

Psalm 14

Title: The Folly and Wickedness of Men

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 14:1

Outline

- A. Depravity: the corruption of the wicked (verses 1-3).
- B. Destruction: the conflict with the righteous (verses 4-6).
- C. Deliverance: the consolation of the psalmist (verse 7).

Notes

Title: See the notes on Psalm 3 and 4.

Verses 1-6: The words of this psalm are nearly identical to Psalm 53. Verses five and six in Psalm 14 are combined into one verse in Psalm 53 (see 53:5).

Verses 1-3: The words in these verses are paraphrased by Paul from the LXX and used in Romans 3:10-12. He quotes from this psalm (or Psalm 53) to demonstrate that all have sinned, both Jew and Gentile.

Verse 1: The “fool” (Heb. *nabal*) is a class of people, not a particular individual. These people are not simpletons, but those who refuse to acknowledge God and live accordingly (see also Psa. 10:4, 11, 13 and Isa. 32:6). They are wicked, evil, immoral, and “corrupt” (see Gen. 6:12). Moral absolutes and divine accountability do not matter to them. “There is no God” are the words of the practical atheist; one who lives as if there is no God. God is not in his heart.

Verse 2: For the words, “The Lord looked down”, see Genesis 11:5 and 18:21. The moral climate of the day had deteriorated (see Psa. 12:1). Those who “understand” (the wise) and “seek God” (KJV) are set in contrast to the “fool” of verse 1.

Verse 3: “Filthly” (KJV) is from the Heb. *alach* meaning “stinking”; like milk turned sour.

Verse 4: The wicked “eat up my people” (the righteous) when they attack the righteous and persecute them (Psa. 27:2; Jer. 10:25; Amos 8:4; Mic. 3:3). The wicked “call not upon the Lord” (KJV) meaning they do not obey, worship, or pray to the Lord (see Gen. 4:26).

Verse 5: “There were they in great fear” refers to the wicked who refuse God, but still fear him. The wicked of verses one through four are contrasted here with the righteous. The

words “God is in the generation of the righteous” (KJV), mean that God has fellowship with his righteous children and he will protect them (see Noah in Gen. 6:9). Note that there are still a few “righteous” who live in a “corrupt” society. The major difference in wording between Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 is found at this point in the psalm. Psalm 14:5 stresses that God is with the righteous, while Psalm 53:5 stresses the judgment of the wicked. Apparently, some of the psalms were adapted to fit different circumstances or uses in the temple worship.

Verse 7: Zion is a reference to Jerusalem (see Psa. 2:6; 9:11,14; etc). “The captivity of his people” (KJV) may not be a reference to the literal Babylonian captivity. It may simply be a reference to the figurative “captivity” of oppression caused by the corruption in David’s day. For “captivity” used in a figurative sense, see Job 42:10; Zephaniah 2:7; Amos 9:14; and Hosea 6:11.

Questions

1. What does the fool say and what kind of person is he who says it (verse 1)?
2. What does the Lord look down from heaven to see (verse 2)?
3. What does the Lord find when he looks down from heaven (verse 3)?
4. What do the workers of iniquity do (verse 4)?
5. How do the workers of iniquity react to God (verse 5)?
6. What do the workers of iniquity do to the poor (verse 6)?
7. What does the psalmist cry out for and what will Jacob (Israel) do when the Lord saves them (verse 7)?

Applications for Today

1. We live in an age where many people are “fools” and live as if “there is no God”. However, it is foolish to deny God and act as if he does not exist (verse 1). There is no good where there is no God! What one thinks about God will determine his character and conduct. What happens when people refuse to have God in their life (Rom. 1:24-32; Lk. 12:20; Eph. 2:12; 2 Tim. 3:1-5)?
2. Corrupt people think and do corrupt things (verse 1). According to Jesus, where does corrupt fruit come from (Mt. 7:17-18; Lk. 6:43)? According to Paul, what is a corrupt mind lacking (1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8)?
3. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (verses 1-3). What solution to sin does sinful man have (Rom. 3:23-24)?
4. A few good people “understand” and “seek after God” (verse 2). What does Paul say God wants (Acts 17:27)? What does God do to those who seek him (Heb. 11:6)?
5. We are not born in sin, but we go astray into sin after we are born (verse 3). What does Solomon say about this (Eccl. 7:29)?
6. Sin is filthy (verse 3). How does Isaiah describe Israel’s sin (Isa. 64:6)? How does Peter describe the sin of Simon (Acts 8:23)?
7. God is in the generation of the righteous (verse 5). What does God do with the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12)?
8. Salvation brings rejoicing (verse 7). What did the Eunuch and the Jailor’s household do after they were baptized (Acts 8:39; 16:34)?