



ה אֶסְפוּ-לִי חֲסִידֵי פָרְתֵי בְרִיתִי עַל-  
 לִי-זָבַח: ו וַיִּגִּדּוּ שְׁמֵימָם צְדָקוֹ כִּי-  
 אֱלֹהִים | שֵׁפֶט הוּא סֵלָה: ז שְׁמָעָה  
 עֲמִי | וְאֲדַבְּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָעִידָה בְּךָ  
 אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲנֹכִי: ח לֹא עַל-  
 זְבָחֶיךָ אוֹכִיחֶיךָ וְעוֹלָתֶיךָ לִנְגְדֵי תַמִּיד:  
 ט לֹא-אֶקְחָ מִבֵּיתֶךָ פֶּר מִמֶּכְלָאֲתֶיךָ  
 עֲתוּדִים: י כִּי-לִי כָל-חַיְתוֹ-יַעַר  
 בְּהֵמוֹת בְּהֵרְרֵי-אֶלְפֵי: יא יַדְעֵתִי  
 כָּל-עוֹף הָרִים וְזִוֵּי שָׁדַי עֲמָדִי: יב  
 אִם-אֶרְעֵב לֹא-אֶמְרָ לְךָ פִּי לִי תִבֵּל  
 וּמְלֹאָה: יג הָאוֹכֵל בֶּשָׂר אֲבִירִים  
 וְדָם עֲתוּדִים אֶשְׁתָּה: יד זָבַח לֹא-  
 לָהִים תוֹדָה וְשִׁלְמִם לְעֲלִיוֹן נִדְרֶיךָ: טו  
 וַקְרָאֲנִי בְיוֹם צָרָה אֶחְלָצֶךָ וּתְכַפְדֵּנִי:  
 טז וְלָרֶשַׁע | אָמַר אֱלֹהִים מַה-לְּךָ  
 לְסַפֵּר חֲקֵי וּתְשֹׂא בְרִיתִי עָלַי-פִּיךָ:  
 יז וְאַתָּה שְׂנֵאתָ מוֹסֵר וּתְשַׁלְּחֵה דְבָרִי  
 אֶחְרֶיךָ: יח אִם-רָאִיתָ גִּבּוֹ וּתְרַץ  
 עִמּוֹ וְעַם מְנַאֲפִים תִּלְקָךָ: יט פִּיךָ  
 שְׁלַחַת בְּרָעָה וּלְשׁוֹנָה תִצְמִיד מִרְמָה:  
 כ תִּשֵּׁב בְּאַחִיךָ תִּדְבַּר בְּכוֹן-אִמָּךָ  
 תִתֶּן-דַּפִּי: כא אֱלֹהֵי עֲשִׂיתָ | וְהִחַרְרֵ-  
 שְׁתֵּי דַמִּית הָיִוֹת אֶהְיֶה כְמוֹךָ אוֹכִיחֶיךָ  
 וְאֶעְרָכֶה לְעֵינֶיךָ: כב בֵּינוּ-נָא זֹאת  
 שְׁכַחֵי אֱלוֹהֵי פֶן-אֶטְרֶף וְאִין מַצִּיל: כג  
 זָבַח תוֹדָה יִכְבְּדֵנִי וְשֵׁם דְרָךְ אֶרְאֶנּוּ  
 בְיִשְׁעֵי אֱלֹהִים:

ד יקרא לאנגלי מרומא מלעיל ולצדיקי ארעא  
 מלרע למימתח דין על עמיה: ה כנושו לוחי  
 חסיד די גזרו קיימי וקיימו אוריתי ואיתעסקו  
 בצלותא דאימתילא לקורבנא: ו ויתנון אנגלי  
 מרומא זכותיה ארום אלהא דינא הוא לעל-  
 מא: ז שמעא עמי ואמליל ישראל ואסהיד בך  
 אלהא אלהך אנא: ח לא מטול דיבחך דלא  
 קריבתא קדמי בגלותא אנא מוכח לך אכסנינג  
 ארום עלוותך דקריבו אבהתך לקבלי תדירא:  
 ט מן יומא די חרוב בית מקדשי לא קבילית מן  
 אידך תורא מן עדרך ברחי: י ארום דילי כל  
 חיות חורשא ואתידית ועתידית לצדיקיא בגן  
 עדן בעיריא דכין ותור בר דרביע דרעי בכל  
 יומא טורין אלפא: יא גליין קדמי כל מיני  
 זייני עופא דפרחין באויר שמיא ושרכיפיהון  
 בטוריא ותרנגול ברא דקרצוליה שרין באר-  
 עא ורישיה מטי בשמיא מרנין קדמי: יב אין  
 ימטי זמן קרבנא תדירא דקריצתא לא אימר לך  
 ארום דילי ארעא ומלייהא: יג מן יומא דחרוב  
 בית מקדשי לא קבילית בשר נכסת פטימיא  
 ודמא דברחי לא זריקו כהניא קדמי: יד כבוש  
 יצרא בישא ויתחשב קדם יהוה כניכסת תודתא  
 ושלים לעילאה נדריך דנדרת בסיני לקיימא  
 פיקודיא: טו וצלי קדמי ביומא דעקתא אישי-  
 זבינג ארום תיקרנני: טז ולרשיעא דלא עבד  
 תתובא ומצלי במרודא אמר יהוה אלהא מה  
 לך למשתעי קיימי ותימי ותומי בשמי ותדכר  
 קיימי עלי פומך: יז ואנת ואת סניתא מכ-  
 סנותא דחכימיא וטלקתא פתגמי בתרך: יח  
 אין חמיתא גנבא ורהיטתא בתרוי ועם גייופי  
 שויתא חולקך: יט פומך שלחתא למישתעי  
 לישנא בישא לישן תליתאי ולישנג מדבקא  
 למללא ניכלא: כ תתיב באחך תמליל כדבור-  
 תא כדכובא בבר אימך אומך תשווי דופיא: כא  
 אילין עובדין בישין עבדתא ואוריכית דתיתבי  
 חשבתא למהוי עד עלמין שלים אמרת בלבך  
 בליבך אהוי תקיף די כמך אוכיחנג בעלמא  
 הדין דוגמת אלהא ואנא בתקוף רגז איתפרע  
 מינג אכסינג בעלמא הדין ואסדר דין גהנם  
 בעלמא דאתי קדמך: כב איתבוננו כדין כדון  
 דא רשיעא דאשלויו דשליין דחלת אלהא די-  
 למא איתבר תוקפכוון ולית משזיב: כג דבב  
 יצרא בישא וכביש ליה היך קורבן תודתא  
 יתחשב ליה ומוקיר לי ודי יעדי אורחא בישא  
 אחמי ליה בפורקנא דיהוה אלהא:

50:6 και ἀναγγελοῦσιν οἱ οὐρανοὶ  
 τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ ὅτι ὁ θεὸς  
 κριτῆς ἐστὶν διάψαλμα 50:7 ἄκουσον  
 λαὸς μου καὶ λαλήσω σοι Ἰσραὴλ καὶ  
 διαμαρτύρομαι σοὶ ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς σου  
 εἰμι ἐγώ 50:8 οὐκ ἐπὶ ταῖς θυσίαις σου  
 ἐλέγξω σε τὰ δὲ ὀλοκαυτώματά σου  
 ἐνώπιόν μου ἐστὶν διὰ παντός 50:9  
 οὐ δέξομαι ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου σου μόσχους  
 οὐδὲ ἐκ τῶν ποιμνίων σου χιμάρους  
 50:10 ὅτι ἐμὰ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία  
 τοῦ δρυμοῦ κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ  
 βόες 50:11 ἔγνωκα πάντα τὰ πετεινὰ  
 τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὠραιότης ἀγροῦ μετ’  
 ἐμοῦ ἐστὶν 50:12 ἐὰν πεινάσω οὐ μὴ  
 σοὶ εἶπω ἐμὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ οἰκουμένη  
 καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς 50:13 μὴ  
 φάγομαι κρέα ταύρων ἢ αἶμα τράγων  
 πίομαι 50:14 θύσον τῷ θεῷ θυσίαν  
 αἰνέσεως καὶ ἀπόδος τῷ ὑψίστῳ τὰς  
 εὐχὰς σου 50:15 καὶ ἐπικάλεσαί με  
 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεως καὶ ἐξελοῦμαι σε  
 καὶ δοξάσεις με διάψαλμα 50:16  
 τῷ δὲ ἁμαρτωλῷ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ἴνα  
 τί σὺ διηγῇ τὰ δικαιώματά μου καὶ  
 ἀναλαμβάνεις τὴν διαθήκην μου διὰ  
 στόματός σου 50:17 σὺ δὲ ἐμίσησας  
 παιδείαν καὶ ἐξέβαλες τοὺς λόγους  
 μου εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω 50:18 εἰ ἐθεώρεις  
 κλέπτῃ συνέτρεχες αὐτῷ καὶ μετὰ  
 μοιχῶν τὴν μερίδα σου ἐτίθει 50:19  
 τὸ στόμα σου ἐπλεόνασεν κακίαν καὶ  
 ἡ γλῶσσά σου περιέπλεκεν δολιότητα  
 50:20 καθήμενος κατὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ  
 σου κατελάλει καὶ κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ  
 τῆς μητρὸς σου ἐτίθει σκάνδαλον  
 50:21 ταῦτα ἐποίησας καὶ ἐσίγησα  
 ὑπέλαβες ἀνομίαν ὅτι ἔσομαι σοὶ  
 ὅμοιος ἐλέγξω σε καὶ παραστήσω  
 κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου 50:22 σύνετε δὴ  
 ταῦτα οἱ ἐπιλανθανόμενοι τοῦ θεοῦ  
 μήποτε ἀρπάσῃ καὶ μὴ ἦ ὁ ρύόμενος  
 50:23 θυσία αἰνέσεως δοξάσει με καὶ  
 ἐκεῖ ὁδός ἡ δεῖξω αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριον  
 τοῦ θεοῦ

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| <p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 50</b><br/>                     5 A Psalm of Asaph. 50:1 The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. 50:3 May our God come and not keep silence; Fire devours before Him, And it is very tempestuous around Him. 50:4 He summons the heavens above, And the earth, to judge His people: 50:5 ‘Gather My godly ones to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.’ 50:6 And the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is judge. Selah. 50:7 ‘Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God. 50:8 ‘I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me. 50:9 ‘I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. 50:10 ‘For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. 50:11 ‘I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. 50:12 ‘If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. 50:13 ‘Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats? 50:14 ‘Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High; 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.’ (NASB)</p> | <p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 50</b><br/>                     50:1 A hymn composed by Asaph. Mighty is God; the Lord spoke at the Creation a song; and he carved out the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. 50:2 The perfection and the beginning of the eternal creation is from Zion; and from there its beauty is complete, God will be revealed. 50:3 The righteous will say on the great day of judgment, “Our God will come, and he will not neglect to vindicate his people”; fire will blaze before him, and around him a storm will rage mightily. 50:4 He will call to the angels of the height above, and to the righteous of the earth below, to extend judgment to his people. 50:5 Gather to me, my pious ones, who have made my covenant, and fulfilled my Torah, and have engaged in prayer, which is likened to a sacrifice. 50:6 And the angels of the height will recount his righteousness, for God is the judge forever. 50:7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel; and I will testify to you; I am God, your God. 50:8 I am not rebuking you on account of your sacrifices that you did not offer before me in exile, for your holocausts that your fathers offered are in front of me always. 50:9 From the day that my sanctuary was laid waste, I have not accepted a bull from your hands, or rams from your flock. 50:10 For mine are all the animals of the forest, and I have prepared for the righteous in the Garden of Eden clean beasts and a wild bull who grazes every day on a thousand mountains. 50:11 Manifest before me are all the kinds of birds who fly in the air of heaven; and the rooster whose legs rest on the earth, while his head reaches to heaven, rejoicing before me. (EMC)</p> | <p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 50</b><br/>                     A Psalm for Asaph. 50:1 The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. 50:2 Out of Sion comes the excellence of his beauty. 50:3 God, our God, shall come manifestly, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall be kindled before him, and round about him there shall be a very great tempest. 50:4 He shall summon the heaven above, and the earth, that he may judge his people. 50:5 Assemble ye his saints to him, those that have engaged in a covenant with him upon sacrifices. 50:6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge. Pause. 50:7 Hear, my people, and I will speak to thee, O Israel: and I will testify to thee: I am God, thy God. 50:8 I will not reprove thee on account of thy sacrifices; for thy whole-burnt-offerings are before me continually. 50:9 I will take no bullocks out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy flocks. 50:10 For all the wild beasts of the thicket are mine, the cattle on the mountains, and oxen. 50:11 I know all the birds of the sky; and the beauty of the field is mine. 50:12 If I should be hungry, I will not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness of it. 50:13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? 50:14 Offer to God the sacrifice of praise; and pay thy vows to the Most High. 50:15 And call upon me in the day of affliction; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Pause. (LXX)</p> |
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| <p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 50</b><br/> 50:16 But to the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth? 50:17 ‘For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you. 50:18 ‘When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers. 50:19 ‘You let your mouth loose in evil And your tongue frames deceit. 50:20 ‘You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son. 50:21 ‘These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. 50:22 ‘Now consider this, you who forget God, Or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. 50:23 ‘He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.’ (NASB)</p> | <p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 50</b><br/> 50:12 If the time of the continual morning sacrifice should arrive, I would not tell you; for mine is the earth and its fullness. 50:13 From the day my sanctuary was laid waste, I have not accepted the flesh of the sacrifice of fatlings, and the priests have not sprinkled the blood of rams before me. 50:14 Subdue the evil impulse and it will be reckoned before the Lord as a sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay to the Most High your vows. 50:15 And pray in my presence in the day of trouble; I will save you, for you will glorify me. 50:16 But to the wicked who has not repented, and prays in impiety, the Lord says, “Why do you recite my covenant, and swear by my name, and invoke my covenant with your mouth?” 50:17 But you hate the rebuke of the wise, and you have cast my words behind you. 50:18 If you saw a thief, you ran after him; and you have placed your portion with adulterers. 50:19 You have loosened your mouth to utter evil speech; and your tongue adheres to speaking deceit. 50:20 You will sit with your brother, you will speak lies against your mother’s son, you will cast aspersions. 50:21 These bad deeds you did and I waited for you to repent; you thought you would be at peace forever; you said in your heart, “I will be strong like you”; I will rebuke you in this world, and I will prepare the judgment of Gehenna before you in the world to come. 50:22 Now understand this, you wicked who have forgotten God, lest I break your might, with no one to save. 50:23 He who sacrifices the evil impulse, it will be reckoned to him like a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and he honors me; and whoever will remove the evil way, I will show him the redemption of the Lord. (EMC)</p> | <p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 50</b><br/> 50:16 But to the sinner God has said, Why dost thou declare my ordinances, and take up my covenant in thy mouth? 50:17 Whereas thou hast hated instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee. 50:18 If thou sawest a thief, thou rannest along with him, and hast cast in thy lot with adulterers. 50:19 Thy mouth has multiplied wickedness, and thy tongue has framed deceit. 50:20 Thou didst sit and speak against thy brother, and didst scandalize thy mother’s son. 50:21 These things thou didst, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest wickedly that I should be like thee, but I will reprove thee, and set thine offenses before thee. 50:22 Now consider these things, ye that forget God, lest he rend you, and there is no deliverer. 50:23 The sacrifice of praise will glorify me: and that is the way wherein I will shew to him the salvation of God. (LXX)</p> |
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This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1-23*, David opens the Psalm saying מְזִמֹּר לְאַסָּף *A Psalm of Asaph*. This is the first of twelve psalms known as the Psalms of Asaph in the Masoretic Text which consist of *Tehillim / Psalms 50, and 73-83*. According to the Septuagint, the Psalms of Asaph are *Tehillim / Psalms 49 and 72-82*. There appears to be a discrepancy in the numbering system in the Septuagint, but that is not really a big deal, we just need to be careful what we are reading and ensure the Greek text we are studying corresponds to the MT. This is similar to the need to recognize the numbering system in the MT as compared to the English translations, many of the psalms are off by a verse number or two since the English

translations take the first verse of the psalm (MT) as a heading.

The word asaph אֲסָפִי means “to gather, receive, remove, gather in,” “1. the father of Hezekiah’s secretary, 2. a son of Berechiah, chief, what is gathered, store, storing, storehouse.” This may be a reference to harvesting especially since Israel was an agricultural community. These psalms are a collection from the Asaphites, a name that is used to identify the Temple singers. Some scholars suggest that these psalms were performed in the style or tradition of the tribe bearing Asaph’s name. (*Freedman, David Noel (June 1, 1992). The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.*) Asaph himself is believed to either be the author or the transcriber of these psalms. Some commentaries have a little confusion over the origin of the psalms in their association with Asaph which is illustrated in the title of the psalms which translates as “of Asaph,” “for Asaph,” and “a testimony to Asaph,” etc within the various English translations. The exact dating of these psalms is not known but only that these were written in the time of David and Solomon (c. 1010–970 BC).

According to the Hebrew lexicon, there are three men with the name of Asaph. According to <http://scholarsgateway.com>, these men are found in *1 Chronicles 16:37*, *2 Chronicles 5:12*, and *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1*. The Asaph identified with these twelve Psalms is said to be the son of Berechiah which is said to be an ancestor of the Asaphites. The Asaphites are one of the families of musicians in the Jerusalem Temple. This information is identified in the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles. According to the Chronicles, Asaph was a descendant of Gershon the son of Levi therefore he is also identified as a member of the Levites. He was one of the three Levites commissioned by David to be in charge of singing in the Temple service. In *1 Chronicles 6:39* David appoints a man named Heman as the main musician or singer and Asaph as Heman’s right hand assistant and the Merarites at his left hand. Asaph is also credited with performing at the dedication of Solomon’s temple in *2 Chronicles 5:12*. Asaph participated in the dedication service of the Temple of Solomon and his years of service began by serving David the king. As a result of his long service to both David and Solomon, he would have seen the worst of the worst amongst both David and Solomon. This may be the source of his psalms, for example, in his complaint against corruption among the wealthy as it is recorded in *Tehillim / Psalms 73* (Masoretic Text) and *Tehillim / Psalms 72* (LXX). This psalm, *Tehillim / Psalms 50*, speaks of the judgment to come and the manifestation of God. It speaks of the Lord asking to be acknowledged as judge and creator and promising to bestow mercy on those who turn to him. The psalm ends with a warning to the wicked followed by a promise.

David opens saying אֵל | אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה דָּבַר וַיִּקְרָא אֶרֶץ מִמְזֶרֶה-שָׁמַשׁ עַד-מְבֹאוֹ | *50:1 The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.* (NASB) Here the psalmist writes “El Elohim YHVH” (אֵל | אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה) using the singular form of the word “God” with the plural form juxtaposed to the name of God (YHVH). The name Elohim is plural and when spoken of as a reference to the God of Israel is understood to be a reference to the one true God and not to many gods. The word “El” is given a masculine plural ending, we know this is not a reference to “gods” since the name is used with singular verb forms and with singular pronouns such as we see in *Bereshit / Genesis 1:26* and the creation of man. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Elohim in its plural form is said to be the plural of respect, plural of majesty, plural of potentiality, or plural of eminence. The Hebrew language offers this unique aspect of Elohim as a reference to “one God” to show the complete majesty and magnificence of God and His holiness. The Lord God is “one God” though He is described by being spelled in the plural form Elohim. The English translators recognize this and in an attempt to translate the meaning of this text say “*The Mighty One, God, the Lord*” to translate אֵל | אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה as these words occur one after another.

The psalmist says אֵל | אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה דָּבַר וַיִּקְרָא אֶרֶץ מִמְזֶרֶה-שָׁמַשׁ עַד-מְבֹאוֹ *has spoken, And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.* The word דָּבַר is written in the Piel verbal pattern. The Piel stem provides us with intensive action and an active voice; the Lord is actively speaking, and he does so by “calling out to the earth” (וַיִּקְרָא אֶרֶץ). The translators render this to mean that the Lord “has spoken, And summoned the earth” which provides a more passive voice, something the Lord has done, rather than active, the Lord is speaking and calling out (summoning) the earth. The psalmist states the Lord calls out from the raising of the sun until its setting indicating that the Lord calls during the day. He uses the words מִמְזֶרֶה-שָׁמַשׁ

meaning literally “from the easterly sun” which is a reference to the sun that raises in the east, and until its setting. What does it mean that the Lord summons the earth? The Aramaic Targum states, א תושבחתא על :50:1 ידוי דאספ תקיפא אלהא יהוה מליל מן בראשית שירתא וגזר”וקרא למעבד ארעא ממדנח שמשא עד מעלניה: *A hymn composed by Asaph. Mighty is God; the Lord spoke at the Creation a song; and he carved out the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (EMC)* The targum translation states תקיפא אלהא יהוה “Strong One / Mighty is the Lord God” which is consistent with our understanding on the way the psalmist wrote “*El Elohim YHVH.*” And the Septuagint states, 50:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ἀσαφ θεὸς θεῶν κύριος ἐλάλησεν καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου καὶ μέχρι δυσμῶν *A Psalm for Asaph. 50:1 The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. (LXX)* The summoning of the earth refers to the inhabitants of the earth who are being called to attention to hear the word of the Lord. This calling to attention may be alluding to Parashat Hazinu (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1*) which calls Heaven and Earth as witnesses, or to *Tehillim / Psalm 50:4* to be witness of the justice and righteousness of God’s dealings with His people for their rejection of His word. There may also be a reference to Parashat Devarim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:26*) as a call to all the inhabitants of the earth to hear God’s Word (His Torah) and obey where the Heavens and the Earth are witness of their disobedience.

ב מְצִיּוֹן מְכַלֵּל-יְפֵי אֱלֹהִים הוֹפִיעַ: ג יְבֵא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵל-יְהוָה אֵשׁ-לְפָנָיו :50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. 50:3 May our God come and not keep silence; Fire devours before Him, And it is very tempestuous around Him. 50:4 He summons the heavens above, And the earth, to judge His people (NASB) How do the Heavens and the Earth judge the people of God? In *Tehillim / Psalms 6* we discussed a parable taken from the rabbinic literature that illustrates the meaning of Heaven and Earth. From *Midrash Tanchuma Vayikra 6*, the Holy One blessed be He will bring the soul and ask, “*Why have you transgressed the precepts?*” The soul will answer “*It is the body that transgressed the precepts and not I, since I left the body am I not perfectly spotless?*” Then the Lord goes to the body and says “*Why have you sinned?*” It answers, “*It is the soul that is the sinner, not I. Since the soul has left me, can You find any iniquity in me?*” He brings them both together and judges them as one. This illustrates the parable of the blind gardener and the lame man found in the *Tehillim / Psalms 6* study. The lame gardener says to the blind gardener, “*I see some nice fruit in this garden. Take me on your shoulders as I cannot walk, and we will then get the fruit and divide it between us.*” This was done by the gardeners and after a time, the owner of the garden found that he was missing some fruit. He accused the lame man of having eaten it. But the lame man replies, “*Do I have legs to carry me over to get the fruit?*” Then he accused the blind man, but the blind man replies, “*Do I have eyes to see?*” How does the king solve the dilemma? The owner places the lame man upon the shoulders of the blind and judges them both as one. And so God brings the soul and deposits it in the body as it is said, “*He calls unto the heavens from above and the earth below to judge His people.*” The idea is that the Heavens and Earth represent the spiritual and the physical realms. The heavens refers to the soul (spiritual) whereas the earth to the body. This provides us with the representation of the relationship between the ideas of the soul which are lived out in the body, to the spirit and the material things, heaven and earth. The things done here on earth in this lifetime will have an impact on what happens in the world to come and that there is a connection between what we do, how we live, and the spiritual realm.

ב מכלל ושירוי בירית בריאת עלמא מציון ומן :ג יימרון צדיקיא ביום דינא רבא ייתי אלהנא ולא ישתוק למעבד פורענות עמיה אשתא קדמוי תצלהב וחזור חזור ליה תזעוף עלעולא לחדא: ד יקרא לאנגלי מרומא מלעיל ולצדיקי ארעא מלרע :50:2 The perfection and the beginning of the eternal creation is from Zion; and from there its beauty is complete, God will be revealed. 50:3 The righteous will say on the great day of judgment, “Our God will come, and he will not neglect to vindicate his people”; fire will blaze before him, and around him a storm will rage mightily. 50:4 He will call to the angels of the height above, and to the righteous of the earth below, to extend judgment to his people. (EMC) The rabbis translate the psalmist’s words to say that from Zion is the beginning of the eternal creation. This is because God has chosen to make His name

known in Zion, He has revealed Himself at Zion. The righteous have nothing to fear even though the fire blazes round about. The heavens refers to the angels above who are the righteous from above, and the earth below is a reference to the righteous below. David continues saying: ה אֶסְפוּ-לִי חֲסִידַי כְּרִיתִי בְרִיתִי עֲלֵי-זָבַח: *Gather My godly ones to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.* 50:5 וַיִּגִּדּוּ שָׁמַיִם צְדָקוֹ כִּי-אֱלֹהִים | שֹׁפֵט הוּא סֶלָה: 50:6 *And the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is judge. Selah. (NASB)* This is how the heavens declare the glory of God, the Lord calls to gather both the righteous above who glorify the Lord continuously (the Angels), and to the righteous below who are His people. Here, the Lord calls out to the Earth to gather his righteous ones to Zion, to the place and in the way the Lord has chosen for his people.

The Aramaic Translation states, ה כנושו לותי חסידי די גזרו קיימי וקיימו אוריתי ואיתעסקו בצלותא, 50:5 *Gather to me, my pious ones, who have made my covenant, and fulfilled my Torah, and have engaged in prayer, which is likened to a sacrifice.* 50:6 *And the angels of the height will recount his righteousness, for God is the judge forever. (EMC)* Here the rabbis say that the angels will tell of God's righteous deeds, His righteousness is connected to His judgment. The Septuagint states, 50:5 συναγάγετε αὐτῷ τοὺς ὁσίους αὐτοῦ τοὺς διατιθεμένους τὴν διαθήκην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ θυσίαις 50:6 καὶ ἀναγγελοῦσιν οἱ οὐρανοὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ ὅτι ὁ θεὸς κριτῆς ἐστὶν διάψαλμα 50:5 *Assemble ye his saints to him, those that have engaged in a covenant with him upon sacrifices.* 50:6 *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge. Pause. (LXX)* The rabbis are connecting the holy ones above to the holy ones below. There are two cases in the Apostolic Writings that come to mind regarding angels, judgment, and the righteousness of God (*1 Corinthians 6:1-5 and 2 Peter 2:1-5*).

### **1 Corinthians 6:1-5**

6:1 *Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? 6:2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? 6:4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? 6:5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, (NASB)*

### **2 Peter 2:1-5**

2:1 *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2:2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 2:3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (NASB)*

The psalm speaks of the heavens above and the earth below declaring the glory of God. The Aramaic targum states that the angels will declare the glory and mercy of God from heaven. When the Scriptures speak of the righteousness of God, in many instances the judgment of God is in close proximity. According to *1 Corinthians 6:1-5* and *2 Peter 2:1-5*, we read that the angels are also subject to the judgment of God. All are judged, both men and angels are subject to the judgment and righteousness of God. The Apostle John pointed out in Revelation that both earth and heaven flee from the presence of Him who is upon the throne to judge. (Remember in *Revelation 12:7*, Michael and his angels battle the dragon and his angels, therefore,

the Scriptures bear testimony to unrighteous angels.) As regards to who does the judging, judgment belongs to Him who is on the throne. A few verses earlier however (*Revelation 20:4*) we also see others will judge as well.

### **Revelation 20:4**

*20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 20:5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (NASB)*

These Scriptures speak of the punishment of angels that have sinned. Peter in *2 Peter 2:1-5* does not specify the sin of the angels, whether rebellion, as in *Revelation 12:7*, or uncleanness, as is written in *Jude 1:6-7*, or based upon what we read of in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:4*. Formally, there is an anacoluthon in *2 Peter 2:4* (*Anacoluthon is an unexpected shift in grammar. Anacolutha often are sentences interrupted midway, where a change in the syntactical structure of the sentence occurs following the interruption.*) Note also that the Greek text states these angels are cast down to hell. The Greek word used here is found nowhere else in the Greek Scriptures; the word *ταρταρώσας*, meaning “*having cast into Tartarus.*” This is obviously the use of a word belonging to Hellenistic mythology which is very remarkable. Peter is obviously drawing upon the Greek mythological understanding here since there are no parallels found elsewhere in the Apostolic Writings. Question: “*Is it a theological problem to draw upon cultural understanding in mythology to teach a spiritual truth like Peter is doing here?*” I read over and over again on social media conversations how horrible it is to use mythology, and especially on the disciples use of Greek mythology to illustrate spiritual truths. Some even make statements that the Greek manuscripts are not inspired by God because of this. (*The word *τάρταρος* occurs in the Septuagint, Job 40:15, and compares to the Septuagint rendering of the name of Job’s daughter Keren-Happuch, *Ἀμαλθαίας κέρας*, the horn of Amalthea; and the word *σειρήνες* in Isaiah 43:20, taken from the Pulpit Commentary.*) Here it appears that the Apostle Peter regards Tartarus as something different from Gehenna (*i.e. he doesn’t believe Tartarus is equivalent to Gehenna.*) We understand this from the statement that the sinful angels are “*reserved unto judgment,*” meaning that they are put in a place of detention prior to that great day of judgment. The idea is, within the context of the psalm, the righteous have nothing to fear even though the fire of God’s judgment blazes round about. The angels in heaven and the righteous men below on earth have nothing to fear. On the other hand, the unrighteous (the wicked) have everything to fear because judgment is coming.

The Scriptures continue saying: *וְאֶדְבַּרְהָ יְשׁוּרָאֵל וְאֶעֱיֶדְהָ בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲנֹכִי: 50:7 ‘Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God. (NASB)* How does God testify against Israel? The prophet Hosea says in *Hosea 7:10* *וְעִנָּה גֵאוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפִנּוּי וְלֹא שָׁבוּ אֶל יְהוָה* *Though the pride of Israel testifies against him, Yet they have not returned to the LORD their God, Nor have they sought Him, for all this. (NASB)* In the people’s pride they sin under the assumption that their ways, or their understanding of their ways is correct whereby in reality they are turning from God’s ways. Thinking on Hosea’s words, he says the people did not turn back (*לֹא שָׁבוּ*) which reminds us of the topic of Teshuvah, “*turning back*” in repentance. Teshuvah is the process of turning or returning to God’s ways, to His commands, and a lot could be said from the Apostolic Writings regarding which commands, the heavy verses the light (ie. Weightier). In the Teshuvah process, there is both a heart (inside, mind, and soul) along with physical (bodily) turning from unrighteousness. The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin states, “*All that Hashem desires from a person is his heart,*” which describes one’s intention or motivation for performing a mitzvah. When one performs a mitzvah, the Lord will value it in a special way



only if it is infused with the proper motivation so the proper motivation is as important as physically turning and walking in God’s ways. Thinking on walking in God’s ways, how weighty is the way in which one lives out the commands? The way one lives out the command is related to the traditions (e.g. Mishnah). Is the Lord concerned so much with the traditions as He is with turning to the commands as long as one is violating a the commands? This is a really good topic for discussion because there are many opinions on the proper tradition that one must follow. The point is here in the Psalm, David says that the Lord will testify against Israel. The Torah remains today as a testimony, a witness either for or against all of the world, and to God’s people. We read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:24 After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, 31:25 he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: 31:26 ”Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. 31:27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die! 28Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials, so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to testify against them. (NASB)* It is this rebellious attitude that is present even today in God’s people which shows how the Torah remains as the testimony of God which is not done away with.

David continues saying the Lord does not reprove for their sacrifices, He does not take bulls out of their flocks because he owns the cattle on a thousand mountains, He does not require sacrifices because He is hungry. (50:8-13) The Lord speaks to the righteous saying to bring the sacrifice of thanksgiving and to pay their vows (50:14-15), to call upon His name in times of trouble, and to the wicked who hate discipline, what right does the wicked have to tell of His statutes or to take His covenant in their mouth? (50:16-20)

### Masoretic Text

#### 02-8:05 retpahC smlasP / milliheT

50:8 *‘I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me. 50:9 ‘I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. 50:10 ‘For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. 50:11 ‘I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. 50:12 ‘If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. 50:13 ‘Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats? 50:14 ‘Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High; 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.’ 50:16 But to the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth? 50:17 ‘For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you. 50:18 ‘When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers. 50:19 ‘You let your mouth loose in evil And your tongue frames deceit. 50:20 ‘You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son. (NASB)*

ח לא על-זבֿחֿיךְ אוֹכִיחֶךָ וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ לְגַגְדֵי תַמִּיד: ט לא-אֶקַח מִבֵּיתֶךָ פֶּר מִמִּכְלֹאתֶיךָ עֲתוּדִים: י כִּי-לִי כָל-חַיְתוֹ-נֶעַר בְּהֵמוֹת בְּהֵרְרֵי-אֶלְךָ: יא יְדַעְתִּי כָל-עוֹף הָרִים וְזִיו שְׂדֵי עַמְדֵי: יב אִם-אֶרְעֵב לא-אֶמַר לָךְ כִּי לִי תֵבֵל וּמְלֹאָה: יג הָאוֹכֵל בֶּשֶׂר אֲבִירִים וְדָם עֲתוּדִים אֲשַׁמֶּה: יד זָבַח לְאֱלֹהִים תוֹדָה וְשִׁלְמִים לְעֹלִיוֹן נְדַרְיֶךָ: טו וּקְרָאֲנִי בַיּוֹם צָרָה אֲחַלֶּצְךָ וּתְכַבְּדֵנִי: טז וְלִרְשָׁע | אֶמַר אֱלֹהִים מֵה-לָּךְ לְסִפּוֹר חֲקֵי וּתְשֹׂא בְרִיתִי עָלַי-פִּי: יז וְאַתָּה שָׁנֵאתָ מוֹסֵר וּתְשַׁלֶּךְ דְּבָרֵי אַחֲרֶיךָ: יח אִם-רָאִיתָ גִּבּוֹר וּתְרַץ עִמּוֹ וְעַם מְנַאֲפִים חֲלָקְךָ: יט פִּיךָ שְׁלַחְתָּ בְרַעְיָה וּלְשׁוֹנָךָ תִּצְמִיד מְרָמָה: כ תֵּשֵׁב בְּאַחֲרֶיךָ תִּדְבֹר בְּבֶן-אִמֶּךָ תִּתֵּן-דִּפְיִ:

## Aramaic Targum

### 02-8:05 retpahC smlasP / hayivoT

50:8 I am not rebuking you on account of your sacrifices that you did not offer before me in exile, for your holocausts that your fathers offered are in front of me always. 50:9 From the day that my sanctuary was laid waste, I have not accepted a bull from your hands, or rams from your flock. 50:10 For mine are all the animals of the forest, and I have prepared for the righteous in the Garden of Eden clean beasts and a wild bull who grazes every day on a thousand mountains. 50:11 Manifest before me are all the kinds of birds who fly in the air of heaven; and the rooster whose legs rest on the earth, while his head reaches to heaven, rejoicing before me. 50:12 If the time of the continual morning sacrifice should arrive, I would not tell you; for mine is the earth and its fullness. 50:13 From the day my sanctuary was laid waste, I have not accepted the flesh of the sacrifice of fatlings, and the priests have not sprinkled the blood of rams before me. 50:14 Subdue the evil impulse and it will be reckoned before the Lord as a sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay to the Most High your vows. 50:15 And pray in my presence in the day of trouble; I will save you, for you will glorify me. 50:16 But to the wicked who has not repented, and prays in impiety, the Lord says, "Why do you recite my covenant, and swear by my name, and invoke my covenant with your mouth?" 50:17 But you hate the rebuke of the wise, and you have cast my words behind you. 50:18 If you saw a thief, you ran after him; and you have placed your portion with adulterers. 50:19 You have loosened your mouth to utter evil speech; and your tongue adheres to speaking deceit. 50:20 You will sit with your brother, you will speak lies against your mother's son, you will cast aspersions. (EMC)

ח לא מטול דיבחד דלא קריבתא קדמי בגלותא אנא מוכח לך אכסנינג ארום עלוותך דקריבו אבהתך לקבלי תדירא: ט מן יומא די חרוב בית מקדשי לא קבילית מן אידך תורא מן עדרך ברחי: י ארום דילי כל חיות חורשא ואתידית ועתידית לצדיקיא בגן עדן בעיריא דכין ותור בר דרביע דרעי בכל יומא טורין אלפא: יא גליין קדמי כל מיני זייני עופא דפרחין באויר שמיא ושרכיפיהון בטוריא ותנגול ברא דקרצוליה שרין בארעא ורישיה מטי בשמיא מרנין קדמי: יב אין ימטי זמן קרבנא תדירא דקריצתא לא אימר לך ארום דילי ארעא ומלייהא: יג מן יומא דחרוב בית מקדשי לא קבילית בשר נכסת פטימא ודמא דברחי לא זריקו כהניא קדמי: יד כבוש יצרא בישא ויתחשב קדם יהוה כניכסת תודתא ושלים לעילאה נדריך דנדרת בסיני לקיימא פיקודיא: טו וצלי קדמי ביומא דעקתא אישיזבינג ארום תיקרנני: טז ולרשיעא דלא עבד תתובא ומצלי במרודא אמר יהוה אלהא מה לך למשתעי קיימי ותימי ותומי בשמי ותדכר קיימי עלי פומך: יז ואנת ואת סניתא מכסנותא דחכימא וטלקתא פתגמי בתרך: יח אין חמיתא גנבא ורהיטתא בתרוי ועם גייופי שויתא חולקך: יט פומך שלחתא למישתעי לישנא בישא לישן תליתאי ולישנך מדבקא למללא ניכלא: כ תתיב באחק תמליל כדבותא כדכובא בבר אימך אומך תשווי דופיא:

## Septuagint

### Psalmoi / Psalms 50:8-20

50:8 I will not reprove thee on account of thy sacrifices; for thy whole-burnt-offerings are before me continually. 50:9 I will take no bullocks out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy flocks. 50:10 For all the wild beasts of the thicket are mine, the cattle on the mountains, and oxen. 50:11 I know all the birds of the sky; and the beauty of the field is mine. 50:12 If I should be hungry, I will not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness of it. 50:13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? 50:14 Offer to God the sacrifice of praise;

*and pay thy vows to the Most High. 50:15 And call upon me in the day of affliction; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Pause. 50:16 But to the sinner God has said, Why dost thou declare my ordinances, and take up my covenant in thy mouth? 50:17 Whereas thou hast hated instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee. 50:18 If thou sawest a thief, thou rannest along with him, and hast cast in thy lot with adulterers. 50:19 Thy mouth has multiplied wickedness, and thy tongue has framed deceit. 50:20 Thou didst sit and speak against thy brother, and didst scandalize thy mother's son. (LXX)*

50:8 οὐκ ἐπὶ ταῖς θυσίαις σου ἐλέγξω σε τὰ δὲ ὀλοκαυτώματά σου ἐνώπιόν μου ἐστὶν διὰ παντός 50:9 οὐ δέξομαι ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου σου μόσχους οὐδὲ ἐκ τῶν ποιμνίων σου χιμάρους 50:10 ὅτι ἐμά ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ δρυμοῦ κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες 50:11 ἔγνωκα πάντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὠραιότης ἀγροῦ μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστὶν 50:12 ἐὰν πεινάσω οὐ μὴ σοι εἶπω ἐμὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ οἰκουμένη καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς 50:13 μὴ φάγομαι κρέα τὰύρων ἢ αἷμα τράγων πίομαι 50:14 θῦσον τῷ θεῷ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως καὶ ἀπόδος τῷ ὑψίστῳ τὰς εὐχὰς σου 50:15 καὶ ἐπικάλεσαί με ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεως καὶ ἐξελοῦμαι σε καὶ δοξάσεις με διάψαλμα 50:16 τῷ δὲ ἁμαρτωλῷ εἶπεν ὁ θεός ἵνα τί σὺ διηγῇ τὰ δικαιώματά μου καὶ ἀναλαμβάνεις τὴν διαθήκην μου διὰ στόματός σου 50:17 σὺ δὲ ἐμίσησας παιδείαν καὶ ἐξέβαλες τοὺς λόγους μου εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω 50:18 εἰ ἐθεώρεις κλέπτην συνέτρεχες αὐτῷ καὶ μετὰ μοιχῶν τὴν μερίδα σου ἐτίθεις 50:19 τὸ στόμα σου ἐπλεόνασεν κακίαν καὶ ἡ γλῶσσά σου περιέπλεκεν δολιότητα 50:20 καθήμενος κατὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου κατελάλεις καὶ κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς μητρός σου ἐτίθεις σκάνδαλον

Notice how David says that the Lord does not take bulls out of their flocks because he owns the cattle on a thousand mountains, He does not require sacrifices because He is hungry (50:8-13) as compared to the rabbi's translation into the Aramaic Targum that speaks of the Lord not rebuking his people because they were unable to offer sacrifices due to the sanctuary being laid waste on the Temple Mount. Due to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the rabbis are saying that God does not cause the people to be guilty for their lack of bringing an offering before Him. This describes living in obedience to the word of the Lord and with respect to what we are able to do within the context of an absent Temple. These comments go to show how the sacrifices were not efficacious for a man to earn his salvation by his own hand (by bringing a sacrifice for his sins). We are called to obedience, to have a high regard for God's word because these things direct us to God's will and plan which was to bring His Messiah Yeshua into this world for the purpose of salvation from sin. The purification of the soul on the inside, the sacrifice of Yeshua purifies us from within, purifies the soul whereas the Temple sacrifices purified the body externally. The significance of this statement is found in the rabbinic translation (Targum) in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:14-15* to subdue the evil impulse. Notice how the rabbinic translation of "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving" is to subdue the evil impulse. Paul says we are to put our bodies to death (*Galatians 5:24*) which is called "crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires." (see also *Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:5*) The act of offering a sacrifice of praise is lived out in our lives as a pleasant aroma before God. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul was saying to the Corinthians in *2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are a sweet fragrance to God in The Messiah among those who have life and among those who perish. (ABPE)* We live our lives in the Messiah in this world, in the midst of both the righteous and the unrighteous nations around us. Do not sin and do not live by sin, because the wages of sin is death. Our intentionally choosing to not sin is reckoned before the Lord as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. We are called to pay our vows, we are to do what we say, we are to live what we claim that we are the children of God. *Tehillim / Psalms 50:15* states to pray in the day of trouble and the Lord will save us. The psalm directs us to seek the Lord and His Messiah for help in this life. If you are struggling with sin, pray, seek the One who is able to overcome (Yeshua) and He will send His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) to help you to overcome sin, for the glory of God. These things are contrasted to the unrighteous, the wicked who do not repent and does not pray in piety (50:16). According to David, these unrighteous men who do not repent turn around and with their mouth recite the covenant

and swear by the name of the Lord. This sounds a lot like going through the motions. The lives of these people are characterized as hating the rebuke of the wise, casting God's words behind them, running after the thief and taking part with the adulterer; he speaks evil and has an deceitful tongue, and will speak lies against his own family. This sounds very close to Paul's teaching to the Ephesians in *Ephesians 5:4* and *there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.* (NASB) taking one example from the Apostolic Writings. There are many parallels between the teaching of the rabbis in Judaism, the Aramaic translation of the Scriptures, and the Apostolic Writings. The point being driven forward here is the righteous live by a different standard and approach life seeking the Lord for help, seeking to please God in all that they do, not simply by the way one lives but even by the way one thinks.

The psalmist concludes saying: **כא אלה עשית | והקרת שתי דמית היות אהיה כמוך אוכיחה ואערכה לעיניך:** *כב 50:21 בינו-נא זאת שכחי אלוה פן-אטרף ואין מציל: כג זבח תודה יכבדנני ושם דרך אראנו בישע אלהים: 'These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. 50:22 'Now consider this, you who forget God, Or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. 50:23 'He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.'* (NASB) Notice how David says that when the wicked sinned the Lord kept silent (והקרת שתי). Note the variations on the root word "Kharash" (חרש) according to the Hebrew lexicon:

- חרש -- adv. secretly, silently, quietly, mutely, noiselessly
- להחריש -- v. to keep silent; silence; deafen
- לחרוש -- v. to plough; plot, design, devise
- להיחרש -- v. be ploughed; plotted, designed; become deaf

The English translation states that "I kept silent," and the various verbal patterns on this word draws upon the idea, in the Hebrew mind, of keeping silent for the purpose of plotting or devising something. In the context of these verses, it is easy to understand what David is saying here that the wicked person assumes God is like him, and that the Lord's keeping silent is a form of plotting and devising evil, the silence of God supposedly justifies one's actions. Does God's silence justify one's actions? The Aramaic Targum states **כא אילין עובדין בישין עבדתא ואורכית דתיתב חשבתא למהוי עד עלמין שלים אמרת בלבבך בליבך אהוי תקיף די כמך אוכיחנך בעלמא הדין דוגמת אלהא ואנא בתקוף רגו איתפרע מינך אכסינך בעלמא הדין ואסדר דין גהנם בעלמא דאתי קדמך: כב איתבוננו כדין כדון דא רשיעיא דאשלו דשליין דחלת אלהא דילמא איתבר תוקפכון ולית משזיב: כג דדבה יצרא בישא וכביש ליה היך קורבן תודתא יתחשב ליה ומוקיר לי ודי יעדי אורחא בישא אחמי:** *50:21 These bad deeds you did and I waited for you to repent; you thought you would be at peace forever; you said in your heart, "I will be strong like you"; I will rebuke you in this world, and I will prepare the judgment of Gehenna before you in the world to come. 50:22 Now understand this, you wicked who have forgotten God, lest I break your might, with no one to save. 50:23 He who sacrifices the evil impulse, it will be reckoned to him like a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and he honors me; and whoever will remove the evil way, I will show him the redemption of the Lord.* (EMC) The Lord kept silent for the purpose of waiting for the unrighteous to repent of their sins and perform Teshuvah. The Lord will and has prepared the judgment of Gehenna for the evil doer in the Olam Habah, we know this by the writings of the Apostles and the Gospel account of Yeshua's teachings. In *Tehillim / Psalms 50:23* the rabbis say explicitly that one is to sacrifice the evil impulse, which parallels putting the evil impulse to death; this is synonymous to offering a sacrifice of thanks giving. The Septuagint translation words this in the following way, *50:21 ταῦτα ἐποίησας καὶ ἐσίγησα ὑπέλαβες ἀνομίαν ὅτι ἔσομαι σοι ὁμοῖος ἐλέγξω σε καὶ παραστήσω κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου 50:22 σύνετε δὴ ταῦτα οἱ ἐπιλανθανόμενοι τοῦ θεοῦ μήποτε ἀρπάσῃ καὶ μὴ ἦ ὁ ρυόμενος 50:23 θυσία αἰνέσεως δοξάσει με καὶ ἐκεῖ ὁδός ἣ δειξῶ αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ 50:21 These things thou didst, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest wickedly that I should be like thee, but I will reprove thee, and set thine offenses before thee. 50:22 Now consider these things, ye that forget God, lest he rend you, and there*

*is no deliverer. 50:23 The sacrifice of praise will glorify me: and that is the way wherein I will shew to him the salvation of God. (LXX)* The Lord keeps silent when the wicked commit their sin. The wicked believes the Lord is like them, however, the Lord will reprove the unrighteous for their deeds. The wicked forget that God is watching and the psalmist states there is no deliverer for the unrighteous, those who live unrepentant lives. The statement *50:22 Now consider these things, ye that forget God, lest he rend you, and there is no deliverer (LXX)* suggests that the Lord carries but there will come a day when He will take action and it will result in “rending” (LXX), “breaking the might/strength” (Targum), or “tearing into pieces” (MT) the one who does not obey and seek the Lord. Does our salvation depend upon repentance and is this a work we must perform considering the meaning of Teshuvah? The sacrifice of praise is the way we live our lives to show we are saved. This is the root meaning of by their fruits you will know them (*Matthew 7:15-20*). The righteous offer sacrifices of thanks giving and order their ways according to the ways of God for the glory of God. This is who we are by nature of our being the children of the Most High God. If your life is not characterized by faith, obedience, and love, then it is time to seek the One who gives liberally and abundantly to those who ask (*James 1:5*). The Lord Yeshua will help, but you have to ask. Let’s Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 50* has 3 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, and 3. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 50, Part 1, 2, and 3*.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 50, Part 1, 2, and 3

#### Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*A Psalm of Asaph, God, God, the Lord, He has spoken and He called the earth into being (Tehillim / Psalms 50:1).*”
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “The heretics asked rabbi Simlai, What is meant by the words God, God, the Lord, He has spoken?”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the opening words of the Psalm and the way the Lord called the earth into being.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable saying that the Lord created the world by three names.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And when the Holy One blessed be He, renews His world, He will renew it out of Zion, as is said, And it will come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord’s house will be established as the first of the mountains (Isaiah 2:2).*”

#### Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*I do not reprove you for your sacrifices (Tehillim / Psalms 50:8).*”
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Nakhman taught in the name of Rabbi Berechiah, If a man intends to do a righteous act, the Holy One blessed be He, writes it down before Him, as if already done, for the verse goes on to say your rising thoughts are continuously before Me.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis the meaning of not reproving for your sacrifices.

- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable drawing a parallel to Solomon’s wives.
- The Concluding phrase says “*But for what do I reprove you? For that you give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit (Tehillim / Psalms 50:19).*”

### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*When you give your mouth to evil and your tongue frames deceit (Tehillim / Psalms 50:19).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*When rabbi Jose son of Khalafta was a boy and used to play with other boys, a man saw him and said to him, Your father should be told that instead of studying your lessons you play with the boys.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the meaning of giving your mouth to evil and your tongue to deceit.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable saying how the Thank offering is the sacrifice the Lord loves the most.
- The Concluding phrase says “*As Scripture says, Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting deliverance; you will not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isaiah 45:17).*”

Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*A Psalm of Asaph, God, God, the Lord, He has spoken and He called the earth into being (Tehillim / Psalms 50:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states שאלו המינין את ר' שמלאי מהו דכתיב אל אלהים ה' דבר “*The heretics asked rabbi Simlai, What is meant by the words God, God, the Lord, He has spoken?*” This comment to the opening words of the psalm is interesting where the rabbis say “*Shaalū ha'minin*” (שאלו המינין) which is translated “*the heretics asked.*” The midrash uses the word המינין which reminds us of the “*Birkat Ha'Minim*” (בְּרַכַּת הַמִּינִים) which translates as the “*benediction concerning heretics*” from the Shemoneh Esreh. This appears to be a reference to the twelfth benediction of the weekday Amidah prayer (*Shmoneh Esreh*). The benediction is attributed to Samuel Ha-Katan at the Council of Jamnia, which was inserted into the Shemoneh Esreh (Eighteen Benedictions) causing the eighteen to be nineteen. The addition of the nineteenth benediction is believed to be the origins on the split between early Christianity and Judaism. The nineteenth benediction was added as a statement of heresy as it is related to Christianity and the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three distinct and individual persons of God. Christians are called “*ha'Minim,*” meaning “*the people of the faith.*” Some scholars debate on who the Minim is referring to, whether Christians or another sect of Judaism. David Flusser views the Birkat ha'Minim as having been a reference to the Sadducees and not to Christians. (*Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish & Christian Literature (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament, 158), 2003 by Peter J. Tomson (Author, Editor), Doris Lambers-Petry (Editor), “... who unearthed the conceptual background of the birkat ha-minim. In his analysis, the material of the berakha basically dates from temple times, when it was directed against such ‘separatists’ (perushim or porshim) as Sadducees who ...*”) However, many scholars see the reference to the “*Birkat ha'Minim*” in Justin Martyr’s complaint to Trypho saying the Jews “*curse in their synagogues those that believe on Christ.*” Here the rabbis make a reference to the Minim who ask about the meaning of the first verse of Tehillim / Psalms 50 which states “*A Psalm of Asaph, God, God, the Lord, He has spoken and He called the earth into being.*” Rabbi Simlai responds with the following answer:

*Rabbi Simlai answered, Scripture does not say here They have spoken, or they called, but He has spoken, and He called. (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 1)*

We had noted earlier that the psalmist writes “*El Elohim YHVH*” (אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה | אֵל) using the singular form

of the word “*God*” along with the plural form juxtaposed to HASHEM, the name of God (YHVH). The name Elohim is plural and when spoken of as a reference to the God of Israel is understood to be a reference to the one true God and not to many gods. The argument is that the word “*Elohim*” is not a proof text for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three separate and distinct individuals. It is true that one should not base their theology upon the misunderstanding of one word. In the word Elohim, the word “*El*” is given a masculine plural ending, we know this is not a reference to “*gods*” since the name is used with singular verb forms and with singular pronouns such as we see in *Bereshit / Genesis 1:26* and the creation of man. Elohim is written as a plurality to give honor and respect to the Lord God who is Lord over all. Rabbi Simlai’s response is that the Scriptures do not say “*They have spoken*” but that “*He has spoken and He called.*” This is obviously a response to Christians asking the question of “*Elohim*” and to *Bereshit / Genesis 1:26* that states “*let Us make man in Our image...*” Here we find a rabbinic response that is rooted in Scripture and to the Shema from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4*: אֶחָד | יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה | אֶחָד: 6:4 ‘*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!*’ (NASB) This Scripture supports the idea that God (Singular) called out to the earth, that He called and not that They called. One interpretation may be that God (El) called out to the earth, He is majestic and awesome in power (Elohim) and He has revealed Himself in the Torah (YHVH) as the Lord who is merciful and full of khesed (grace). The rabbis bring us back to the Scriptures in their grammatico-logical hermeneutic drawing upon the Scriptures for understanding the correct a mistaken belief that God is a composition of three individual gods. The midrash continues saying the following:

*Later, his disciples said to him, Master you have put them off with a broken reed of an answer. But what answer will you give us? He said to them, His three names are one, as a man say, Artisan, builder, and architect. And why did Scripture here mention three times the name of the Holy One blessed be He? To teach that the Holy One blessed be He, created His universe by three names that stand for the three godly attributes of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, by these the world was created, as is said The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken up (Mishley / Proverbs 3:19-20). The Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle were also built to stand for these three attributes as God said, I have filled him Bazalel with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge (Shemot / Exodus 31:3). So too, the name of God is repeated three times in the verse, For the Lord you God are a devouring fire, a jealous God (Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:24). (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 1)*

A student or disciple of rabbi Simlai speaks up and says that his answer is not an adequate one. The problem is that *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1* mentioned God’s name three times (El, Elohim, YHVH). His response to this is that God’s names are one and we can find a parallel in this world, as a man is called “*Artisan, builder, and architect*” all three are in reference to one man, so too is occurring here in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1* on the three names referencing One, the Lord God Almighty. The rabbis respond in like manner saying that God created the world by three names, these names are “*wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.*” The response to three in one is “*The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken up (Mishley / Proverbs 3:19-20).*” The point is that in Christianity, because of the Greek world, the counsels who discussed the deity of Yeshua began with the persons of God most likely as a result of the Hellenistic culture and understanding of God from Greek mythological perspective, and how the gods interact in mythology with mankind taking on human form. The obvious difficulty is in the biblical statements like the Shema, where God is One, and other Scriptures that state that there are no other gods (*Shemot / Exodus 20:3, Isaiah 44:6, 45:5* to name a few). The rabbinic hermeneutic draws us back to the Scriptures on how God has created this world since we are discussing *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1* that God called out to all the earth rather than taking examples from Greek mythology. A second example is given in the midrash, rabbi Simlai says “*The Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle were also built to stand for these three attributes as God said, I have filled him Bazalel with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge (Shemot / Exodus 31:3).*” The Tabernacle was built

to stand upon three things, wisdom, understanding and knowledge. A third example is given, “*So too, the name of God is repeated three times in the verse, For the Lord you God are a devouring fire, a jealous God (Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:24).*” The point is that even though we find this motif of three throughout the Scriptures, the rabbis are not using a motif of three to substantiate a three god theology like we find in the classical writings of the early church. The idea that is being drawn out here is that there are many places where God’s name is mentioned multiple times, even three times like we see in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1* and in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:24*. Just because God’s name is repeated three times, we should not make or justify our theology based upon the number three (a motif), or by the repetition of three, etc. The point that is being driven forward here in the midrash is that Christianity and Judaism do not disagree on the authority of Scripture, the issue is how one interprets the scriptures and then applies God’s word in practice (in life). As we can see from the midrash, there is a vast difference in interpretation that appears to be the result of how one perceives (sees or reads) the Scriptures and the presuppositions that one has which are brought into one’s interpretation. Taking this approach, objectivity is lost. We need to have an objective view, we need to be able to set ourselves outside of our own presuppositions in order to consider the alternative. This can be quite difficult at times because our lives are built upon our upbringing and our culture. The point I am making here is not that we should doubt who Yeshua the Messiah is (His deity), but that we need to base our theologies upon a solid foundation (Scripture). We need to be able to provide an answer to those who ask and not base our answers on one word (Elohim) or the idea that repetition (three, or motif) is a proof of a theology. By the question and response technique that is taking place between the Minim and the rabbi in the midrash, this appears to be the method that is being implemented on the interpretation of *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1* by the rabbis and this is a solid method of interpretation. Even though the rabbis have a solid basis for their methods (hermeneutics) we still may come out with a different interpretation on the deity of Yeshua. But the point is by studying in this way we “*KNOW*” what we believe and are able to make a case for our beliefs to those who ask.

The midrash continues, and another example is given where the name of God is repeated again.

*And again in the verse The children of Gad said, God, God, the Lord, God, God, the Lord, He knows (Joshua 22:22). Why does the phrase God, God, the Lord occur twice here? Once to stand for the three attributes by which the world was created, and once again to stand for the three attributes whereby the Torah was given, as is said, For I am the Lord, your God, a jealous God (Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:9). Hence, it is said God, God, the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth into being. You might think that the earth was called into being separately and the heaven separately. But no, the two were called into being together, as is said, Yea, My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has spread out the heavens, when I call them into being, they stand up together (Isaiah 48:13). God, God, the Lord called the earth into being from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof (Tehillim / Psalms 50:1). When a mortal forms a figure, he either begins with its head and finishes with its foot, or begins with its foot and finishes with its head. Not so the Holy One blessed be He. When God formed man, he formed him all at once, As Scripture says, He is One who forms all at once (Jeremiah 10:16). Hence, it is said, From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. And whence did God call the world into being? Out of Zion, for the verse, Out of Zion, the perfecting of the beauty (Tehillim / Psalms 50:2) refers to the perfecting of the beauty of the world. What is meant at the end of the verse by shined forth? It means that God gave light, for God shined forth clearly means His gift of light, as is said, God caused the light of His cloud to shine forth (Job 37:15). Whence the proof that this Psalm speaks of God’s calling the world into being? Because the word perfecting is used in the Psalm, and it is said in the chapter on creation The heaven and the earth were perfected and all the host of them (Bereshit / Genesis 2:1). (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 1)*

The idea is that if the repetition of three is important, what about the repetition of the name of God in the



book of Joshua? In *Joshua 22:22*, God is repeated again three times. The Scriptures say, | אֱלֹהִים | אֵל | כַּבְּ: 22:22 | יְהוָה אֵל | אֱלֹהִים | יְהוָה הוּא יָדַע וְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא יָדַע אִם-בְּמַרְדָּךְ וְאִם-בְּמַעַל בְּיְהוָה אֵל-תּוֹשִׁיעֵנו הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: *The Mighty One, God, the Lord, the Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows, and may Israel itself know. If it was in rebellion, or if in an unfaithful act against the Lord do not save us this day! (NASB)* In *Joshua 22:22*, the name of God is repeated three times twice, or six times. So the midrash is asking us why the name is repeated three times, twice? One interpretation is that, “Once to stand for the three attributes by which the world was created, and once again to stand for the three attributes whereby the Torah was given, as is said, For I am the Lord, your God, a jealous God (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:9*).” Rabbi Simali says that this double repetition of the three is for the world and for the Torah, that these are created by three “wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.” Another parallel is drawn between the heaven and earth. One may think that heaven and earth were created separately, but they were not, they were created together according to the Scriptures. The repetition of the name of God three times, the Christian interpretation appears to follow along the argument that the reason the name is mentioned three times is because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were created separately, as in the classic doctrine, three separate and distinct individuals. The midrash quotes from *Isaiah 48:13* stating that the Lord created the heavens and the earth with His right hand suggesting that God formed all at once. Another example is given with regard to light and darkness, when the sun raises, and sets, when a man enters a place, he enters (begins) with his foot and ends with his head, etc. The Holy One blessed be He formed man all at once, created the heaven and the earth at once, God called into being the earth at once, out of Zion God gave the light, He caused His cloud to shine forth, etc. We find the midrash drawing us back to the creation account as an example of how the Lord created, all of these things at once, to prove that the Lord is one even though David repeats the Lord’s name three times in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:1*. Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 1 concludes saying, “And when God destroys the world, He will begin with Zion, as is said I will make Jerusalem heaps (*Jeremiah 9:10*), and thereafter, The whole earth will be desolate (*Jeremiah 4:27*), and The earth will be desolate for them that dwell therein (*Micah 7:13*). And when the Holy One blessed be He, renews His world, He will renew it out of Zion, as is said, And it will come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord’s house will be established as the first of the mountains (*Isaiah 2:2*).” The midrash concludes with destruction and restoration. With destruction, the Lord will not show partiality to Jerusalem because of her sins, all of the world will be desolate. Upon the Lord’s restoration, He will begin with Zion in Jerusalem, and then all of the earth will be restored as well. The concept that is being drawn out is of unity, that the Lord does not function in His creation as separating heaven and earth, or in destruction, separating unrepentant sinners, He is no respecter of persons. The Lord does not function as three separate and distinct individual persons even though this may be what appears. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One, the Father sits upon the throne in heaven, the Son who is the Word of the Father which proceeds from the mouth of our Father in heaven, and the Holy Spirit is simply the Spirit of God. The Son (the Word) could not exist if the Father had not spoken, and the Spirit could not exist without the Father. God has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, this much is clear according to the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings, but do the Scriptures say that God is three distinct and individual persons? How does this analysis affect your faith in Yeshua the Messiah? Does this analysis effect the purpose of the Messiah and what He has done for each one of us? Does this interpretation effect our understanding of the deity of Yeshua?

Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying, “I do not reprove you for your sacrifices (*Tehillim / Psalms 50:8*).” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states, “Rabbi Nakhman taught in the name of Rabbi Berechiah, If a man intends to do a righteous act, the Holy One blessed be He, writes it down before Him, as if already done, for the verse goes on to say your rising thoughts are continuously before Me.” The entire midrash states the following:

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| <p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק נ סימן ב</b></p> <p>ב לא על זבחיך אוכיחך. אמר ר' נחמן בשם ר' ברכיה אם אמר אדם לעשות צדקה הקב"ה כותבה כנגדו, שנאמר ועולותיך נגדי תמיד. ויהי לחם שלמה ליום אחד (מ"א מלכים א' ה ב). ר' יהודה אומר אלף נשים היו לו לשלמה, וכולן עושות אריסטון כל אשה כל יומא, שהיתה כל אחת ואחת אומרת שמא אצלה סועד. לבד מאיל וצבי ויחמור (שם שם מלכים א' ה' ג) ואת מעלה לפני עולה, הוי לא על זבחיך.</p> | <p><b>Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 2</b></p> <p>2. <i>I do not reprove you for your sacrifices (Tehillim / Psalms 50:8). Rabbi Nakhman taught in the name of Rabbi Berechiah, If a man intends to do a righteous act, the Holy One blessed be He, writes it down before Him, as if already done, for the verse goes on to say your rising thoughts are continuously before Me. And Solomon's provisions for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal, and a hundred sheep, for he had dominion over all the region (1 Kings 5:2-4). Rabbi Judah said, Solomon had a thousand wives, and all of them prepared banquets, every wife, every day, for each hoped that Solomon would dine with her. Solomon had besides deer and gazelles and roebucks. Now will you fetch up a burnt offering for Me who has dominion over so much more than Solomon? Hence, I do not reprove you for your sacrifices (Tehillim / Psalms 50:8), since they are all already Mine. But for what do I reprove you? For that you give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit (Tehillim / Psalms 50:19).</i></p> |
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This is a very interesting midrash because Rabbi Nakhman says that he learned from Rabbi Berechiah that if a man has the intention to perform a righteous act, the Lord writes it down as if he had already performed the act. Does “intention” really equate to actually performing a righteous deed? Does this Rabbinical teaching offer one the opportunity to overlook a number of things within the Scriptures? For example, we receive the from the rabbis, according to Yochanan Ben Zachai, that G’millut KhaSadim (*deeds of loving kindness*) may substitute for the blood atonement. Another interpretation is when one reads the commandments in the Torah regarding atonement it is as if one has performed them. This interpretation is derived from select verses from the Tanach such as the following:

*Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (KJV)* ו כִּי חֶסֶד חָפְצָתִי וְלֹא־זִבְחָ וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מֵעֲלֹת:

*Hosea 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. (KJV)* ג קַחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֵל־יְהוָה אֱמַרוּ אֵלָיו כְּלִי־תִשָּׂא עֲוֹן וְקַח־טוֹב וְנִשְׁלַמָּה פְרִים שְׁפִתֵינוּ:

These interpretations most likely were the result of the destruction of the second Temple. According to *Isaiah 8:20* we read “*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*” Isaiah suggests that our actions bear witness of our faith in the Lord. Our faith, our testimony, our walk before God is consistent with the Torah which is the testimony of God. Here we are told in the midrash that one’s intention is more important than the deed and that intention secures the deed in written form before the Lord. The midrash continues by making a comparison to Solomon who made provision of food, to his wives preparing food in the hope that Solomon would dine with them, and the Lord asking for a sacrifice.

*And Solomon's provisions for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal, and a hundred sheep, for he had dominion over all the region (1 Kings 5:2-4). Rabbi Judah said, Solomon had a thousand wives, and all of them prepared banquets, every wife, every day, for each hoped that Solomon would dine with her. Solomon had besides deer and gazelles and roebucks. Now will you fetch up a burnt offering for Me who has dominion over so much more than Solomon? Hence, I do not reprove you for your sacrifices (Tehillim / Psalms 50:8), since they are all already Mine. (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 2)*

The idea that is being put forward here is that one’s intention are enough, a sacrifice is not necessary, the

Lord will not reprove the people for their sacrifices (*Tehillim / Psalms 50:8*), the reason being He has dominion over all of the animals. Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 2 concludes saying, “*But for what do I reprove you? For that you give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit (Tehillim / Psalms 50:19).*” This concept that intention is more important than actions seems to follow from the Targum translation we had discussed previously, that we are called to subdue the evil impulse (*Tehillim / Psalms 50:14-15*). Remember that the rabbis translate David’s words to “*Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving*” as to subdue the evil impulse. They are equating our righteous deeds to the sacrifice of thanksgiving. This is consistent with Paul’s analysis in which he states to put your body to death (*Galatians 5:24*) to “*crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.*” (see also *Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:5*) Paul also says *2 Corinthians 2:15* *For we are a sweet fragrance to God in The Messiah among those who have life and among those who perish. (ABPE)* Thus, the act of offering a sacrifice of praise is to live our lives as a pleasant aroma before God. We live our lives in the Messiah in this world, in the midst of both the righteous and the unrighteous nations around us. This idea that our intention supersedes one’s actions is based upon the rabbinic substitution of the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the absent Temple, and subduing the evil impulse. The midrash states that the reason God does not “*reprove you for your sacrifices*” is because the sacrifices are already His. Notice something here, the rabbis translate that the Sacrifices are the Lord’s to give, is this a parallel to what Yeshua has done for each of us sending His Son to die for our sins? The rabbinic interpretation brings in the concept that one does good deeds in the hopes that the Lord will sup with us, He will commune with us, the righteous act will somehow cause us to draw near to the Lord. The rabbinic understanding of righteous deeds based upon this midrash is that righteous deeds will cause us to draw near to the Lord, whereas sin will cause us to be separated. This is a theologically sound assumption based upon the Apostolic Writings. The only issue is that how our righteous deeds may be equated with the sacrifice of thanksgiving. According to the midrash the Lord must have dominion, or as the midrash states “*they are already mine*” (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 2). The point is, does the Lord have dominion over your life? We are told in the Apostolic Writings that we are to give ourselves, or lives over to Yeshua the Messiah so that He has dominion over our lives. By believing upon Yeshua, His death, His resurrection, and asking His Spirit to dwell in us, in these things we are giving the Lord dominion over our lives. According to the Apostolic Writings, we MUST give dominion of our lives over to the Lord, we must submit our lives to Yeshua. Intention alone is not enough since Yeshua said “*by their fruit you will know them*” (*Matthew 7:16*). Our intention is what follows through to action. This is why King Solomon said in *Mishley / Proverbs 4:23* *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (NIV)* Within the heart is the intension to serve God. The Lord knows our hearts, and as the midrash states, if the intention is not right, the deed will not be regarded as righteous. This sounds an awful lot like what Yeshua was teaching of the last days before the judgment throne when he said what he did in *Matthew 7:21-24*.

#### **Matthew 7:21-24**

*7:21 ‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter 7:22 ‘Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 7:23 ‘And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ 7:24 ‘Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. (NASB)*

The intention of the heart of these people standing before the throne was not in line with their actions. Sure the power of God was present, but intension should not be for show or for personal pride or wealth. The fruit of a child of God is to “*Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving*” by the way he lives with the intentions of bringing glory to God and not to himself.

Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*When you give your mouth to evil and your tongue frames deceit (Tehillim / Psalms 50:19).*” The homiletic introduction to the

Midrash states “When rabbi Jose son of Khalafta was a boy and used to play with other boys, a man saw him and said to him, Your father should be told that instead of studying your lessons you play with the boys.” The point is that the studying in school outweighs playing with friends. It might be that this boy was out playing at a time when he was not allowed. The midrash continues saying the following:

*Rabbi Jose answered, As you live, what is it to you? If you tell my father, he will strike me. Thus, you will accustom your tongue to the speaking of slander. Hence, When you give your mouth to evil and your tongue frames deceit, you will sander your own mothers son. He who offers thanks glorifies Me (Tehillim / Psalms 50:23). (Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 3)*

The midrash is discussing the topic of being a talebearer. A search on [www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com) for the word “talebearer” produces the following results.

**Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16** *Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor; I am the LORD. (KJV JPS ASV DBY)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 11:13** *A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. (KJV JPS NAS RSV)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 16:28** *A false man soweth contention; and a talebearer separateth very friends. (DBY)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 18:8** *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (KJV DBY)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 20:19** *He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips. (KJV JPS)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 26:20** *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. (KJV DBY)*

**Mishley / Proverbs 26:22** *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (KJV DBY)*

**Jeremiah 6:28** *All of them are turned away, going about with false stories; they are brass and iron: they are all workers of deceit. (See NAS)*

Based upon these Scriptures, a talebearer is not a good attribute to have. In *Mishley / Proverbs 26:22* for example, the word **שֹׁפֵחַ** (talebearer) is used which is taken from the root word **שָׁפַח** meaning “to whisper.” The concept here is that the one who whispers is doing so in secret because what he is doing is slanderous or gossip. So the talebearer has an alternate meaning, to be slanderous or a gossip according to the Hebrew text. The Targum translation of *Tehillim / Psalms 50* states that we are called to subdue the evil impulse (*Tehillim / Psalms 50:14-15*). The evil impulse is paralleled to our lips. This seems to also be consistent with Yeshua’s words in Luke chapter 6.

**Luke 6:43-47**

*6:43 ‘For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. 6:44 ‘For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. 6:45 ‘The good man out*

*of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. 6:46 'Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 6:47 'Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like (NASB)*

Yeshua speaks of a tree that bears fruit, a good tree is not capable of producing bad fruit, each tree (person) is known by the fruit they produce. This sets the stage for the good man who keeps good things in his heart, these things overflow out of the mouth, the good things one meditates upon is what one speaks about to others. In the Damascus document from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the author writes about the one who has knowledge of, or is knowledgeable in “*the book of the Meditation*” is to instruct others in righteousness. This book that is being referred to is the Torah, the reason being, the Torah contains God’s instructions for righteousness and holiness. When one meditates upon these things, they are essentially filling their hearts with God’s Holy Words, meditating upon good things. These good things then proceed forth from one’s lips and become a part of one’s life. This is very consistent with Solomon’s words in Proverbs which say, whatever a man fills his heart with he will become (*Mishley / Proverbs 23:7, “as a man thinks, so is he”*). The point is that others will see and know who we are by the things we spend our time doing. What we do comes from the meditation of our hearts. More importantly, others sees how such a person lives, and they will either give glory to God or pray because of sorrow, or worse yet, curse God because of the evil that is produced in his life. The Targum translation makes a lot of sense with regard to the offering of Thanksgiving and subduing the evil impulse. The rabbis in Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 3 continue saying:

*A thank offering is dearer to God than all the other offerings, for these are brought only because of transgressions. Thus, in Job you find it said, Job offered burnt offerings for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned (Job 1:5). But the thank offering is brought freely. Thus, Scripture says, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22), and also Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, my ears have You opened (Tehillim / Psalms 40:7). Glorify Me (Tehillim / Psalms 50:23) glorifies Me in this world as well as in the world to come. To him that prepares a way (Tehillim / Psalms 50:23), to such as those who light lanterns in dark entrances, I will show the deliverance of God. After deliverance by a mortal enslavement can still follow, but after deliverance by the Holy One blessed be He, there is no further enslavement. As Scripture says, Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting deliverance; you will not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isaiah 45:17).*

The midrash says that the Thank Offering (Korban Todah) is brought because of transgressions, the Thank Offering is brought freely, and that the Lord does not desire sacrifice and offering, that the Lord has opened our ears to hear and now we glorify the Lord. We are to give glory to the Lord in this world, and in the world to come (Olam Habah). Note how the concept of light and darkness is drawn into context here, lighting light is a parallel to living righteously, and in a dark place is a reference to this present age (world), and the Lord will deliver His people. Midrash Tehillim 50, Part 3 concludes saying, “*As Scripture says, Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting deliverance; you will not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isaiah 45:17).*” It is fascinating to study the rabbinic understanding of the sacrifice, the Thank Offering, how we are to subdue the evil impulse, and how these concepts tie into the Apostolic Writings. Today Judaism teaches that prayer and study has the capacity of replacing sacrifice, they may be used as a substitute that is found within the concept of “*having the intention to perform a righteous act, the Lord writes it down as if one had already performed the act.*” According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, we read how intention replaces sacrifice.

### ***Prayer and Study Replace Sacrifice.***

*The view that the sacrifice is such a substitute is clearly expressed in the prayer which R.*

*Sheshet was wont to recite on the evening after a fast-day: "Lord of the World, when the Temple was standing one who sinned offered a sacrifice, of which only the fat and the blood were taken, and thereby his sins were forgiven. I have fasted to-day, and through this fasting my blood and my fat have been decreased. Deign to look upon the part of my blood and my fat which I have lost through my fasting as if I had offered it to Thee, and forgive my sins in return" (Ber. 17a). The study of the laws of sacrifice was regarded as a sacrifice in itself (Men. 110), and thereby one obtained forgiveness after the destruction of the Temple had rendered the offering of sacrifices impossible (Ta'an. 27b).*

*The thank- and food-offerings are more sacred than the sin-offerings. They are offered because it is not fitting that the table of man should be filled while the table of the Lord, the altar, is empty (Hag. 7a). There are, however, various sentences in the Talmud which show the different views as to the value of these sacrifices. According to one view they have an absolute value in themselves, and the sacrifices which a person brings are a meritorious work for which he will be rewarded by God. Thus King Balak of Moab was rewarded for his sacrifices to God by being permitted to become the ancestor of Ruth (Nazir 23b). Similarly the sacrifices which Israel offered to God are meritorious works by which it was distinguished from the other peoples (Meg. 12b), and God can not forget the sacrifices which Israel offered to Him in the wilderness (Ber. 32b). A sacrifice is meritorious in proportion to its value (Sanh. 43b). But the view is expressed also that the value of a sacrifice depends upon the spirit in which it is brought; it matters not whether a person offers much or little, so long as he offers it in a spirit pleasing to God (Men. 110a).*

We know from historical documents and by the record in the Talmud how Judaism was restructured to consist of prayer and study replacing the ancient Temple ritual, and the construction of the synagogue replacing the ritual sacrifice by the Torah readings, prayer and teaching. Because of the present state of the Temple, its destruction, the rabbis added many interpretations and traditions that were meant to preserve the people of the book (Israel) until one day when the Temple is rebuilt. The prophet Jeremiah said that *"My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water"* (Jeremiah 2:13). Like we see here in the midrash on the rabbinic interpretation on *"intention"* being equated to performing a righteous deed, this has been used to a greater or lesser extent as an opportunity to overlook certain things within the Scriptures. Like the prophet Jeremiah said, these things have been used to forsake the Lord. Specifically, those things that are related to the Messiah. By the teachings and traditions, the rabbinic writings, the opinions of the rabbis have been elevated to the same level or above God's Word, and by doing so taking away from the Word of God by not accepting the True Messiah, Yeshua. In this elevation of the rabbinical teachings, the rabbis have done a great amount of spiritual damage to the Jewish people. The Scriptures have been given by the divine inspiration of the Creator of the universe. The Word of God is a priceless treasure that contains the wisdom of God and most importantly speaks of The Messiah Yeshua, the sacrifice that the Lord Himself brought on our behalf for the forgiveness of sins. Consistent with the rabbis on the intent of the heart, we believe in the righteous work of the Messiah Yeshua, and having the intention of faith believing that Yeshua died for our sins and was raised again, this is credited to us by God as if we ourselves have done the righteous deeds. Yeshua as the lamb of God made substitutionary atonement for our sins, and we are justified before God because of what He has accomplished, Praise the Lord for such a wonderful thing! Therefore, if you want atonement before God, do not overlook what the Scriptures are saying because of what the rabbis say, believe in Yeshua The Messiah of God for your salvation. This is a very rabbinic thing to do based upon our analysis of Midrash Tehillim 50. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Great are Your mercies Lord and Greatly are You to be praised! We thank You for preserving all of these writings and teachings and for giving us the ability to understand the meaning behind these writings Lord for Your glory. We call out to you today Lord, come into our heart, help us to live spirit filled lives and to walk according to Your ways and Your will for the glory of Your name! We want to glorify You and give You Praise by the way we live because You always keep Your promises and have always drawing us back to You! Lord deliver us from sin in our lives and increase our faith. You have demonstrated the greatness of Your love for us in Your Son Yeshua the Messiah. Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

## Notes