

SBC – Feb 4, 2024

Psalm 14 (NKJV)

“Portrait of the Godless”

Psalm 14 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Psalm 14 is another Psalm written by David. It is addressed to the “Chief Musician,” who may have been a key musical leader, but some suggest it is meant to address the ultimate Musician as God Himself.

Slide # 1

Psalm 14

“Portrait of the Godless”

OUTLINE:

vv. 1-3 Universal Depravity

vv. 4-6 – Futility of Depravity

v. 7 – Longing for God’s Deliverance

1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

The fool has a heart problem – the fool has a problem with God. In the Hebrew there are actually 3 different words for fool.

Slide # 2

Kesyl – dull

Eviyl – unreasonable

Nabal - brutish

The word used here in Psalm 14:1 is the word “nabal” which implies aggressive perversity as epitomized in the Nabal (Abigail’s husband) of 1 Sam. 25.

Slide # 3

1 Samuel 25:25 (NKJV)

25 Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

The idea of a nabal fool is one who is rebelliously perverse. The issue here is not an intellectual issue. The person is not mentally dull, but rather morally perverse. He has a rebel moral problem.

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God”. This is the creed of the fool! This emanates forth from the heart. This is what they are thinking and acting on in their heart. The heart represents the core of a person’s being related to the will and commitments.

There are a couple of different ways to understand “There is no God”. Commonly this is taken with the idea of this meaning, “God does not exist”. Clearly, the fool does not want God to exist because he does not want to be held accountable for his wickedness. And people can self-deceive themselves into affirming in their hearts what they want to believe – no matter the contrary evidence.

To take the position that God does not exist - what we commonly call the atheistic position is clearly the position of a fool. Often it is joked that April 1st (April fools day) is the Atheists Holiday.

The folly of the atheists position is not a well-thought out position – but rather a position of moral rebellion.

There are all kinds of intellectual arguments to mitigate against the idea that there is no God. Let’s start with Romans 1 which says God has given everyone a God-consciousness. We come wired this way. There are no true atheists – but in depravity men can come to have a seared conscience that defies the most obvious of spiritual reality.

Slide # 4

Romans 1:18–20 (NKJV)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

When one suppresses the truth that God has shown that is the height of folly. There is no excuse only culpability. This is the rebel fools position. It really makes no sense on a number of levels.

- 1) The Cosmological Argument: This argument says there has to be a Cause/Creator behind all that exists because nothing comes from nothing.
- 2) The Teleological Argument: This argument is what is commonly known as the intelligent design argument. There is design in the whole fabric of creation testifying to the reality of a sovereign designer. Design demands a Designer.
- 3) The Anthropological Argument argues that the unique nature and character of humanity means there must be a relational God. Intelligence must come from intelligence. In the whole of creation, only intelligence begets intelligence.
- 4) The Moral Argument says the existence of morality means there must be a supreme moral being. If there is no God, where did the universal idea of morality come from?

But I really like what C.S. Lewis said:

Slide # 5

"Atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning..."

— C.S. Lewis

Indeed, if there is no God then there is no meaning, but if there is no meaning how did we find this out? That is brilliant!

From every angle only a FOOL would say God does not exist!

But I think there is a better way to understand Psalm 14:1. If you have a NKJV note that the words “*There is*” is in italics meaning those words were supplied by the translator to make a more smooth translation. But quite literally what the fool says is, “No God!” in the sense of defiance. I think the context would argue for this idea.

Thus, the fool says NO to God's truth, NO to divine standards, NO to God's authority, NO to what God says. The fool who assumes the position of DEFIANT REBELLION is saying “No God!” in the sense of not recognizing God's Lordship authority over him. And yes, this may ultimately reflect itself in atheism, but I think the main idea is moral rebellion and defiance that refuses to acknowledge God and His rightful place in their heart and life.

Note the position of “No God” leads to “No Good”. Their heart's defiance leads to corrupt and abominable works. Where God does not have His rightful place in a person's heart bad things follow.

But then he says, “There is none who does good” and so as we follow the thought through we find that application is made to the whole of humanity.

In our natural state we are all moral rebels. We are all defiant – not wanting to recognize the Lordship authority of God over us.

2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

People in their depravity may reject God out of hand but it is very hard to get rid of the reality of God. No matter what the heart disposition of people, no matter their perverse rebellion – yet God is still God, and He is watching. He takes note of the condition of humanity.

David here depicts a divine inspection to see if there are any among the human race who understand, who seek God.

Are there any who show proper moral and spiritual judgment? Are there any who get God? Are there any who understand properly the reality and truth of God?

Are there any who seek God on His terms? Are there any that seek after God at all? The answer is plainly NO as seen in verse 3. God must always take the initiative because man, in his depravity, never does. This has always been the case from the very beginning.

When Adam and Eve sinned suddenly everything changed. Suddenly they were overcome with a FEAR of God and sought to hid. It wasn't Adam who went searching after God. Rather it was God who went after Adam.

Slide # 6

Genesis 3:8–9 (NKJV)

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the **LORD God called to Adam** and said to him, "Where are you?"

In our depravity there is NONE that seek after God. It was God who sent Jesus to earth on a rescue mission. It was the Son of Man who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." The initiative is always God's – without exception.

When man makes a move towards god it is always a false god – it is always in the direction of idolatry. This is the direction of depravity. Apart from the intervening and initiating work of God in mercy and grace, none would ever seek Him.

3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

This is a comprehensive statement. Note the emphasis on ALL stated in one way or another four times in this single verse. All turned aside. No one has walked back toward God – they all turned aside.

They have together in total unison become corrupt. There is no exception. No one broke rank. The word "corrupt" here is a different word than the one seen in verse 1. This word in verse 3 (Heb. Alah) occurs only one other time in the OT and that is in Job 15:16.

Slide # 7

Job 15:16 (NKJV)

16 How much less man, who is abominable and **filthy**, Who drinks iniquity like water!

Corrupt here in Psalm 14:3 is literally "sour" in the sense of sour milk.

The whole of the human race is like sour milk before God – spiritually speaking. It is the idea of rotten or putrid. It ain't pretty!

There is NONE who does good, No, not one. – NOT EVEN ONE!

This is total depravity for the whole human race. So much for being better than anyone else. God says that whole group of us are like rotten/putrid/sour milk. He's not gonna drink it!

Paul in the Romans 3:10-12 quotes from Psalm 14:1-3 to show that all are under the condemnation of sin.

Slide # 8

Romans 3:10–12 (NKJV)

10 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

This is not just an NT idea but has defined the human race all along. Depravity has defined humanity through and through ever since the fall. There is no exception!

This is true universally, but now David focuses specifically on those who persist in their rebellion against God and take it out on God's people.

Here between verse 3 and verse 4 there is quiet assumption that some do in fact turn to God and become God's people and are then abused for it.

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the LORD?

The idea of “iniquity” (Heb. Avon) is that which is crooked, twisted, or perverted. Iniquity is the distorting of that which is right and good. It is doing the crooked thing that is wrong. It is also translated as “wicked” or “evildoers”.

Verse 4 is a rhetorical question. In fact, the workers of iniquity show that they have no knowledge about the reality of God. They have no appreciation for ultimate reality.

Slide # 9**Psalm 33:8–11 (NKJV)**

8 Let all the earth **fear the LORD**; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in **awe of Him**.

9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD **brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.**

11 The **counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.**

Those with no understanding, with no knowledge, don't get that God is sovereignly in charge. And consequently, they exploit, abuse, and take advantage of God's people as casually as if they were eating bread. They think nothing of it because they have no proper knowledge of God. They don't know God. They don't get it.

Their ignorance is apparent in the way they treat God's people. If they realized how God defends the poor and punishes sin, they would never devour believers as if it were a legitimate, everyday thing, like eating bread! – ***William MacDonald***

And these workers of iniquity don't "call on the LORD?" LORD here is YHWH. They don't recognize the God of the Bible – the God of Israel. They don't recognize their dependence upon Him – so they don't call on Him for help. They don't see their need of Him. And so they are prayerless!

For the moment, the wicked have the upper hand, but that is about to change. Their position is very tenuous!

5 There they are in great fear, For God is with the generation of the righteous.

When people mess with the people of God, they are really messing with God, whether they realize it or not! And suddenly, in that position, they find themselves in great terror!

David does not indicate how exactly this might happen, but he views the position of the wicked who persecute God's people as one step away from sudden calamity that terrorizes the wicked.

Slide # 10

Psalm 73:18–19 (NKJV)

18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.

People can be so wickedly cocky but in an instant that can all change and it does at some point! And the stated reason is that, “**God is with the generation of the righteous**”.

“A panic terror seized them: ‘they feared a fear,’ as the Hebrew puts it; an undefinable, horrible, mysterious dread crept over them. The most hardened of men have their periods when conscience casts them into a cold sweat of alarm.” – **Charles Spurgeon**

God can put the FEAR into anyone in an instant in whatever way He wants to do it. It may be a matter of conscience or circumstance. It might be in life or it might be in death.

But the wicked prayerless people who abuse God’s people are standing in place of TERROR! It’s just a matter of when it will strike them!

6 You shame the counsel of the poor, But the LORD is his refuge.

The “poor” in context are God’s people as seen in verse 4, and the “righteous” as seen in verse 5. The poor are the vulnerable who look to the Lord for help. In contrast to the wicked they call upon the Lord (v. 4). They make the LORD their refuge – they put their trust in Him – depending on God to take care of them.

And God honors their faith. To make the LORD your refuge is an OT way of expressing TRUST.

Charles Spurgeon noted the ways that the poor take counsel.

Slide # 11

- He takes counsel with his own weakness and sees that he must depend upon God.
- He takes counsel with his observations and sees the end of the wicked.
- He takes counsel with the Bible and trusts it to be the word of God.
- He takes counsel with his own experience and sees that God answers prayer.

The wicked are prayerless and shame such counsel. They MOCK trust in the LORD. But the LORD is a refuge for His people, and in the end, they are not disappointed.

Charles Spurgeon also offered this reproof:

“Remember you can be laughed into hell, but you can never be laughed out of it.” – **Charles Spurgeon**

Oh, the wicked mock now- they think they don't need God now, but SUDDENLY in that position they will find themselves in GREAT FEAR! In truth they are the vulnerable ones. The ones in the true place of safety are those who make the LORD their refuge.

The word “refuge” (Heb. Mahseh) means a “**shelter from danger**” and is used 9 times in the Psalms in reference to the LORD (cf. 14:6; 46:1; 61:3; 62:7-8; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2, 9).

Slide # 12

Psalm 46:1 (NKJV)

1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Psalm 62:8 (NKJV)

8 Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; **God is a refuge for us**. Selah

Psalm 91:2 (NKJV)

2 I will say of the LORD, “**He is my refuge** and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”

Where is your safe place? For the people of God it has always been the LORD Himself! We run to Him and there we find shelter!

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

David knew that God is with His people and that His people find refuge in Him. Yet, it was hard to see at the time as the wicked were eating up God's people like bread.

And so he prayed: “Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!”

Most dispensational commentators believe that ultimately David here has a kingdom request in view when God will establish His righteous rule from Zion through the Messiah. David also wrote Psalm 2.

Slide # 13

Psalm 2:6 (NKJV)

6 “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”

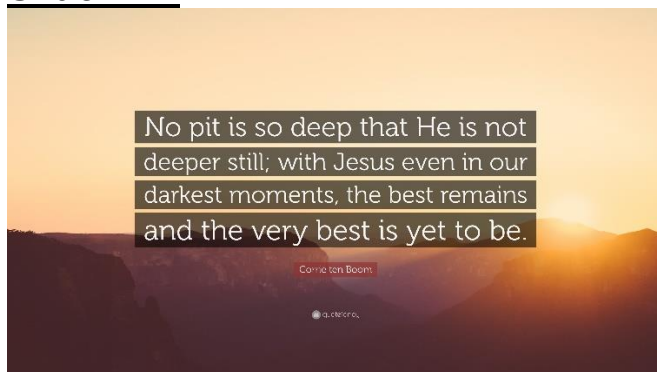
David longed for the time “When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people”.

Captivity is here used in a general sense as when God’s people are oppressed and held under abuse. “Brings back the captivity” is the sense of turning it around to where God delivers from oppression and restores His people (cf. Job 42:10; Ezek. 16:53).

This will be a time of great celebration and joy! And so David in anticipation says, “Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.”

Yes, humanity is totally depraved. But some find refuge in God and then are hated by the world for it. In the present, the wicked seem to eat up God’s people like bread, but in the kingdom, God will turn the situation around so that His people will rejoice and be glad.

Slide # 14



Keep calling on the LORD, for He is with us. Keep looking to the LORD for He is our refuge. Keep the kingdom in focus for it is about to come into full view. And then God’s people will rejoice and be glad with unspeakable joy. Keep pressing on – for the very best is yet to be!