

# Exposition on Psalm 50

by St. Augustine

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*St. Augustine's exposition on Psalm 50 emphasizes the need for self-examination, the nature of God, and the hope of resurrection and eternal life through grace.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 49:1-50

**Topics:** "Repentance And Forgiveness", "Praise And Worship"

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## Description

St. Augustine preaches about the importance of offering the sacrifice of praise to God, emphasizing the need for genuine repentance and acknowledgment of one's sins. He warns against flattery and deceit, urging believers to seek God's mercy and grace through humility and contrition. The sermon highlights the consequences of praising evil deeds and failing to live a righteous life, pointing to the salvation found in Christ for those who humbly seek His forgiveness and grace.

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## Transcript

1. How much avails the Word of God to us for the correction of our life, both regarding His rewards to be expected, and His punishments to be feared, let each one measure in himself; and let him put his conscience without deceit before His eyes, and not flatter himself in a danger so great: for you see that even our Lord God Himself does flatter no one: though He comforts us by promising His blessings, and by strengthening our hope; yet them that live ill and despise His word He assuredly spares not. Let each one examine himself, while it is time, and let him see where he is, and either persevere in good, or be changed from evil. For as he says in this Psalm, not any man whatever nor any angel whatever, but, The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken Psalm 49:1. But in speaking, He has done what? He has called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down. He that has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, is Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, John 1:14 in order that He might dwell in us. Our Lord Jesus Christ then is the God of gods; because by Himself were all things made, and without Himself was nothing made. The Word of God, if He is God, is truly the God of gods; but whether He be God the Gospel answers, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 And if all things were made by Himself, as He says in the sequel, then if any were made gods, by Himself were they made. For the one God was not made, and He is Himself alone truly God. But Himself the only God, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, is one God.

2. But then who are those gods, or where are they, of whom God is the true God? Another Psalm says, God has stood in the synagogue of gods, but in the midst He judges gods. As yet we know not whether

perchance any gods be congregated in heaven, and in their congregation, for this is in the synagogue, God has stood to judge. See in the same Psalm those to whom he says, I have said, You are gods, and children of the Highest all; but you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

It is evident then, that He has called men gods, that are deified of His Grace, not born of His Substance. For He does justify, who is just through His own self, and not of another; and He does deify who is God through Himself, not by the partaking of another. But He that justifies does Himself deify, in that by justifying He does make sons of God. For He has given them power to become the sons of God. John 1:12 If we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods: but this is the effect of Grace adopting, not of nature generating.

For the only Son of God, God, and one God with the Father, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was in the beginning the Word, and the Word with God, the Word God. The rest that are made gods, are made by His own Grace, are not born of His Substance, that they should be the same as He, but that by favour they should come to Him, and be fellow-heirs with Christ. For so great is the love in Him the Heir, that He has willed to have fellow-heirs. What covetous man would will this, to have fellow-heirs?

But even one that is found so to will, will share with them the inheritance, the sharer having less himself, than if he had possessed alone: but the inheritance wherein we are fellow-heirs of Christ, is not lessened by multitude of possessors, nor is it made narrower by the number of fellow-heirs: but is as great for many as it is for few, as great for individuals as for all. See, says the Apostle, what love God has bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and be, the sons of God. 1 John 3:1 And in another place, Dearly beloved, we are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.

We are therefore in hope, not yet in substance. But we know, he says, that when He shall have appeared, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:2 The Only Son is like Him by birth, we like by seeing. For we are not like in such sort as He, who is the same as He is by whom He was begotten: for we are like, not equal: He, because equal, is therefore like. We have heard who are the gods that being made are justified, because they are called the sons of God: and who are the gods that are not Gods, to whom the God of gods is terrible?

For another Psalm says, He is terrible over all gods. And as if you should enquire, what gods? He says, For all the gods of the nations are devils. To the gods of the nations, to the devils, terrible: to the gods made by Himself, to sons, lovely. Furthermore, I find both of them confessing the Majesty of God, both the devils confessed Christ, and the faithful confessed Christ. You are Christ, the Son of the living God, Matthew 16:16 said Peter. We know who You are, You are the Son of God, said the devils.

A like confession I hear, but like love I find not; nay even here love, there fear. To whom therefore He is lovely, the same are sons; to whom He is terrible, are not sons; to whom He is lovely, the same He has made gods; those to whom He is terrible He does prove not to be gods. For these are made gods, those are reputed gods; these Truth makes gods, those error does so account.

3. The God, therefore, of gods, the Lord has spoken Psalm 49:1. Hath spoken many ways. By Angels He has Himself spoken, by Prophets He has Himself spoken, by His own mouth He has Himself spoken, by His faithful He does Himself speak, by our lowliness, when we say anything true, He does Himself speak. See then, by speaking diversely, many ways, by many vessels, by many instruments, yet He does Himself sound everywhere, by touching, moulding, inspiring: see what He has done. For He has spoken, and has called the world. What world? Africa, perhaps! For the sake of those that say, the Church of Christ is the

portion of Donatus. Africa indeed alone He has not called, but even Africa He has not severed. For He that has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, leaving out no parts that He has not called, in His calling has found Africa. Let it rejoice therefore in unity, not pride itself in division. We say well, that the voice of the God of gods has come even into Africa, has not stayed in Africa. For He has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down. There is no place where may lurk the conspiracies of heretics, they have no place wherein they may hide themselves under the shadow of falsehood; for there is none that can hide himself from the heat thereof. He that has called the world, has called even the whole world: He that has called the world, has called as much as He has formed. Why do false christs and false prophets rise up against me? Why is it that they strive to ensnare me with captious words, saying, Lo! Here is Christ, Lo! He is there! Matthew 24:23 I hear not them that point out portions: the God of gods has pointed out the whole: He that has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, has redeemed the whole; but has condemned them that lay false claim to portions.

4. But we have heard the world called from the rising of the sun unto the going down: whence does He begin to call, who has called? This thing also hear ye: Out of Sion is the semblance of His beauty Psalm 49:2. Evidently the Psalm does agree with the Gospel, which says, Throughout all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47 Hear, Throughout all nations: He has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down. Hear, Beginning at Jerusalem: Out of Sion is the semblance of His beauty. Therefore, He has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, agrees with the words of the Lord, who says, It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name throughout all nations. Luke 24:46-47 For all nations are from the rising of the sun unto the going down. But that, Out of Sion is the semblance of His beauty. that thence begins the beauty of His Gospel, that thence He began to be preached, being beautiful in form beyond the sons of men, agrees with the words of the Lord, who says, Beginning at Jerusalem. New things are in tune with old, old things with new: the two Seraphim say to one another, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Isaiah 6:3 The two Testaments are both in tune, and the two Testaments have one voice: let the voice of the Testaments in tune be heard, not that of pretenders disinherited. This thing then has the God of gods done, He has called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, His semblance going before out of Sion. For in that place were His disciples, Acts 1:4 who received the Holy Ghost sent from heaven on the fiftieth day after His resurrection. Thence the Gospel, thence the preaching, thence the whole world filled, and that in the Grace of Faith.

5. For when the Lord Himself had come, because He came to suffer, He came hidden: and though He was strong in Himself, He appeared in the flesh weak. For He must needs appear in order that He might not be perceived; be despised, in order that He might be slain. There was semblance of glory in divinity, but it lay concealed in flesh. For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. 1 Corinthians 2:8 So then He walked hidden among the Jews, among His enemies, doing marvels, suffering ills, until He was hanged on the tree, and the Jews seeing Him hanging both despised Him the more, and before the Cross wagging their heads they said, If He be the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross.

Matthew 27:39-40 Hidden then was the God of gods, and He gave forth words more out of compassion for us than out of His own majesty. For whence, unless assumed from us, were those words, My God, My God, why have You forsaken me? But when has the Father forsaken the Son, or the Son the Father? Are not Father and Son one God? Whence then, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, save that in the Flesh of infirmity there was acknowledged the voice of a sinner? For as He took upon Him the likeness of the flesh of sin, Romans 8:3 why should He not take upon Him the voice of sin?

Hidden then was the God of gods, both when He walked among men, and when He hungered, and when He thirsted, and when fatigued He sat, and when with wearied body He slept, and when taken, and when scourged, and when standing before the judge, and when He made answer to him in his pride, You could have no power against Me, except it had been given you from above; John 19:11 and while led as a victim before His shearer He opened not His mouth, Isaiah 53:7 and while crucified, and while buried, He was always hidden God of gods.

What took place after He rose again? The disciples marvelled, and at first believed not, until they touched and handled. Luke 24:37-40 But flesh had risen, because flesh had been dead: Divinity which could not die, even still lay hid in the flesh of Him rising. Form could be seen, limbs held, scars handled: the Word by whom all things were made, who does see? Who does hold? Who does handle? And yet the Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us. John 1:14 And Thomas, that was holding Man, understood God as he was able.

For when he had handled the scars, he cried out, My Lord, and my God. Yet the Lord was showing that form, and that flesh, which they had seen upon the Cross, which had been laid in the sepulchre. He stayed with them forty days....But what was said to Thomas handling? Because you have seen, you have believed; blessed are they that see not, and believe. John 20:29 We are foretold. That world called from the rising of the sun unto the going down sees not, and believes. Hidden then is the God of gods, both to those among whom He walked, and to those by whom He was crucified, and to those before whose eyes He rose, and to us who believe in Him in heaven sitting, whom we have not seen on earth walking.

But even if we were to see, should we not see that which the Jews saw and crucified? It is more, that not seeing we believe Christ to be God, than that they seeing deemed Him only to be man. They in a word by thinking evil slew, we by believing well are made alive.

6. What then, brethren? This God of gods, both then hidden, and now hidden, shall He ever be hidden? Evidently not: hear what follows: God shall come manifest Psalm 49:3. He that came hidden, shall come manifest. Hidden He came to be judged, manifest He shall come to judge: hidden He came that He might stand before a judge, manifest He shall come that He may be judge even of judges: He shall come manifest, and shall not be silent. But why? Is He now silent? And whence are all the words that we say? Whence those precepts? Whence those warnings? Whence that trumpet of terror? He is not silent, and is silent: is not silent from warning, is silent from avenging: is not silent from precept, is silent from judgment. For He suffers sinners daily doing evil things, not caring for God, not in their conscience, not in heaven, not in earth: all these things escape Him not, and universally He does admonish all; and whenever He chastises any on earth, it is admonition, not yet condemnation. He is silent then from judgment, He is hidden in heaven, as yet He intercedes for us: He is long-suffering to sinners, not putting forth His wrath, but awaiting penitence. He says in another place: I have held my peace, shall I always hold my peace? Isaiah 42:14 When then He shall not hold His peace, God shall come manifest. What God? Our God. And the God Himself, who is our God: for he is not God, who is not our God. For the gods of the nations are devils: the God of Christians is very God. Himself shall come, but manifest, not still to be mocked, not still to be buffeted and scourged: He shall come, but manifest, not still to be smitten with a reed upon the head, not still to be crucified, slain, buried: for all these things God being hidden has willed to suffer. He shall come manifest, and shall not be silent.

7. But that He shall come to judgment, the following words teach. Fire shall go before Him. Do we fear? Be we changed, and we shall not fear. Let chaff fear the fire: what does it to gold? What you may do is now in

your power, so you may not experience, for want of being corrected, that which is to come even against your will. For if we might so bring it about, brethren, that the day of judgment should not come; I think that even then it were not for us to live ill. If the fire of the day of judgment were not to come, and over sinners there impended only separation from the face of God, in whatever affluence of delights they might be, not seeing Him by whom they were created, and separated from that sweetness of His ineffable countenance, in whatever eternity and impunity of sin, they ought to bemoan themselves.

But what shall I say, or to whom shall I say? This is a punishment to lovers, not to despisers. They that have begun to feel in any degree the sweetness of wisdom and truth, know what I say, how great a punishment it is to be only separated from the face of God: but they that have not tasted that sweetness, if not yet they yearn for the face of God, let them fear even fire; let punishments terrify those, whom rewards win not. Of no value to you is what God promises, tremble at what He threatens.

The sweetness of His presence shall come; you are not changed, you are not awakened, you sigh not, you long not: you embrace your sins and the delights of your flesh, you are heaping stubble to yourself, the fire will come. Fire shall burn in His presence. This fire will not be like your hearth-fire, into which nevertheless, if you are compelled to thrust your hand, you will do whatsoever he would have you who does threaten this alternative. If he say to you, write against the life of your father, write against the lives of your children, for if you do not, I thrust your hand into your fire: you will do it in order that your hand be not burned, in order that your member be not burned for a time, though it is not to be ever in pain.

Your enemy threatens then but so light an evil, and you do evil; God threatens eternal evil, and doest thou not good? To do evil not even menaces should compel you: from doing good not even menaces should deter you. But by the menaces of God, by menaces of everlasting fire, you are dissuaded from evil, invited to good. Wherefore does it grieve you, except because you believe not? Let each one then examine his heart, and see what faith does hold there. If we believe a judgment to come, brethren, let us live well.

Now is time of mercy, then will be time of judgment. No one will say, Call me back to my former years. Even then men will repent, but will repent in vain: now let there be repentance, while there is fruit of repentance; now let there be applied to the roots of the tree a basket of dung, Luke 13:8 sorrow of heart, and tears; lest He come and pluck up by the roots. For when He shall have plucked up, then the fire is to be looked for. Now, even if the branches have been broken, they can again be grafted in: Romans 11:19 then, every tree which brings not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Matthew 3:10 Fire shall burn in His presence.

8. And a mighty tempest round about Him Psalm 49:3. A mighty tempest, in order to winnow so great a floor. In this tempest shall be that winnowing whereby from the saints shall be put away everything impure, from the faithful every unreality; from godly men and them that fear the Word of God, every scorner and every proud man. For now a sort of mixture does lie there, from the rising of the sun unto the going down. Let us see then how He will do that is to come, what He will do with that tempest which shall be a mighty tempest round about Him. Doubtless this tempest is to make a sort of separation. It is that separation which they waited not for, who broke the nets, before they came to land. Luke 5:6 But in this separation there is made a sort of distinction between good men and bad men. There be some that now follow Christ with lightened shoulders without the load of the world's cares, who have not heard in vain, If you will be perfect, go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me; Matthew 19:21 to which sort is said, You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28 Some then shall be judging with the Lord: but others to be judged, but to be

placed on the right hand. For that there will be certain judging with the Lord, we have most evident testimony, which I have but now quoted: You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel....

9. But what the Lord did after His resurrection, signified what is to be to us after our resurrection, in that number of the kingdom of heaven, where shall be no bad man....Lastly, those seven thousand of whom reply was made to Elias, I have left me seven thousand men that have not bowed knees before Baal, 1 Kings 19:18 far exceed that number of fishes. Therefore the hundred and fifty-three fishes John 21:11 does not alone express just such a number of saints, but Scripture does express the whole number of saints and righteous men by so great a number for a particular reason; to wit, in order that in those hundred and fifty-three all may be understood that pertain to the resurrection to eternal life.

For the Law has ten commandments: Deuteronomy 4:13 but the Spirit of Grace, through which alone the Law is fulfilled, Isaiah 11:2-3 is called sevenfold. The number then must be examined, what mean ten and seven: ten in commandments, seven in the grace of the Holy Spirit: by which grace the commandments are fulfilled. Ten then and seven contain all that pertain to the resurrection, to the right hand, to the kingdom of heaven, to life eternal, that is, they that fulfil the Law by the Grace of the Spirit, not as it were by their own work or their own merit.

But ten and seven, if you count from one unto seventeen, by adding all the numbers by steps, so that to one you may add two, add three, add four, that they may become ten, by adding five that they may become fifteen, by adding six that they may become twenty-one, by adding seven that they may become twenty-eight, by adding eight that they may become thirty-six, by adding nine that they may become forty-five, by adding ten that they may become fifty-five, by adding eleven that they may become sixty-six, by adding twelve that they may become seventy-eight, by adding thirteen that they may become ninety-one, by adding fourteen that they may become one hundred and five, by adding fifteen that they may become one hundred and twenty, by adding sixteen that they may become one hundred and thirty-six, by adding seventeen, make up one hundred and fifty-three, you will find a vast number of all saints to belong to this number of a few fishes.

In like manner then as in five virgins, countless virgins; as in five brethren of him that was tormented in hell, thousands of the people of the Jews; as in the number of one hundred and fifty-three fishes, thousands of thousands of saints: so in twelve thrones, not twelve men, but great is the number of the perfect. 10. But I see what is next required of us; in like manner as in the case of the five virgins, a reason was given why many should belong to five, and why to those five many Jews, and why to a hundred and fifty-three many perfect-- to show why and how to the twelve thrones not twelve men, but many belong.

What mean the twelve thrones, which signify all men everywhere that have been enabled to be so perfect as they must be perfect, to whom it is said, You shall sit over the twelve tribes of Israel? Matthew 19:28 And why do all men everywhere belong to the number twelve? Because the very everywhere which we say, we say of the whole world: but the compass of lands is contained in four particular quarters, East, West, South, and North: from all these quarters they being called in the Trinity and made perfect in the faith and precept of the Trinity,-- seeing that three times four are twelve, you perceive wherefore the saints belong to the whole world; they that shall sit upon twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, since the twelve tribes of Israel, also, are the twelve tribes of the whole of Israel.

For like as they that are to judge are from the whole world, so also they that are to be judged are from the whole world. The Apostle Paul of himself, when he was reprovng believing laymen, because they referred not their causes to the Church, but dragged them with whom they had matters before the public, said, Do you not know that we shall judge Angels? 1 Corinthians 6:3 See after what sort He has made Himself judge: not only himself, but also all that judge aright in the Church.

11. Since then it is evident, that many are to judge with the Lord, but that others are to be judged, not however on equality, but according to their deserts; He will come with all His Angels, Matthew 25:31 when before Him shall be gathered all nations, and among all the Angels are to be reckoned those that have been made so perfect, that sitting upon twelve thrones they judge the twelve tribes of Israel. For men are called Angels: the Apostle says of himself, As an angel of God ye received me.

Galatians 4:14 Of John Baptist it is said, Behold, I send My Angel before Your face, that shall prepare Your way before You. Therefore, coming with all Angels, together with Him He shall have the Saints also. For plainly says Isaias also, He shall come to judgment with the elders of the people. Isaiah 3:14 Those elders of the people, then, those but now named Angels, those thousands of many men made perfect coming from the whole world, are called Heaven. But the others are called earth, yet fruitful.

Which is the earth that is fruitful? That which is to be set on the right hand, unto which it shall be said, I was an hungred, and you gave Me to eat: Matthew 25:35 truly fruitful earth in which the Apostle does joy, when they sent to him to supply his necessities: Not because I ask a gift, he says, but I require fruit. Philippians 4:17 And he gives thanks, saying, Because at length you have budded forth again to be thoughtful for me. Philippians 4:10 He says, You have budded forth again, as to trees which had withered away with a kind of barrenness.

Therefore the Lord coming to judgment (that we may now hear the Psalm, brethren), He will do what? He will call the heaven from above Psalm 49:4. The heaven, all the Saints, those made perfect that shall judge, them He shall call from above, to be sitters with Him to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. For how shall He call the heaven from above, when the heaven is always above? But those that He here calls heaven, the same elsewhere He calls heavens. What heavens? That tell out the glory of God: for, The heavens tell out the glory of God: whereof is said, Into all the earth their sound has gone forth, and into the ends of the world their words.

For see the Lord severing in judgment: He shall call the heaven from above and the earth, to sever His people. From whom but from evil men? Of whom here afterwards no mention is made, now as it were condemned to punishment. See these good men, and distinguish. He shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, to sever His people. He calls the earth also, not however to be associated, but to be dissociated. For at first He called them together, when the God of gods spoke and called the world from the rising of the sun unto the going down, He had not yet severed: those servants had been sent to bid to the marriage, Matthew 22:3 who had gathered good and bad.

But when the God of gods shall come manifest and shall not keep silence, He shall so call the heaven from above that it may judge with Him. For what the heaven is, the heavens themselves are; just as what the earth is, the lands themselves, just as what the Church is, the Churches themselves: He shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, to sever His people. Now with the heaven He severs the earth, that is, the heaven with Him does sever the earth. How does He sever the earth?

In such sort that He sets on the right hand some, others on the left. But to the earth severed, He says what? Come, you blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was an hungred, and you gave me to eat, and so forth. But they say, When saw we You an hungred? And He, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of Mine, you have done it unto Me. He shall call therefore the heaven from above, and the earth, to sever His people.

12. Gather to Him His righteous Psalm 49:5. The voice divine and prophetic, seeing future things as if present does exhort the Angels gathering. For He shall send His Angels, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Matthew 25:32 Gather to Him His righteous. What righteous men save those that live of faith and do works of mercy? For those works are works of righteousness. You have the Gospel: Beware of doing your righteousness before men to be seen of them. Matthew 6:1 And as if it were inquired, What righteousness? When therefore you do alms, He says. Therefore alms He has signified to be works of righteousness. Those very persons gather for His righteous: gather those that have had compassion on the needy, that have considered the needy and poor: gather them, The Lord preserve them, and make them to live; Gather to Him His righteous: who order His covenant above sacrifices: that is, who think of His promises above those things which they work. For those things are sacrifices, God saying, I will have mercy more than sacrifice. Who keep His covenant more than sacrifice.

13. And the Heaven shall declare His righteousness Psalm 49:6. Truly this righteousness of God to us the heavens have declared, the Evangelists have foretold. Through them we have heard that some will be on the right hand, to whom the Householder says, Come, you blessed of My Father, receive. Matthew 25:34 Receive what? A kingdom. In return for what thing? I was an hungred, and you gave Me to eat. What so valueless, what so earthly, as to break bread to the hungry? At so much is valued the kingdom of heaven. Break your bread to the hungry, and the needy without covering bring into your house; if you see one naked, clothe him. Isaiah 58:7 If you have not the means of breaking bread, hast not house into which you may bring, hast not garment wherewith you may cover: give a cup of cold water, Matthew 10:42 cast two mites into the treasury. Mark 12:42 As much the widow does buy with two mites, as Peter buys, by leaving the nets, Matthew 4:20 as Zacchæus buys by giving half his goods. Luke 19:8 Of so much worth is all that you have. The heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God is Judge. Truly judge not confounding but severing. For the Lord knows them that are His. 2 Timothy 2:19 Even if grains lie hidden in the chaff, they are known to the husbandman. Let no one fear that he is a grain even among the chaff; the eyes of our winnowers are not deceived. Fear not lest that tempest, which shall be round about Him, should confound you with chaff. Certainly mighty will be the tempest; yet not one grain will it sweep from the side of the grain to the chaff: because not any rustic with three-pronged fork, but God, Three in One, is Judge. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge. Let heavens go, let the heavens tell, into every land let their sound go out, and unto the ends of the world their words: and let that body say, From the ends of the world unto You have I cried, when my heart was in heaviness. For now mingled it groans, divided it shall rejoice. Let it cry then and say, Destroy not my soul with ungodly men, and with men of blood my life. He destroys not together, because God is Judge. Let it cry to Him and say, Judge me, O Lord, and sever my cause from the nation unholy: let it say, He shall do it: there shall be gathered to Him His righteous ones. He has called the earth that He may sever His people.

14. Hear, my people, and I will speak to you Psalm 49:7. He shall come and shall not keep silence; see how that even now, if you hear, He is not silent. Hear, my people, and I will speak to you. For if you hear not, I will not speak to you. Hear, and I will speak to you. For if you hear not, even though I shall speak, it will not be to you. When then shall I speak to you? If you hear? When do you hear? If you are my people.

For, Hear, my people: you hear not if you are an alien people. Hear, my people, and I will speak to you: Israel, and I will testify to you....For Your God, is properly said to that man whom God does keep more as one of His family, as though in His household, as though in His peculiar: Your God am I. What will you more? Requirest thou a reward from God, so that God may give you something; so that what He has given you may be your own? Behold God Himself, who shall give, is your own. What richer than He? Gifts you were desiring, you have the Giver Himself. God, your God, I am.

15. What He requires of man, let us see; what tribute our God, our Emperor and our King does enjoin us; since He has willed to be our King, and has willed us to be His province? Let us hear His injunctions. Let not a poor man tremble beneath the injunction of God: what God enjoins to be given to Himself, He does Himself first give that enjoins: be ye only devoted. God does not exact what He has not given, and to all men has given what He does exact. For what does He exact? Let us hear now: I will not reprove you because of your sacrifices Psalm 49:8. I will not say to you, Wherefore have you not slain for me a fat bull? Why have you not selected the best he-goat from your flock? Wherefore does that ram amble among your sheep, and is not laid upon mine altar? I will not say, Examine your fields and your pen and your walls, seeking what you may give Me. I will not reprove you because of your sacrifices. What then: Do You not accept my sacrifices? But your holocausts are always in My sight Psalm 49:9. Certain holocausts concerning which it is said in another Psalm, If You had desired sacrifice, I would surely have given, with holocausts You will not be delighted: and again he turns himself, Sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit, a heart broken and humbled God does not despise. Which be then holocausts that He despises not? Which holocausts that are always in His sight? Kindly, O Lord, he says, deal in Your good will with Sion, and be the walls of Jerusalem built, then shall You accept the sacrifice of righteousness, oblations, and holocausts. He says that certain holocausts God will accept. But what is a holocaust? A whole consumed with fire: causis is burning, holon is whole: but a holocaust is a whole consumed with fire. There is a certain fire of most burning love: be the mind inflamed with love, let the same love hurry off the limbs to its use, let it not allow them to serve cupidity, in order that we may wholly glow with fire of divine love that will offer to God a holocaust. Such holocausts of yours are in My sight always.

16. As yet that Israel perchance does not understand what are the holocausts thereof which He has in His sight always, and is still thinking of oxen, of sheep, of he-goats: let it not so think: I will not accept calves of your house. Holocausts I named; at once in mind and thought to earthly flocks you were running, therefrom you were selecting for Me some fat thing: I will not accept calves of your house. He is foretelling the New Testament, wherein all those sacrifices have ceased. For they were then foretelling a certain Sacrifice which was to be, with the Blood whereof we should be cleansed. I will not accept calves of your house, nor he-goats of your flocks.

17. For mine are all the beasts of the wood Psalm 49:10. Why should I ask of you what I have made? Is it more yours, to whom I have given it to possess, than Mine, who have made it? For mine are all the beasts of the wood. But perchance that Israel says, The beasts are God's, those wild beasts which I enclose not in my pen, which I bind not to my stall; but this ox and sheep and he-goat-- these are my own. Cattle on the mountain, and oxen. Mine are those which you possess not, Mine are these which you possess. For if you are My servant, the whole of your property is Mine. For it cannot be, that is the property of the master which the servant has gotten to himself, and yet that not be the property of the Master which the Master Himself has created for the servant. Therefore Mine are the beasts of the wood which you have not taken; Mine are also the cattle on the mountains which are yours, and the oxen which are at your stall: all are My own, for I have created them.

18. I know all the winged creatures of heaven Psalm 49:11. How does He know? He has weighed them, has counted. Which of us knows all the winged creatures of heaven? But even though to some man God give knowledge of all the winged creatures of heaven, He does not Himself know in the same manner as He gives man to know. One thing is God's knowledge, another man's: in like manner as there is one possession of God's, another of man's: that is, God's possessing is one thing, man's another.

For what you possess you have not wholly in your power, or else your ox, so long as it lives, is in your power; so as that it either die not, or be not to be fed. With whom there is the highest power, there is highest and most secret cognition. Let us ascribe this to God, while praising God. Let us not dare to say, How knows God? Do not, I pray you, brethren, of me expect this, that I should unfold to you, how God does know: this only I say, He does not so know as a man, He does not so know as an Angel: and how He knows I dare not say, because also I cannot ken.

One thing, nevertheless, I ken, that even before all the winged creatures of heaven were, God knew that which He was to create. What is that knowledge? O man, you begin to see, after that you had been formed, after that you had received sense of seeing. These fowls sprung of the water at the word of God, saying, Let the waters bring forth fowls. Genesis 1:20 Whereby did God know the things which He commanded the water to bear forth? Now surely He knew what He had created, and before He created He knew.

So great then is the knowledge of God, so that with Himself they were in a certain ineffable manner before they were created: and of you does He expect to receive what He had, before He created? I know all the winged creatures of heaven, which thou to Me canst not give. The things which you were about to slay for Me, I know all: not because I made I know, but in order that I might make. And the beauty of the field is with Me. The fairness of the field, the abundance of all things engendering upon earth, is with Me, He says.

How with Him? Were they so, even before they were made? Yea, for with Him were all things to come, and with Him are all things by-gone: things to come in such sort, that there be not withdrawn from Him all things by-gone. With Him are all things by a certain cognition of the ineffable wisdom of God residing in the Word, and the Word Himself is all things. Is not the beauty of the field in a manner with Him, inasmuch as He is everywhere, and Himself has said, Heaven and earth I fill?

Jeremiah 23:24 What with Him is not, of whom it is said, If I shall have ascended into heaven, You are there; and if I shall have descended into hell, You are present? With Him is the whole: but it is not so with Him as that He does suffer any contamination from those things which He has created, or any want of them. For with you, perchance, is a pillar near which you are standing, and when you are weary, you lean against it. You need that which is with you, God needs not the field which is which Him.

With Him is field, with Him beauty of earth, with Him beauty of heaven, with Him all winged creatures, because He is Himself everywhere. And wherefore are all things near Him? Because even before that all things were, or were created, to Him were known all things.

19. Who can explain, who expound that which is said to Him in another Psalm, For my goods You need not? He has said that He needs not from us any necessary thing. If I shall be hungry, I will not tell you Psalm 49:12. He that keeps Israel shall neither hunger nor thirst, nor be weary, nor fall asleep. But, lo! According to your carnality I speak: because you will suffer hunger when you have not eaten, perhaps you think even God does hunger that He may eat. Even though He shall be hungry, He tells not you: all things

are before Him, whence He will He takes what is needful for Him. These words are said to convince little understanding; not that God has declared His hunger. Though for our sake this God of gods deigned even to hunger. He came to hunger, and to fill; He came to thirst, and give drink; He came to be clothed with mortality, and to clothe with immortality; He came poor, to make rich. For He lost not His riches by taking to Him our poverty, for, In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. Colossians 2:3 If I shall be hungry, I will not tell you. For Mine is the whole world, and the fullness thereof. Do not then labour to find what to give Me, without whom I have what I will.

20. Why then dost still think of your flocks? Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or shall I drink the blood of he-goats? Psalm 49:13. You have heard what of us He requires not, who wills to enjoin us somewhat. If of such things you were thinking, now withdraw your thoughts from such things: think not to offer God any such thing. If you have a fat bull, kill for the poor: let them eat the flesh of bulls, though they shall not drink the blood of he-goats. Which, when you shall have done, He will account it to you, that has said, If I shall be hungry, I will not tell you: and He shall say to you, I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or shall I drink the blood of he-goats? Matthew 25:35

21. Say then, Lord our God, what do You enjoin your people, Your Israel? Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise Psalm 49:14. Let us also say to Him, In me, O God, are your vows, which I will render of prose to You. I had feared lest You might enjoin something which would be out of my power, which I was counting to be in my pen, and but now perchance it had been taken away by a thief. What do You enjoin me? Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise. Let me revert to myself, wherein I may find what I may immolate: let me revert to myself; in myself may I find immolation of praise: be Your altar my conscience.

We are without anxiety, we go not into Arabia in quest of frankincense: not any bags of covetous dealer do we sift: God requires of us the sacrifice of praise. Zacchæus had the sacrifice of praise in his patrimony; Luke 19:8 the widow had it in her bag; Mark 12:42 some poor host or other has had it in his jar: another neither in patrimony, nor in bag, nor in jar, has had anything, had it wholly in his heart: salvation was to the house of Zacchæus; and more this poor widow cast in than those rich men: this man, that does offer a cup of cold water, shall not lose his reward: Matthew 10:42 but there is even peace on earth to men of good will.

Luke 2:14 Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise. O sacrifice gratuitous, by grace given! I have not indeed bought this to offer, but You have given: for not even this should I have had. And this is the immolation of the sacrifice of praise, to render thanks to Him from whom you have whatever of good you have, and by whose mercy is forgiven you whatsoever of evil of yours you have. Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise: and render to the Highest your prayers. With this odour the Lord is well pleased. 22.

And call thou upon Me in the day of your tribulation: and I will draw you forth, and you shall glorify Me Psalm 49:15. For thou oughtest not to rely on your powers, all your aids are deceitful. Upon Me call thou in the day of tribulation: I will draw you forth, and you shall glorify Me. For to this end I have allowed the day of tribulation to come to you: because perchance if you were not troubled, you would not call on Me: but when you are troubled, you call on Me; when you call upon Me, I will draw you forth; when I shall draw you forth, you shall glorify Me, that you may no more depart from Me.

A certain man had grown dull and cold in fervour of prayer, and said, Tribulation and grief I found, and on the Name of the Lord I called. He found tribulation as it were some profitable thing; he had rotted in the slough of his sins; now he had continued without feeling, he found tribulation to be a sort of caustic and

cutting. I found, he says, tribulation and grief, and on the Name of the Lord I called. And truly, brethren, tribulations are known to all men. Behold those afflictions that abound in mankind; one afflicted with loss bewails; another smitten with bereavement mourns; another exiled from country grieves and desires to return, deeming sojourning intolerable; another's vineyard is hailed upon, he observes his labours and all his toil spent in vain.

When can a human being not be made sad? An enemy he finds in a friend. What greater misery in mankind? These things all men do deplore and grieve at, and these are tribulations: in all these they call upon the Lord, and they do rightly. Let them call upon God, He is able either to teach how it must be borne, or to heal it when borne. He knows how not to suffer us to be tried above that we are able to bear. 1 Corinthians 10:13 Let us call upon God even in those tribulations: but these tribulations do find us; as in another Psalm is written, Helper in tribulations which have found us too much: there is a certain tribulation which we ought to find.

Let such tribulations find us: there is a certain tribulation which we ought to seek and to find. What is that? The above-named felicity in this world, abundance of temporal things: that is not indeed tribulation, these are the solaces of our tribulation. Of what tribulation? Of our sojourning. For the very fact that we are not yet with God, the very fact that we are living amid trials and difficulties, that we cannot be without fear, is tribulation: for there is not that peace which is promised us.

He that shall not have found this tribulation in his sojourning, does not think of going home to his father-land. This is tribulation, brethren. Surely now we do good works, when we deal bread to the hungry, home to the stranger, and the like: tribulation even this is. For we find pitiful objects upon whom we show pity; and the pitiful case of pitiful objects makes us compassionate. How much better now would it be with you in that place, where you find no hungry man whom you may feed, where you find no stranger whom you may take in, no naked man whom you may cover, no sick man whom you may visit, no litigant whom you may set at one!

For all things in that place are most high, are true, are holy, are everlasting. Our bread in that place is righteousness, our drink there is wisdom, our garment there is immortality, our house is everlasting in the heavens, our steadfastness is immortality: does sickness come over? Does weariness weigh down to sleep? No death, no litigation: there peace, quiet, joy, righteousness. No enemy has entrance, no friend falls away. What is the quiet there? If we think and observe where we are, and where He that cannot lie has promised that we are to be, from His very promise we find in what tribulation we are.

This tribulation none finds, but he that shall have sought it. You are whole, see if you are miserable; for it is easy for him that is sick to find himself miserable: when you are whole, see if you are miserable; that you are not yet with God. Tribulation and grief I found, and on the Name of the Lord I called. Immolate, therefore, to God the sacrifice of praise. Praise Him promising, praise Him calling, praise Him exhorting, praise Him helping: and understand in what tribulation you are placed. Call upon (Him), you shall be drawn forth, you shall glorify, shall abide.

23. But see what follows, my brethren. For now some one or other, because God had said to him, Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise, and had enjoined in a manner this tribute, did meditate to himself and said, I will rise daily, I will proceed to Church, I will say one hymn at matins, another at vespers, a third or fourth in my house, daily I do sacrifice the sacrifice of praise, and immolate to my God. Well you do indeed, if you do this: but take heed, lest now thou be careless, because now you do this: and perchance

your tongue bless God, and your life curse God. O my people, says to you the God of gods, the Lord that spoke, calling the earth from the rising of the sun unto the setting, though yet you are placed amid the tares, Matthew 13:25 Immolate the sacrifice of praise to your God, and render to Him your prayers: but take heed lest you live ill, and chant well. Wherefore this? For, Unto the sinner, says God, why do you tell out My judgments, and takest My Covenant in your mouth? Psalm 49:16. You see, brethren, with what trembling we say these words. We take the Covenant of God in our mouth, and we say these words. We take the Covenant of God in our mouth, and we preach to you the instruction and judgment of God. And what says God to the sinner? Why do you? Does He then forbid preachers that be sinners? And where is that, What they say do, but what they do, do not? Matthew 23:3 Where is that, Whether in truth or on occasion Christ be preached? Philippians 1:18 But these words were said, lest they should fear that hear, from whomsoever it be that they hear: not that they should be without care that speak good words, and do evil deeds. Now therefore, brethren, you are without care: if you hear good words ye hear God, through whomsoever it be that you may hear. But God would not dismiss without reproof them that speak: lest with their speaking alone, without care for themselves they should slumber in evil life, and say to themselves, For God will not consign us to perdition, through whose mouth He has willed that so many good words should be spoken to His people. Nay, but hear what you speak, whoever you are that speakest: and thou that writ be heard yourself, first hear yourself; and speak what a certain man does speak in another Psalm, I will hear what in me speaks the Lord God, for He shall speak peace to His people. What am I then, that hear not what in me He speaks, and will that other hear what through me He speaks? I will hear first, will hear, and chiefly I will hear what speaks in me the Lord God, for He shall speak peace to His people. Let me hear, and chasten my body, and to servitude subject it, lest perchance to others preaching, myself be found a cast-away. 1 Corinthians 9:27 Why do you tell out my judgments? Wherefore to you what profits not you? He admonishes him to hear: not to lay down preaching, but to take up obedience. But you, why do you take My Covenant in they mouth?

24. But you hate instruction Psalm 49:17. Thou hatest discipline. When I spare, you sing and praisest: when I chasten, you murmur, as though, when I spare, I am your God: and, when I chasten, I am not your God. I rebuke and chasten those whom I love. Revelation 3:19 But you hate instruction: and hast thrown My sayings behind you. The words that are said through you, you throw behind you. And you have thrown My sayings behind you: to a place where they may not be seen by you, but may load you. And you have thrown My sayings behind you.

25. If you saw a thief, you consented unto him, and with adulterers you made your portion Psalm 49:18. Lest perchance you should say, I have not committed theft, I have not committed adultery. What if he pleased you that has committed? Have you not with the very pleasing consented? Have you not by approval made your portion with him that has committed? For this is, brethren, to consent with a thief, and to make with an adulterer your portion: for even if you commit not, and approvest what is committed, you are an accessory in the deed: for the sinner is praised in the longings of his soul, and he that does iniquity shall be blessed. You do not do evil things, you praise evil-doers. For is this a small evil? Thou made your portion with adulterers.

26. Your mouth has abounded in malice, and your tongue has embraced deceit Psalm 49:19. Of the malevolence and deceit, brethren, of certain men he speaks, who by adulation, though they know what they hear to be evil, yet lest they offend those from whom they hear, not only by not reproving but by holding their peace do consent. Too little is it, that they do not say, You have done evil: but they even say, You have done even well: and they know it to be evil: but their mouth abounds in malice, and their tongue

embraces deceit.

Deceit is a sort of guile in words, of uttering one thing, thinking another. He says not, your tongue has committed deceit or perpetrated deceit, but in order to point out to you a kind of pleasure taken in the very evil doing, He has said, Hath embraced. It is too little that you do it, you are delighted too; you praise openly, you laugh to yourself. Thou dost push to destruction a man heedlessly putting forth his faults, and knowing not whether they be faults: thou that know it to be a fault, sayest not, Whither are you rushing?

If you were to see him heedlessly walk in the dark, where you knew a well to be, and were to hold your peace, of what sort would you be? Would you not be set down for an enemy of his life? And yet if he were to fall into a well, not in soul but in body he would die. He does fall headlong into his vices, he does expose before you his evil doings: you know them to be evil, and praisest and laughest to yourself. Oh that at length he were to be turned to God at whom you laugh, and whom you would not reprove, and that he were to say, Let them be confounded that say to me, Well, well. 27.

Sitting against your brother you detracted Psalm 49:20. And this sitting does belong to that whereof he has spoken above in, has embraced. For he that does anything while standing or passing along, does it not with pleasure: but if he for this purpose sits, how much leisure does he seek out to do it! That very evil detraction you were making with diligence, you were making sitting; you would thereon be wholly engaged; you were embracing your evil, you were kissing your craftiness.

And against your mother's son you laid a stumbling-block. Who is mother's son? Is it not brother? He would repeat then the same that he had said above, your brother. Hath he intimated that any distinction must be perceived by us? Evidently, brethren, I think a distinction must be made. Brother against brother does detract, for example's sake, as though for instance one strong, and now a doctor and scholar of some weight, does detract from his brother, one perchance that is teaching well and walking well: but another is weak, against him he lays a stumbling-block by detracting from the former.

For when the good are detracted from by those that seem to be of some weight and to be learned, the weak fall upon the stumbling-block, who as yet know not how to judge. Therefore this weak one is called mother's son, not yet father's, still needing milk, and hanging on the breast. He is borne as yet in the bosom of his mother the Church, he is not strong enough to draw near to the solid food of his Father's table, but from the mother's breast he draws sustenance, unskilled in judging, inasmuch as yet he is animal and carnal.

For the spiritual man judges all things, 1 Corinthians 2:15 but the animal man perceives not those things which are of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him. 1 Corinthians 2:14 To such men says the Apostle, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as to babes in Christ I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able, but not even now are you able. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 A mother I have been to you: as is said in another place, I became a babe among you, even as a nurse cherishing her own children. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Not a nurse nursing children of others, but a nurse cherishing her own children.

For there are mothers who when they have borne give to nurses: they that have borne cherish not their children, because they have given them to be nursed; but those that cherish, cherish not their own, but those of others: but he himself had borne, he was himself cherishing, to no nurse did commit what he had borne; for he had said, Of whom I travail again until Christ be formed in you. Galatians 4:19 He did cherish them, and gave milk. But there were some as it were learned and spiritual men who detracted from Paul.

His letters indeed, say they, are weighty and powerful; but the presence of his body weak, and speech contemptible: 2 Corinthians 10:10 he says himself in his Epistle, that certain his detractors had said these words. They were sitting, and were detracting against their brother, and against that their mother's son, to be fed with milk, they were laying a stumbling-block. And against your mother's son you laid a stumbling-block.

28. These things have you done, and I held my tongue Psalm 49:21. Therefore the Lord our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. Now, These things have you done, and I held my tongue. What is, I held my tongue? From vengeance I have desisted, my severity I have deferred, patience to you I have prolonged, your repentance I have long looked for...You have imagined iniquity, that I shall be like you; You have imagined that I shall be like you, while you will not be like Me. For, Be, he says, perfect, even as your Father, which is in the heavens, who makes His sun to rise on the good and evil. Matthew 5:48, 45 Him you would not copy, who gives good things even to evil men, insomuch that sitting thou dost detract even from good men. I will reprove you, when God manifest shall come, our God, and shall not keep silence, I will reprove you. And what to you shall I do in reproving you? What to you shall I do? Now yourself you see not, I will make you see yourself. Because if you should see yourself, and should displease yourself, you would please Me: but because not seeing yourself you have pleased yourself, you will displease both Me and yourself; Me when you shall be judged; yourself when you shall burn. But what to you shall I do? He says. I will set you before your face. For why would you escape yourself? At your back you are to yourself, you see not yourself: I make you see yourself: what behind your back you have put, before your face will I put; you shall see your uncleanness, not that you may amend, but that you may blush....

29. But, understand these things, you that forget God Psalm 49:22. See how He cries, and keeps not silence, spares not. You had forgotten the Lord, did not think of your evil life. Perceive how you have forgotten the Lord. Lest at length He seize like a lion, and there be none to deliver. What is like a lion? Like a brave one, like a mighty one, like him whom none can withstand. To this he made reference when he said, Lion. For it is used for praise, it is used also for showing evil. The devil has been called lion: Your adversary, He says, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom He may devour. 1 Peter 5:8 May it not be that whereas he has been called lion because of savage fierceness, Christ has been called Lion for wondrous mightiness? And where is that, The Lion has prevailed of the tribe of Judah? Revelation 5:5 ...

30. Sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me Psalm 49:23. How shall sacrifice of praise glorify Me? Assuredly sacrifice of praise does no wise profit evil men, because they take Your Covenant in their mouth, and do damnable things that displease Your eyes. Straightway, he says, even to them this I say, Sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me. For if you live ill and speakest good words, not yet do you praise: but again, if, when you begin to live well, to your merits thou dost ascribe your living well, not yet do you praise....Therefore the Publican went down justified, rather than that Pharisee. Therefore hear ye that live well, hear ye that live ill: Sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me. No one offers Me this sacrifice, and is evil. I say not, Let there not offer Me this any one that is evil; but no one does offer Me this, that is evil. For he that praises, is good: because if he praises, he does also live well, because if he praises, not only with tongue he praises, but life also with tongue does agree.

31. And there is the way whereby I will show him the salvation of God. In sacrifice of praise is the way. What is the salvation of God? Christ Jesus. And how in sacrifice of praise to us is shown Christ? Because Christ with grace came to us. These words says the Apostle: But I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me: but that in flesh I live, in faith I live of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Galatians

2:20 Acknowledge then sinners, that there would not need physician, if they were whole. Matthew 9:12 For Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6 When then they acknowledge their ungodlinesses, and first copy that Publican, saying, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner: Luke 18:13 show wounds, beseech Physician: and because they praise not themselves, but blame themselves--So that he that glories, not in himself but in the Lord may glory, 1 Corinthians 1:31 -- they acknowledge the cause of the coming of Christ, because for this end He came, that He might save sinners: for Jesus Christ came, he says, into this world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1:15 Further, those Jews, boasting of their work, thus the same Apostle does rebuke, in saying, that they to grace belonged not, who to their merits and their works thought that reward was owing. Galatians 5:4 He therefore that knows himself to belong to grace, does know what is Christ and what is Christ's because he needs grace. If grace it is called, gratis it is given; if gratis it is given, not any merits of time have preceded that it should be given....

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