

# A Message to the Churches of God

## (Go To Meeting)

Eduardo Elizondo, November 5, 2022

Today, we're going to start by going to Deut. 6, from the most important, from the beginning. This is what God has for us and this is what God is telling us. The message is not from me, it's a message that is written in the Bible to the Churches of God.

Before we get to that, we are going to read the foundational things, the most important things in our life, that we have to be reminded of every day. This is really setting the stage for the message that we're going to study today.

Deuteronomy 6:4: "**Hear, O Israel. Our one God is the LORD, the LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up**" (vs 4-7).

This is the greatest commandment; Jesus said that this is the most important thing for us to do. As we go into this message to the Churches of God, just keep this in mind, that this is exactly what God wants. What He desires the most is that we do His commandments; the greatest thing that we can do in this life.

Mark 12:28: "And one of the scribes who had come up to Him [Jesus], after hearing them reasoning together and perceiving that He answered them well... [obviously, the Son of God is answering them well] ...asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?'"

Verse 29: "Then Jesus answered him, **'The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel. Our one God is the Lord, the Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."** This is the first commandment" (vs 29-30).

This is the most important thing, and then He added to it. The scribe only asked Jesus "...Which is the first commandment of all?" (v 28).

Jesus answered the question, but He kept going:

Verse 31: "And the second is like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

*This is the foundation!* Before we get into this message to the Churches of God; this includes all of us, all the brethren in all the other organizations, the Churches of God. It's for all of us! This message is in Psalms 50, because this is where the message is that we're going to study today. We're going to see some things that God wants all of us to know.

We have to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, being and strength. That's where our eyes need to be! They need to be on God. That's where our heart needs to be! Like He said in Deut. 6, that *these words shall be in your heart!*

He doesn't say only in your mouth or whenever it's at Sabbath services. NO! It's all the time! It says (Deut. 6) that you shall talk to of them to your children, when you sit in your house or walk by the way. All the time! When you rise up and when you lie down!

All of that! It's a full-time job to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, being and strength! But love is not something that can be legislated! We cannot put a set of dos and don'ts on love.

- it has to come from within
- it has to come from the heart

It goes together with the words of God, that they need to be in our heart and mind. That we are to live, as Jesus said, **by every words that proceeds out of the mouth of God** (Deut. 8, Matt. 4; Luke 4). This is the message and we're going to start studying this message, because this is what God has for all of us.

It doesn't matter which of the groups of the Church of God you're in, the Church is God is one—there is one Body—and we know that there were seven Churches in the past, and we know that there are many organizations, but this is what God says to all of His Churches, all His groups, all of His people who are one under Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church.

Psalms 50:1: "The mighty God, God, the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth" (vs 1-2).

We understand a lot of things related to this. We know that this is the way that Jesus Christ is going to come; the sign of the Son of man is going to be just like that!

It's basically going to be like another sun, because it says, *out of Zion the Perfection of Beauty—God—has shined forth!* He will shine forth when He is ready to appear on the earth. This is what it is says:

Verse 3: "Our God shall come, and He shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, **and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.**"

This is going to happen! But the message is already here. We don't have to wait until He returns to hear these things. We don't have to wait, in fact we're going to see that this message is already written here for us right now, for everyone of us in the Church of God right now!

Of course, we understand and know that it's a Spiritual Body, not a physical organization of man. That's what it says: *When God comes it shall be very tempestuous all around,* because when God speaks that's they way it is!

We're going to read the whole message of Psalms 50 as we study it together, but let's come to:

This is when God was about to give the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai:

Exodus 19:16: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there *were* thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And the sound of the trumpet was exceedingly loud so that all the people in the camp trembled."

When God speaks, He's really powerful! That's why it will be very tempestuous all around as we just read in Psalms 50:3. When Christ comes, He comes in power, with His glory and it's absolutely tremendous! It's something to behold; something to be afraid of! And it says:

Verse 17: "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the base of the mountain."

This is just to give context of where this message is going, because this is the background of the message, a similar thing.

Verse 18: "And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it, because the LORD came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly."

Just put yourself in that position. When we have an earthquake we get terrified. When we have a volcano erupting, we get terrified. This was both at the same time! It was so much smoke and the mountain was quaking.

Verse 19: "And when the sound of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong,

Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice."

We know that this terrified all the people. This is God showing His power! That's what it says here. *When God speaks we have to listen to Him, and we have to listen with awe and respect!* And yes, with fear, because God is worthy of fear. Being afraid is different, but fear of His power and might. That's why it says that *a fire shall devour before Him!* It's the same way that they came to the mountain.

Psalms 50:3: "...a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him." *It's going to be something to behold!*

Verse 4: "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, **so that He may judge His people.**"

How many times has God put heaven and earth for witnesses when He's going to say something important?. He calls into the record, when He wants to say something important He wants the heaven and the earth as witnesses for what He's going to do.

Here He calls the heavens and the earth "...**so that He may judge His people.**" *We know that He's judging His people now!*

John 5:22—*Jesus Himself declares:* "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son."

We know that Jesus Christ has been given all judgment and one of the reasons is because He has come in the flesh. He's had the human experience and He knows what it's like to be in the flesh and be subject to human nature.

- He did not sin!
- Sin did not rule over Him!
- He conquered sin!
- He conquered human nature!

*Through the power of the Holy Spirit because He was full of the Holy Spirit!*

- What did He do?
- What did He say?

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, '**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.** Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...." (vs 18-20).

*This is still the commission to the Church!* This is part of what He told, not only His disciples,

but everybody who would follow Him. That they would teach others “...**to observe all things...**” that He has commanded.

- He is the One Who judges! (Psa. 50:4)
- “...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to” Him (Matt. 28:18)
- Christ is the Head of the Church

No man is the head of the Church; we know that it’s a *spiritual body* of believers who come *together to worship the true God in Spirit and in Truth!* ***But the true body of believers have to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, being and strength first!*** Then love the neighbor as themselves!

- that’s what we hear
- that’s what we see
- that’s the very first and most important thing that God wants us to do

So, He comes in Psa. 50 and He has a message for His people—***for His people, not for the world!*** None of the rest of the words in this message, this Psalm—none of them—are for the world! We cannot point to them and say that this is for them! This is for us! It’s a sobering message, but it’s also a good reminder of:

- Who we serve
- Who the One is Who is the Head of the Church
- Who the One is Who is leading and guiding us
- Who the One is Who we have all come before
- Who the One is Who we have our eyes and mind fixed on

**Jesus Christ our Lord, and God the Father Whom Christ has revealed!** It tells us here in Psa. 50, and this is how we know that ***the entire rest of this message is for all of those who have been called!***

Psalm 50:5: “**Gather My saints unto Me,** those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

We know we have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. We know that we have done that! Why? *That’s at baptism! This is what God does when He speaks to His people:*

Deuteronomy 30:19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you...”

*Because He was going to judge His people; give a message to all His people, to us!*

“...that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, **choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**” (v 19).

This goes together with what we read in

Deut. 6, that we should teach these words to our children. Our seed is not going to live if we don’t teach these things (tie in Matt. 28). *Teaching them to observe all things that He has commanded us!* This is part of that! We know that we have made a covenant with God at baptism, because we have pledged our death!

We know these things—this is just a reminder—but it goes together with what Christ said.

Psalm 50:5: “**Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.**”

That’s what it is, it’s a sacrifice that we have made. We have pledged our death when we were baptized. We basically have promised before God that we will never depart from Him; that we will be His forever!

Romans 6:3: “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into **the** death... [the death of Christ] ... so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life” (vs 3-4).

We pledged our life! We basically say that ***IF we break this covenant, let me die!*** That’s why we’re put under the water in the way that we are, symbolizing our death. This is a very serious thing.

Psalm 50:5: “**Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.**”

So, every single one of us who has been baptized has made this covenant with God by sacrifice; each and every one of us! Our sacrifice is not of an animal, not with the blood of bulls and goats, that’s not what we have done!

We pledged our own life when we went under the watery grave. We have made that covenant, so Christ is speaking to us! That’s why He calls us *His saints!* “**Gather My saints unto Me...**”

Now let’s get into the message, because what else does He say?

Verse 6: “And **the heavens shall declare His righteousness,** for **God Himself is Judge.** Selah.”

Again, Jesus Christ said, ‘All judgment has been given to Me.’ That’s Who is doing this. “...God Himself is Judge”! Just to remind ourselves about God being Judge:

Psalm 97:6: “The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory.” *That’s what we read:* “...**the heavens shall declare His righteousness...**” (Psa. 50:6)

That’s what He calls them also, as witnesses! He calls heaven and earth, because *the heavens declare His glory!* They basically testify of Who He is! He has the right to judge, because He is a Righteous Judge and a loving God, as well. But ***He’s also strong and powerful, and worthy of all respect, reverence and fear! He is worthy of all that!***

Psalm 50:7—*Christ tells us:* “Hear, My people... [all of us in all the Churches of God] ...and **I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, even your God.**”

*Tie in Deut. 6!* Hear O Israel. We have one God, God the Father and Jesus Christ—and They are one! He calls Himself ***our God, because He is!***

We know that this is a message to Israel, but what does it say in Deut. 32:21? This is what happened and this is the Psalm that God told Moses to write that they would be a witness to them when they would go astray from Him. But what does He say after they go and basically prophesy of everything that they were going to do:

- they were going to rebel
- they were going to deny God
- they were going to go astray

Deuteronomy 32:21—*God says:* “They have moved Me to jealousy with *that which is not God*. They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities. And **I will move them to jealousy with those, which are not a people.** I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” *Romans is a counterpart to this.* We know what happened with the people of Israel.

**“...I will move them to jealousy with those, which are not a people...”** *That’s us!*

Romans 9:25: “Accordingly, He also said in Hosea, ‘I will call those who *are not My people*, “My people,” and those who *were not beloved*, “Beloved.” And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, “You *are not My people*,” there **they shall be called the sons of the living God**” (vs 25-26).

God has called us! We are basically a ‘foolish nation.’ He chose the weak and base things of the world. We are not a people, not a bloodline. ***We have been called according to the will of God!*** It’s not a bloodline anymore. It’s not only the descendants of Abraham! Yes, the people of Israel

have a great destiny, and God will fulfill the promises that He made. He will save Israel and Judah first, that’s what the Bible teaches. It will happen!

We know that there are 144,000—12,000 from each tribe—but right now we are also the people of God. ***We are the spiritual people of God!*** He’s talking to us, as well; He’s testifying against us, “...I am God, even your God” (Psa. 50:7). He’s making it very clear who He is speaking to. He’s making it very clear that He’s speaking to all of us; to those who have made a covenant by sacrifice at baptism.

Psa. 50:8: **“I will not reprove you for your sacrifices, or your burnt offerings,** which are continually before Me. I will take no bull out of your house, nor he-goats out of your folds, for every beast of the forest is Mine and the livestock upon a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all the fullness of it. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (vs 8-13).

He’s asking all of us, and He’s telling us that He **“...will not reprove you for your sacrifices, or your burnt offerings...”**

When we bring an offering to God, He’s not reprovng us; He will not reprove us for that. But He also wants us to understand that He doesn’t depend upon the things that we bring to Him. He takes delight in the prayers of His saints. But just like He didn’t need the sacrifices back then, He did not need to meat from the sacrifices. *That’s what He says!* ***‘Everything is Mine!’***

**“...If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all the fullness of it. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”** (v 13).

How does that translate into today? *We no longer offer animal sacrifices!* Our sacrifice is in heaven above; ***His was one perfect sacrifice for all! The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God!*** We know that!

- What are these things here?
- What is the relationship to us?

The way He talks about these things, He could be telling us, as well:

I will not reprove you for your sacrifices. I will not reprove you for keeping My Feasts and Holy Days. For keeping My Sabbath, tithing, abstaining yourself from unclean meats. I will not reprove you for any of that!

But also, don't think that any of those things do anything to God. **Those are for us, to teach us**, because that's what God wants. Those are the minimum requirement so that we don't think that we are so good just by the sacrifices that we do. That's why He's saying these things here.

Sometimes people tend to think—and this is why He was saying these things—because we are the people of God, we're the Temple of the Lord, and just hang onto to those things. But we have a real relationship. These things are just foundational things. They really can't, by themselves, mean something. It has to be in the context of our relationship.

This is what Jesus said regarding the things that we are commanded to do.

Luke 17:7: "But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come and sit down and eat'*? Rather, will he not say to him, 'Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink'? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not" (vs 7-9). *He says to the people of Israel:*

Don't think that I'm doing this and asking you offer all these sacrifices because I'm hungry.

That's not what it is! It was to change them; it was for them to see that there has to be shed blood in order for us to be able to come before God.

We know that! We know that it was precious blood of Jesus Christ that was shed so that we come before the presence of God the Father.

Verse 10: "Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do.'"

The Sabbath and Holy Days are good; they are commanded, required, absolutely! **They are the foundation** of our relationship with God. **They are the foundation** of our development. They are that Rock, because it comes from the Word of God, and the Word became flesh and that Word was God! That was the Rock!

So, everything that we do is what we are commanded to do, but after we have done all of these things, say, "...**We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do.**"

The first thing that Christ says to His people in Psa. 50 is:

**Don't think that you're doing Me a favor!** That's not what this is about. This is for you, for your good! This is so that you understand things. This is so that you come to the knowledge of God and the understanding of the deep things of God.

This is not just to check a list as other religions do, check a list and think they're good and fine and have done these things. That's not what God wants. What God wants is:

Psalm 50:14: "Offer to God thanksgiving..."

In the United States we're coming up with the national holiday of Thanksgiving. But what God wants is *real thanksgiving every day from the heart!* Not just in one day as a nation.

*Every day*, v 14: "Offer to God thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High"—*which means wealth!*

It's better to not vow if we're not going to keep it; that's what the Bible says. 'God does not take delight in fools.' But it also says that if you make a vow, "...pay your vows to the Most High." He likes when we do things to strengthen our relationship with Him; make a vow of something.

But we have to keep it, and we should not over-commit. But if we're moved to make a vow, we have to keep it. That's what God wants; that relationship! This is what it talks about.

Verse 14: "Offer to God thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High." *This is all about a relationship! If there's any doubt:*

Verse 15: "And call upon Me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver you, and you shall honor Me."

He will deliver us and we shall honor Him, because the love gets strengthened when we go through trials and He rescues us and pulls us out of our trials and afflictions! The relationship gets so much stronger when we go through those trials and call upon Him in the day of our trouble. **He delivers us and we honor Him!** That's what He wants! *That honor comes and flows from the heart because of what He has done!*

That's what it's all about. He's saying that, 'yes, these things are required, but don't think that you're doing them for Me. I require them of you and you've done everything, *you're an unprofitable servant!*

The profitable servant is the one that goes beyond that and continues in that, into that depth with God:

- when we offer things, giving to God
- when we pay our vows to the Most High
- when we come before His presence
- when we call Him in trouble
- when we call upon Him when things are good
  - ✓ to praise Him
  - ✓ to give Him glory
  - ✓ to give Him thanks

*That's what He wants; a real relationship!* This entire message is to the people of God!

He says that He's spoken from the heavens, v 5: "Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant..." [v 4]: ...so that He may judge His people."

That's why v 16 is also for His people. I know that this is very sobering, but the purpose of the message is for us to pay attention to this message that God has for all of His Churches, for all His people all around the world.

We have to honor God, but we have to love Him with all our heart, mind, being and strength. There are some very stern warnings that we're going to read here; very stern! **God wants us to take heed and pay attention:**

Verse 16: "But to the wicked God says..."

These are the ones who are operating wickedly, and some of us do. At times we all do!

- we all still sin
- we all still make mistakes
- we all still have bloopers (as Fred calls them)

***We do!*** "But to the wicked God says..."—***to the one that is not forthright with Him!*** There are brethren—some of us—who do these things from time-to-time!

- only God can rectify us
- only God can change us

He has to get the wickedness out of us! We all have a desperately wicked heart (Jer. 17). So, we cannot say that this does not apply to us. We have to remember that this does apply to every single one of us! It doesn't matter if we're a member, an elder, or minister.

***It doesn't matter who we are;*** God is speaking to His people one-on-one! Those who have made a covenant with Him when we were baptized, one-on-one we made a covenant with God and we answer to God. ***We don't answer to a man! We answer to God directly!***

We have to be careful that we take heed to

these words, so that He can cleanse us and take our iniquity away.

"...What right have you to declare My statutes, and to take up My covenant in your mouth?" (v 16).

God is not happy if we're preaching and saying one thing, but doing another. God is not pleased when we declare His statutes, if we do the things that He says not to do. He's not pleased if we do that.

"...and to take up My covenant in your mouth?" (v 16).

This is what He says in Isaiah, and we can see a little more and sometimes it's how God feels. He felt like this with Israel, but we cannot be kidding ourselves. This is not just for Israel. ***This is for us! This is also for the spiritual people of God today!***

If we're doing the same things that Israel did, looking away, looking to man, looking to other thing, we're falling into this, and the entire message is to those who are His people!

Isaiah 1:11: "'To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?' says the LORD. 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I do not delight in *the blood of* bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts? **Bring no more vain sacrifices**..." (vs 11-13).

He's telling each and every one of us that we don't just come and sit here for two hours and learn about God, and then go our merry way and forget about God.

We don't do that! That would be a *vain sacrifice!*

"...incense is an abomination to Me—new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I **cannot endure iniquity** along with the solemn assembly!" (v 13). *I cannot endure the iniquity that comes with it!*

The sad reality is that we are all still struggling against our nature, human nature. We're fighting sin, and we still sin. We do not practice sin if we have been begotten by God (1-John). But we still do sin, and we have to be aware of that! God ***...cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly!*** ***He wants true repentance!***

Verse 14: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates..."

It's not His commandment that He hates; it

the other things that we do while we're keeping these things.

"...they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them*. And when you spread forth your hands, **I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood**" (vs 14-15).

Just exactly like our hands are not full of the blood of the sacrifices now in the temple—because we don't do that anymore—but: **Are our hands are full of blood in the spiritual sense?**

We have to ask ourselves this question. If we are hating our brother, if we're doing these things, **our hands are full of blood!** That's what Jesus Christ said when He elevated the Law. ***It's not about murder, it's about hate in your heart and mind!***

If we're doing these things He says he will not hear! But He tells us:

Verse 16: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil"—*take away that iniquity!*

But we have to cooperate! We know that we cannot do it by ourselves! We know that! But this is what we have to do:

Verse 17: "**Learn to do good...**"—*in our heart and mind*; not judging and condemning other people. Judge *righteous* judgment! We judge matters; we cannot judge people! Christ made that very clear; He said, 'All judgment has been given to Me! Do not condemn others.'

"...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor...." (v 17).

*This is what happens sometimes*; Psalm 50:17: "Yea, **you hate to be taught, and you cast My words behind you.**"

How many of us have **cast the words of God behind us?** We take the words of God that fit a perspective and we use those and we cast the other ones behind.

- How many have we heard also give messages—in the Churches of God—that are about all kinds of things?
- All kinds of topics *except the Word of God?*
- Is that not casting the words of God behind us?

We talk about history, a book, an author, an artist—whatever is going on in the world—***except the Word of God!***

We have to **learn** the Word of God! We're not going to learn to do good by following the examples of the people of this world. ***We're not going to do that!*** But the problem is deeper than that. It's not just casting the words behind; it says: "**...you hate to be taught...**"

Do we hate to be taught from the Word of God? When God convicts us with His Word through someone or something and it's clear, right before our eyes... I'm sure that has happened to you! God is going to bring something to your attention! It has happened to me! God bring something to your attention right in front of your eyes with the Word of God. ***But we cannot hate to be taught, or ignore it, or cast the words behind us!*** We cannot do that!

We have to listen to the words of God, because this is what has happened, sadly, in many of the Churches of God! It's *casting the Word of God behind us!* Talking about everything, and all kinds of good lessons. They're good speeches and very good speakers, absolutely, very charismatic. But:

- Is that what God wants us to learn?
- or
- Does He want us to learn His Word?
  - Does He want us to learn His commandments?

This message is for all the Churches of God! This is for all of us! ***That we don't cast the words of God behind us!***

We know that these are very stern warnings, but it's good to read them, because our God is a God of strength and righteousness. Yes, of love and compassion. That's what He does, too. But He says:

Ezekiel 34:1: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! **Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?**'" (vs 1-2).

*That's what Jesus told Peter, 'Feed My flock. **If** you love Me—agape Me!'* That's what He said and that's what we read in the very beginning. The commandment is to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, being and strength! We cannot shepherd the flocks if we're not loving God! If we don't 'agape' God!*

Verse 3: "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, *but* you do not feed the flock."

This is a stern warning to all of us, especially to those of us who are elders and teachers. We have to feed the flock from the Word of God! We cannot cast the words of God behind us!

Verse 4: “You have not made the weak strong, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken. You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but you have ruled them with force and with cruelty.” ***We cannot do that!***

Fred has said this many, many times—and it’s so true—the brethren do not belong to us, they do not belong to an organization, ***they belong to God! They belong to Jesus Christ and God the Father!*** Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church; we know that! This is just a reminder to all of us that the brethren are not ours, and they’re not to come to us. ***We’re to point them to God!*** We’re not rule them with force and cruelty!

Verse 5: “And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd. And they became food to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.”

Why? *Because we were not pointing them to the true shepherd, Jesus Christ!* He’s Word will not be broken! He will teach us His ways directly, to each and every one of us. We have to trust that God is working with each and every one of us. That:

- we all have His Holy Spirit
- we do come to God
- we’re growing in grace and knowledge
- we cannot cast His Word behind us
- we should not hate to be taught

Verse 6: “My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill. Yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none searched nor sought for them.” *God is very upset at this!*

Verse 7: “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food to every beast of the field because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search *for* My flock, ***but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock***” (vs 7-8).

- How many times have we seen that?
- People drawing people unto themselves?
- Leaders drawing people unto themselves?
  - ✓ excluding them from others?
  - ✓ preventing people from talking with other people in other Churches of God
- ***That’s damnable!***
- ***God hates that!***
- ***God doesn’t want that!***

*This is continuing the message; Psalm 50:18: “When*

*you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him, and you have taken part with adulterers.”*

How many abuses have we seen throughout our history? That doesn’t mean that it’s not the *true Church*. Some people cast it away and say that it’s not the true Church, because this can’t be of God.

Well, guess what? *We are people and we do make mistakes!* There are some egregious things that have been done in the past with abuses of power and money. That’s why it says, “...***you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him...***”

- How many abuses were there of money under the guise that this is ‘the Kingdom of God’? *We know the Kingdom of God is not on earth, yet!*
- How much thievery was there?
- How much abuse was there?

“...and you have taken part with adulterers” (v 18).

- How much adultery was there?
- How much evil can there really be?
  - we have to be taught
  - we have to come back to God

We have to take heed to this message that God has given us that we don’t do these things. What we read in Ezek. 34, that’s what God wants! He wants all of us:

- to make the weak strong
- strengthen those who are weak
- seeking those who are lost
- to be merciful and kind

*That’s the very nature of God!*

Psa, 147 shows us the God that we serve; the Lord Who is coming with a tempest around Him, with fire before Him. This is the same God:

Psalm 147:3: “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names. Great is our LORD and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite” (vs 3-5).

Just to have the realization of Who the God is that we serve.

Verse 6: “The LORD lifts up the meek; He casts the wicked down to the ground.”

*That’s what the Lord does:*

- He lifts up the meek
- He heals the brokenhearted

Every single one of us are brokenhearted in one way or another. We all are! That’s why He heals the

brokenhearted, because He's going to heal all of us if we come to Him, if we keep His Word.

- we all have been hurt
- we all carry this hurt

The reason why is because we all have this evil nature. That's what it is; human nature is evil! The human heart is desperately wicked, and our nature is not subject to the Laws of God and cannot be. That's why we're not going to stop sinning. But we're going to stop practicing sin, which is different. We have this wicked nature; we have this evil nature.

These are some of the things that God is warning us about in this message. At one point or another we have all done them. We have to repent. For many of the we have repented. God accepts that, and we also have to believe that. That God accepts our repentance and that God is for us.

This is not about us, brethren, this is about God and His Plan. That's why He says this, because this is about His glory. What do people say about His Church?

Psalm 50:19: "You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit."

- Do we do that?
- Does our tongue frame deceit from time to time?
- Do we give our mouth to evil?

**Only we know!**

Verse 20: "You sit; you speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son."

Have we spoken against our brethren? *We're talking about spiritual brethren! We are the spiritual Body of God/Christ! We are the Church of God, all of us. All the Churches of God! But how we "...sit; you speak against your brother..."*

- How many splits in the Churches have there been?
- Is this not carnality?
- Is this not speaking against our brother?
- Is this not slandering our "...own mother's son"?
- Is this not what we have done at one point or another when we're accusing the brethren and pointing the finger?

This is a warning for all of us that we don't do that! God hates that; hates when we do this!

This message, like I said, is to all of us in the Churches of God, because God loves all of us. But He expects better. It's so much greater than that; so much greater than for us to do these kinds of

things.

Jeremiah 23:1: "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture," says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, God of Israel, against the shepherds who feed My people, 'You have scattered My flock, and have driven them away, and have not taken care of them. Behold, I will bring upon you the evil of your doings,' says the LORD" (vs 1-2).

- Are we causing division?
- Is that what we're doing when we speak against our brother?
- When we bring up accusations?
- Is that the purpose?
- That somebody gets disfellowshipped?
- That somebody gets expelled?
- Is that what we do?
- Is that what God wants?

*Conversely*

- Do we just want to hear nice things?
- Is that what it is?

*Sometimes that's casing our words behind us! There's a warning:*

Verse 16: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you vain; they speak a vision from their own heart, not out of the mouth of the LORD. They still say to those who despise Me.' The LORD has said, 'You shall have peace!' And they say to everyone who walks after the imagination of his own heart, 'No evil shall come upon you!' For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD to see and hear His Word?... [instead of books, authors, artists, history, and all these other messages] ...**Who has attended to His Word and heard it?**" (vs 16-18).

There are some good Christian lessons in those messages, but is that what God has called us to? *It's so much more than that!*

Psalm 50:21: "These things you have done, and I have kept silence; you thought that I was like yourself..."

Sometimes that has happened to some of us at times; maybe all of us at times. We think that we are like God. That's when we need to fast, to humble ourselves! To acknowledge what little of nothing that we really are before God. Sometimes we can think that we're just like God. But we have to humble ourselves.

"...but I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes" (v 21).

- it is so much more than just the foundation
- so much more than just the letter of the Law
- there's so much more of just taking some pieces and parts of what the Word of God says
- there's so much more

It's that we fear and love the great God of the universe, that He has called us into a great purpose. We have to fear Him, love Him, and stay close to Him! God is giving us a warning here, and this is for all of us all the time!

Verse 22: Now, consider this, you who forget God... [and are playing church, playing social club, playing politics] ...lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." *This God speaking to us!*

- ***IF*** we're accusing our brother
- ***IF*** we're causing slander
- ***IF*** we're doing these things

***This needs to stop! We cannot forget God, because He is the Head of the Church! Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church!***

If we don't do that, it's going to tear us up and there will be none to deliver! We're sinning against the very One Whom we claim to serve! We cannot do this. These are the things that can come upon us:

Psalm 28:4: "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their practices, give them according to the work of their hands; give them what they deserve."

Every single one of us will be judged by God—is being judged by Jesus Christ—and we will all be face-to-face before Jesus Christ our Lord. We will have to give account for what we did, for what we believe, for what we did: good or evil!

- that is the danger here
- that is the warning that He's giving here

***He is giving this warning that we may all repent! He wants us to repent, because the God we serve is:***

- so good
- so righteous
- so merciful
- so compassionate
- so patient

We cannot say that He's just patient with the world; He's patient with us! He wants ***ALL*** to come to repentance, not just the world. All of us, too, must continually repent and come back to God and

remember that ***we serve the Great God of the Universe!***

We are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and being! That's what He comes back to, to the hope of what he wants us to do.

Psalm 50:23: Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and he who sets his conduct aright..."

God is showing us things that we're doing out of this list. We all know what we've done or what we are doing. If we don't, we can pray about it and let Him show them to us. He wants to show us our faults. Just like David prayed in Psa. 51, which is the Psalm that continues:

- show me my secret faults
- cleanse me from presumptuous sins, thinking that I'm just like Yourself
- thinking that I'm just like God

***Cleanse us from that!***

We have to pray, each and every one of us, that He will cleanse us from all of this! In all of the Churches of God. That we won't cast His words behind us. That we will love one another, but especially first and foremost that we love God, fear Him and honor Him! Whoever offers praise and glorifies Him and sets his conduct aright:

***"...I will show him the salvation of God"***  
(v 23). *This is the promise!*

This is the close of the message, but there's another message for us today. There's no denying that we are living in the last times, that if these are eras and that we are living in the Era of Laodicea. Let's read what Christ says to us. Let's own it! We cannot continue saying that this them, or them, or some of us.

NO! This is US! This is US right now! We have to come back to God, because this warning applies all the time because we continually have to repent and continually have to come back to God. This is all of us.

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, write: 'These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot... [neither here nor there] ...***I will spew you out of My mouth.*** For you say, 'I am rich...'" (vs 14-17).

This is for all of us to think about it:

- Are we rich?
- In what way are we rich?

“...and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”; and **you do not understand** that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v 17).

This has happened and continues to happen, sadly! Some people say:

- we have the largest organization
- we have the most Feast sites
- we have the most people
- we have the most music
- we have the most worship
- we have this, that or the other

*for some groups:*

- we have the most knowledge
- we have the deepest messages
- we have most of the Word of God

But without love, loving God—that first and greatest commandment—and loving the brethren, when we’re doing those things in the warning message:

- speaking against your brother
- speaking against your own mother’s son
- when you cast God’s Word behind you
- when you hate to be taught

When we do those things we are: “...**wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked**” (v 17). *That includes me and all of us!*

That we, in our heads from time to time, undeniably, we become rich! We go through cycles! We do get lifted up in vanity and arrogance; that’s undeniable, because it’s part of human nature. If we don’t even acknowledge it, God cannot help us!

In what way have we become rich? In knowledge? *Knowledge puffs up! But love edifies!*

Verse 17: “For you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy...’”

- Is it in knowledge?
- Is it in the number of people?
- Is it in the number of congregations?
- Is it activities?
- Is it groups?
- Is it physical things that we’re doing?
- What is it that we’re rich in?

This is for you to think about by yourself. For me to think about by myself.

In what way are we “...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”? (v 17). *This is an attitude!*

When somebody understands that wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness and

nakedness that we really have—and still have because we haven’t arrived, yet—then we’re going to do what it says:

Verse 18: “I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire...”—*trials and tribulations!*

God does allow them. Just like Jesus said, ‘Offenses will come, but WOE to him by whom they come. We should sit close to God so that they’re the least amount possible by us.

“...buy from Me gold purified by fire **so that you may be rich...**” (v 18)—*truly!* When you’re truly rich ***you’re going to really understand that:***

- you have nothing that you have not received
- there’s nothing that you have done for yourself

*We’re all going to understand that!*

“...and **white garments** so that you may be clothed...” (v 18).

The *righteous actions of the saints*; actions, not just doctrine, not just a teaching. It’s what we do, not just what we say.

“...and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed...” (v 18).

God is the One Who clothes us. We are going to kings and priests in His Kingdom, but we have to have these white garments. That’s what He told the priests to do and dress with the white, pure, linen garments. That’s what He wants for us spiritually, as well. From our spiritual nakedness from doing all of these things in the warning message of Psa. 50. that it will not be revealed until you anoint your eyes with slave so that you may see!

- we need to stop ***playing church***
- we need to stop ***playing games***
- we need to stop ***accusing brethren and ministers right and left***
- we need to stop that in all the Churches of God
- we need to stop playing Church
- we need to stop talking about the physical

We serve a spiritual God, **in Spirit and in Truth!** That’s what Jesus said! That’s how God desires to be worshipped ***in Spirit and in Truth!***

- not in the letter
- not in the flesh
- not just in the external

God knows the heart! He tells us that ‘as

many as I love I rebuke and chasten! In Psa. 50, the message to the Churches of God, is because God loves us! This goes to me, too. This is for all of us. Nobody is exempt from this warning and this message!

Verse 19: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent.:

***Be zealous for God! For His Word!*** To do the things that God does with us.

- to be compassionate toward others
- to be giving the benefit of the doubt
- to be merciful
- to be loving

***That’s what God wants us to do!***

*This is Jesus Christ speaking;* v 20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.... [He’s knocking right now] ...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”

We better do this right now that He’s knocking! We have a personal, intimate relationship with God:

- based on His Word
- based on the things that He says in there

So that He can come and sup with us and us with Him before He comes in power with the tempest all around Him and fire burning before Him. Before that happens, because that’s going to happen. This is a promise:

Verse 21: “To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His Throne. **The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**” (vs 21-22).

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- 2) Mark 12:28-31
- 3) Psalm 50:1-3
- 4) Exodus 19:16-19
- 5) Psalm 50:3-4
- 6) John 5:22
- 7) Matthew 28:18-20
- 8) Psalm 50:5
- 9) Deuteronomy 30:19
- 10) Psalm 50:5
- 11) Romans 6:3-4
- 12) Psalm 50:5-6
- 13) Psalm 97:6
- 14) Psalm 50:7
- 15) Deuteronomy 32:21

- 16) Romans 9:25-26
- 17) Psalm 50:8-13
- 18) Luke 17:7-10
- 19) Psalm 50:14-15, 5, 4, 16
- 20) Isaiah 1:11-17
- 21) Psalm 50:17
- 22) Ezekiel 34:1-8
- 23) Psalm 50:18
- 24) Psalm 147:3
- 25) Psalm 50:19-20
- 26) Jeremiah 23:1-2, 16-18
- 27) Psalm 50:21-22
- 28) Psalm 28:4
- 29) Psalm 50:23
- 30) Revelation 3:14-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 8
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4
- Jeremiah 17
- 1-John

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