

Psalms 50:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

Analysis

The shift to the wicked: 'But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?' The wicked person recites God's laws and claims covenant relationship, but their behavior contradicts their profession. Religious talk without righteous life is condemned.

Historical Context

This addresses religious hypocrisy--using correct vocabulary while living contradictory lives. The prophets frequently condemned this disconnect between profession and practice.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'take God's covenant in thy mouth' without living it?
2. How can religious knowledge become a form of wickedness?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא בְּמַה אֱלֹהִים אָמַר	לְבַטְשׁ עָלָיו		
But unto the wicked	saith	God	H4100
H7563	H559	H430	H0
לְסַפֵּר	עֲקָרִים	וְתַשְׁאַל	בְּרִית
What hast thou to do to declare	my statutes	or that thou shouldest take	my covenant
H5608	H2706	H5375	H1285
בְּלִי פִּיכְנָה			
in thy mouth			
H5921	H6310		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 29:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

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