



The Silence of God ***A Study on Psalm 50***

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Produced by
Prayer for Israel.



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INTRODUCTION

The Middle-East is aflame - and it's not just Israel. Reports in past months show every country in the region facing huge turbulence. The world looks on and wrings its hands in frustration as every effort made by peacemakers sees peace slip out of their reach. Why is this and why is Israel in the centre of it? It has everything to do with the fact that we are engaged in a huge satanic assault on truth in every Nation on earth. God is angry "with the nations at ease" and He is creating the situation where all will be drawn towards Israel and Jerusalem according to Zechariah 12:1-4 and then on to the valley of Jehoshaphat for judgement.

Joel 3:3 "It's 'beggars belief' to see how consistently the media is able to twist reality into such fantasy," said Ron Prossor – Israel's Ambassador at the UN. In the Media War, there seems to be one rule for Israel and another for everyone else. Why is this? It's because there is a global assault being carried out focussed on the God of Israel and His revelation to Israel as well as to the nations, through the pages of scripture. It's a battle aimed at any nation that has incorporated Gods Laws into their national life and so it is a total war against Truth, Justice, and Righteousness. Where does it come from and who is controlling it? It is quite clear that the source is a spiritual power whose declared enemy is the true God, the true church and

true believers across the world who love the God of Israel - who is the God of all the earth. For it is He who is the only true and living God who has "*Shined forth out of Zion*" so that all who believe in the Messiah of Israel – Jesus Christ who is Messiah for all, can have hope of salvation.

Having painted this dark picture, which is a heavy burden to bear, we need to realise that despite all the 'Bad News', there is also 'Good News'. God is well aware and fully informed of the whole situation, is truly in control of all the events, fully understands the impact it is making on individuals, families and nations and has a plan that is ripening and almost ready to be implemented. Psalm 50 is a dramatic picture of events today and an encouragement to all believers.

A WORD ABOUT PROPHECY

It's important to understand first of all that there are two sets of prophetic pictures in scripture relating to the Messiah Jesus and His interest in this world. Prophecy tells His people why God is intervening in the world and what He intends to do with it.

1. To His coming in humility for personal redemption - first of all Israel and then all who would believe. Rom 1:16
2. To His coming in power and glory to receive a Kingdom on the earth which shall not pass away. Isa 66:13; Dan 7:13 Jewish interpretation was driven to create two Messiahs, to avoid recognising the deity of Jesus. (a) Messiah Ben-Joseph and (b) Messiah Ben-David. However there is no trace of support in scripture. Chris-

tian interpretation however created two methods of interpretation (a) Those prophecies relating to his coming in humility were considered literal and (b) those relating to the Kingdom on earth were considered to be spiritual and only refer to the reign of Christ in heaven. Since Israel was no more, the developing Church claimed to be the “New Israel” with heaven as the focus. However Acts 3:18-25 shows clearly that Prophecy was the cornerstone to preaching in the first century Church. This is a key challenge to the liberal Church attitude to Biblical interpretation that rejects prophetic fulfilment in the restoration of Israel.

THE CENTRAL THEME

Psalms 50 is clearly focussed on the second coming of the Messiah Jesus in power and glory.

Verse 1. He is introduced with an array of titles, El-Elohim-Jehovah that describe His great and awesome character but YHWH is the personal Name of the Lord to whom from the start in Gen 4. The psalm continues by revealing the divine programme in relation to:

1. The Saints of the true Church
2. To the Nation Israel
3. To Christendom

Verse 2 God has shined declaring the OT proclamation of Epiphany. The shining forth of the Saviour begins in Deut 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” Hab-

akkuk 3:3 also parallels this idea.

To Israel it is a marvellous revelation of life but by weakness of the flesh was a shining forth of death because it exposed to us our awful sin and helplessness in contrast to the perfect holiness of the God who is a “consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:18-29 explains the glories of Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant. This passage shows that the Law contained not only a promise but was a preparation for the gospel. In the fullness of time another “shining forth” took place 2 Tim 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” bringing not another fiery Law but a gospel of His grace. For 1900 years this grace has been known to millions but clearly this age is coming to an end.

SCOFFERS BOLDLY SAY

Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” 2Pe 3:4 Even in the Church, there is the doubting of His coming. But surely as night follows day there will be a new shining forth as we see the glory of the personal and visible coming of the Lord. If believing in His first coming is by faith so too is His second. But the sceptic says t’s all a spiritual lesson - neither are meant to be literal.” The believer gasps and God remains silent on the matter and many are led into doubt.

Some try to help God out and provide dates, some by generating exaggerated claims for particular signs in the heav-

ens!

But God says be patient n your patience, possess ye your souls” Luke 21:19 in relation to events of the last days.

ZION - THE CENTRE OF EPIPHANY

Just as God’s revelations in the past have been centred in Zion, so too with His second coming. What we see happening in Israel today is just the “birth-pangs” of the Messiah. Psalm 132:13,14 says For the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for His habitation.” And in our passage Ps 50:2 “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.” Once it was not so, Lamentations 2:15 All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call ‘The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth’? ZION was glorious but one day it felt the full wrath of almighty God. The meaning of the word Zion is dry, barren place or arid wilderness” Truly Israel has experienced the other side of that name. One day soon it will receive a new epiphany.

ISRAEL HAS NO NATURAL BEAUTY

Israel can take no credit for the moral beauty which went forth among the nations. The Lord says, From Me is thy fruit found” Hosea 14:8 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 16:14 Today we can see Israel once again adorned with splendour in many ways. Not quite the perfection of beauty or a praise in the midst of the earth and yet despite the events of today, Israel is a remarkable place. Verse 3. The “parousia” is the subject from here on. Our God shall come and not keep silent. The manner

of the manifestation is the awful presence and majesty of God. Rev 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. It will be a very noisy day with trumpets and great revelations. God will not keep silence! It’s a complete contrast of what he says in Ps 50:21 *“This thou hast done and I kept silent.”* What He is saying is that God has kept silent over many things for so long but NOW He is going to speak. Looking back over the ages, there are times when God has spoken and then long periods when He has been silent.

For some reason God appears to withdraw Himself from man and the question is – why? In Eden God spoke to Adam n the cool of the day”, but sin comes in, ruins the fellowship and there is silence. God is grieved and rightly so. Not until Enoch (7th from Adam) is God’s voice heard again – recorded in Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.” Why - because wickedness was so great in the earth (Gen 6:5)

You can see the unfolding redemptive plan through all the prophets as Rev 19:10 makes clear. After Enoch another long pause until God speaks to Noah and speaks judgment on the world by the flood. However, thank God, it is judgment with mercy – at least for Noah and his family. After the flood a new chance and God again withdraws Himself to test what is in man’s heart. Pursuit of unity in the building the tower of Babel is the result and God is grieved

as He brings merciful judgment through the confusion of their language. Later Isaiah concludes the situation this way *"For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you."* Isaiah 60:2

From Abraham to Malachi it is a period when God does arise and speak through the prophets but it is interspersed with periods of silence and God withdrawing Himself. This is not God being moody, He has a purpose. Judges 10:13 when Israel refuses to obey God, He says, I've had enough of you – goodbye! God withdraws Himself to prevent His purity consuming them. But thank God for His mercy that comes two verses later.

WHY DOES GOD WITHDRAW HIMSELF?

Hosea 4:17, 5:6, and especially verse 15 is a powerful explanation of how God shows mercy by distancing Himself from the sin of the nation until they come to their senses and sincerely seek after Him. God works the same way in the NT where there will be a future withdrawal described in Thessalonians;

2 Thess 2:7 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

This is another case of God stepping aside and letting lawlessness reach its full crescendo – when He will then act in judgment and no-one will be able to raise any argument. Most would agree that the Holy Spirit is the one who restrains evil but how could He leave the earth – it belongs to Him. Surely it is more consistent with Him being grieved

enough to step aside just as in OT days and then come in righteous judgment – which He will do.

CAN GOD'S WORD BE TRUSTED? IT'S SEEMS SO CONFUSING!

The history of Israel is a clear a record as one could ever have that God wanted to be on speaking terms with His people. Had Israel been prepared to listen God would continue to speak until the shining forth of the Messiah. Instead, after Malachi there followed 400 years of silence until the silence was broken by the voice of one crying in the wilderness – The NT ends with Rev 22:20 And at that point there sets in the longest of all silences until today. The Question is this – Has God been silent or has He spoken? Indeed He has;

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Can we trust what He has said? – YES! But what we need is patience. How often has the church cried out *"How long O Lord, how long?"* But there is neither audible sound nor visible manifestation. When will this silence be broken? The answer is what is in Psalm 50:3 *"Our God cometh and will not keep silent"* It will be an awful time and nothing to look forward to. A word to "End time watchers" from Amos 5:18 "Woe

to you, it will be a time of judgement"
How can we take any pleasure in ticking
the boxes of Gods eschatological clock?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S WITHDRAWAL AND SILENCE?

1. Designed to drive men to that which
He has already spoken. 2 Tim 3:16 He
also speaks by His spirit to the inner
man. Are there other ways? Some say
Dreams and Visions – but rare and
specific.

2. It's a testing time for man under more
favourable conditions. It's also a time
for the full development of evil so that
when God judges – who can argue with
Him.

**"That You may be found just when You
speak, And blameless when You judge."**
Psalm 51:4

Clearly, during Gods silence Man has
had a lot to say but it has only become
more foolish, proud and blasphemous.

3. The period of His silence is the period
of His longsuffering, which in the
richness of His goodness is designed
to lead men to repentance. Behold the
patience and forbearance of the
everlasting God. But should we com-
plain? Rather rejoice that there is still
time left for men to repent. The accept-
able year of the Lord is still in force.
Isaiah 61:2 *"To proclaim the acceptable
year of the Lord, And the day of venge-
ance of our God; To comfort all who
mourn"*

*To proclaim the acceptable year of the
Lord."* Luke 4:19

4. Finally, the Lord will come, not as

before but as Psalm 50:3 says,
*"Our God shall come, and shall not keep
silent; A fire shall devour before Him,
And it shall be very tempestuous all
around Him."*

See also Isa 66:15,16 and also 2 Thess
1:8,9

5. And lastly He will come on time and
according to the appointed times.
Habakkuk 2:3 *"For the vision is yet for
an appointed time; But at the end it
will speak, and it will not lie. Though it
tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely
come, It will not tarry."*

Thank God for He is a gracious God, if
not where would we be? In the next
Magazine Part 2 will deal with the next
part of this Psalm which covers His com-
ing in relation to the Church, Israel and
the world.