wrong in them to declare them to the people, for such purposes as they did, namely, to obtain life and righteousness by them;

or [that] thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? which is to be understood, not of the covenant of works made with Adam, and now broke; nor of the pure covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation, of which Christ is the Mediator, and the Gospel a transcript, since both were rejected by these persons; but the covenant at Mount Sinai, which was a typical one; and being in some sense faulty, was now antiquated, and ought to have ceased; and therefore these men are blamed for taking it in their mouths, and urging it on the people: and besides, they had no true sight of and faith in the thing exhibited by it; and moreover were not steadfast, nor did they continue in it, like their fathers before them, (\*\*\*PSSIM\*\* 78:37) (\*\*\*\*\* Psalm 78:37) (\*\*\*\*\* Psalm 78:37)

**Ver. 17**. *Seeing thou hatest instruction*, etc.] Or "correction" <sup>676</sup>; to be reproved or reformed by the statutes and covenant they declared to others; they taught others, but not themselves, ( Romans 2:21-23); or evangelical instruction, the doctrines of grace, and of Christ; for, as concerning the Gospel, they were enemies, ( Romans 11:28); and since they were haters of that, they ought not to have been teachers of others;

and castest my words behind thee; the doctrines of the Gospel, which they despised and rejected with the utmost abhorrence, as loathsome, and not fit to be looked upon and into; and also the ordinances of it, the counsel of God, which they rejected against themselves, (\*\*Acts 13:45,46\*\*\*Luke 7:30).

**Ver. 18**. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, etc.] Or "didst run with him" f677; joined and agreed with him in the commission

of the same things; which was literally true of the Scribes and Pharisees: they devoured widows' houses, and robbed them of their substance, under a pretence of long prayers; they consented to the deeds of Barabbas, a robber, when they preferred him to Jesus Christ; and they joined with the thieves on the cross in reviling him: and, in a spiritual sense, they stole away the word of the Lord, every man from his neighbour; took away the key of knowledge from the people, and put false glosses upon the sacred writings;

and hast been a partaker with adulterers; these teachers of the law were guilty both of theft and adultery, (\*\*Romans 2:21,22); they are called by our Lord an adulterous generation, (\*\*\*P\*\*Matthew 12:39); and they were so in a literal sense; (see \*\*\*\*John 8:4-9); and in a figurative one, adulterating the word of God, and handling it deceitfully.

**Ver. 19**. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil*, etc.] To speak evil things against Christ, his doctrines, ordinances, ministers and people; and to deliver out evil doctrines, pernicious to the souls of men;

and thy tongue frameth deceit; puts and joins together deceitful words in a very artful manner, by which simple and unstable minds are beguiled.

**Ver. 20**. *Thou sittest*, etc.] Either in the chair of Moses, or on the seat of judgment, in the great sanhedrim of the nation; or, as Aben Ezra paraphrases it, "in the seat of the scornful";

[and] speakest against thy brother; even to pass sentence upon him, to put him to death for professing faith in Christ, (\*\*\*Matthew 10:21);

thou slanderest thine own mother's son; the apostles and disciples of Christ, who were their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who was bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.

**Ver. 21**. *These things hast thou done*, etc.] "These evil works", as the Targum; which they had done over and over again without remorse, with the greatest pleasure, and with promises of impunity to themselves. This is a confirmation of the charge made by the omniscient God, who saw and knew all their actions;

and I kept silence; spoke not by terrible things in righteousness, deferred the execution of judgment, exercised forbearance and patience, and gave

space to repent; which being despised, they were hardened yet more and more in sin; (see \*\*\*Ecclesiastes 8:11 \*\*\*Romans 2:4,5). This refers to the space of time between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem:

thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; either that he did not see the things committed by them in secret, as the things before mentioned, theft, adultery, slander, and detraction, commonly are; because they could not see such actions done by others: or that he took pleasure in them, as they did, and that he approved of their crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, and of their contempt of his Gospel, and of the persecution of his followers;

[but] I will reprove thee: not verbally by the ministry of the word, much less effectually and savingly by his Spirit; nor in a way of fatherly correction and chastisement; but by sore judgments; by sending the Roman armies to burn their city and temple, and carry them captive;

and set [them] in order before thine eyes; that is, their sins, and thereby fully confute their vain imagination, that either he did not take notice of them, or else approved of them. This signifies a formal process against them, as in a court of judicature; bringing in a regular charge and accusation against them, and an orderly disposition of their sins, as to time, place, and circumstances, committed by them, and a strong evidence or thorough conviction of them, so as not to be denied and gainsaid by them: or a setting them in battle array, as in (\*\*\*TOD\*\*Job 6:4); in rank and file; sins being what war against men, and bring upon them utter ruin and destruction; as the sins of the Jews fought against them, and destroyed them; (see \*\*TOD\*\*Jeremiah 2:19).

**Ver. 22**. *Now consider this*, etc.] The evils that had been committed, and repent of them; for repentance is an after thought and reconsideration of sin, and humiliation for it; that the Lord, was not like them, not an approver of sin, but a reprover for it; and what would be their latter end, what all this would issue in, in case of impenitence;

*ye that forget God*; that there is a God, his being, perfections, word, works, and benefits;

*lest I tear [you] in pieces*; as a lion, leopard, or bear; (see 3800 Hosea 13:7,8); which was accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem; when both their civil and ecclesiastical state were torn in pieces; their city and

temple levelled with the ground, and not one stone left upon another; and they scattered about in the earth;

and [there be] none to deliver; which denotes their utter and irreparable ruin, till the time comes they shall turn to the Lord; (see \*\*\* Isaiah 42:22).

**Ver. 23**. *Whoso offereth praise*, etc.], Which is exhorted to; (see Gill on "STAP Salm 50:14");

*glorifieth me*; celebrates the divine perfections, gives God the glory of all mercies; which honours him, and is more grateful and well pleasing to him than all burnt offerings and sacrifices;

and to him that ordereth [his] conversation [aright]; according to the rule of God's word, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; who walks inoffensively to all, circumspectly and wisely in the world, and in love to the saints; in wisdom towards them that are without, and in peace with them that are within; who is a follower of God, of Christ, and of his people; and who lives so as to glorify God, and cause others to glorify him likewise: or that chooses for himself the right way, as Aben Ezra, the right way to eternal life; and the sense is, he that puts or sets his heart upon it, and is in pursuit after the evangelical way of life. To him

will I show the salvation of God; or, "cause to see" or "enjoy it" for only temporal salvation from time to time, but spiritual and eternal salvation; to see interest in it, and to possess it; and particularly Christ, the author of it, who is the salvation of God's providing, appointing, and sending, and whose glory is greatly concerned therein; (see Signal Saiah 52:10 Luke 2:25,30).