

Psalm 53

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David.

Psalm 53: This psalm (is a copy of Psalm 14), slightly revised. Two major differences are apparent: this psalm substitutes the generic word for God, Elohim, for the personal name of God used in Psalm 14, Yahweh. This was done evidently to give the psalm a wider appeal. Second (verse 5), has been rewritten and has become an encouraging affirmation of God's protection.

Verses 1-6: This psalm is nearly identical to Psalm 14 (Psalm 53:1-5a is from Psalm 14:1-5a; Psalm 53:6 is from Psalm 4:7). The major difference is (verse 5), in which the psalmist celebrates a military victory over an enemy. Apparently Psalm 14 is here rephrased to apply to a specified war event, earning it a distinct place in the canon.

- I. The Description of Those Who Reject God and His People (53:1-4).
- II. The Danger to Those Who Reject God and His People (53:5).
- III. The Deliverance of His People (53:6).

“Title”: “Mahalath”: The name of a tune or an instrument.

Verses 1-4 (see notes on Psalms 14. Romans 3:10-12 quotes; Psalm 53:1-3).

Psalm 53:1 "The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: [there is] none that doeth good."

The biblical meaning of the word “fool” is a person who ignores God (Rom. 3:10-12). When a person considers God's existence and the importance of walking in His ways, that person has laid the foundation for wise living (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 14:27).

As we have said so many times, a man is what his heart is. Only a fool could look around himself and conclude there is no God. An atheist is not an atheist on his dying bed. This suddenly changes when he is faced with something he cannot control himself. Death is one of the surest reasons to believe in God. Only a fool would decide that this world and everything in it just happened. Even science shows us that a far superior intelligence than mere man has set this all in order. It is much easier to believe that God created the universe and all that is in it, than to believe any of the farfetched theories that atheists have come up with. A person who does not believe in God is, of all men, most deceived.

Psalm 53:2 "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God."

In (Psalm 14:2), it is read, "the Lord" or "Jehovah". In everything else there is an agreement in this verse (See note on Psalm 14:2). The reference to “God” rather than LORD” is another

difference between Psalm 14 and 53. "Elohim" (God), is used 3 times (in Psalm 14), but 7 times (in Psalm 53).

"To see if there were any that did understand": The Targum is, "that were understanding" in the law. It doubtless means understanding in divine and spiritual things.

"That did seek God": By which he condemns all knowledge and understanding that tends not to seek God. The above paraphrase is, "seeking doctrine from before the Lord".

In our world today, He would probably find just a very few who do truly understand and truly seek God. We know that just before the great flood, God looked down at man, and He was grieved that He had made man. He looked and there was a man called Noah who sought God and understood. We know that God saved Noah and his family and destroyed all the others who did not believe. We know also, that God looked at Sodom and Gomorrah and could not even find 10 righteous men. I greatly wonder just how many He would find today who love Him and serve Him. A few understand and seek God, but as a whole I am afraid most of the dwellers on earth do not understand and seek God.

Psalm 53:3 "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one."

This psalm is almost the same as the 14th Psalm. The scope of it is to convince us of our sins. God, by the psalmist, here shows us how bad we are, and proves this by his own certain knowledge. He speaks terror to persecutors, the worst of sinners. He speaks encouragement to God's persecuted people. How come that men are so bad? Because there is no fear of God before their eyes. Men's bad practices flow from their bad principles; if they profess to know God, but yet in works, because in thoughts, they deny him. See the folly of sin; he is a fool, in the account of God, whose judgment we are sure is right, that harbors such corrupt thoughts. And see the fruit of sin; to what it brings men, when their hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. See also the faith of the saints, and their hope and power as to the cure of this great evil. There will come a Savior, a great salvation, a salvation from sin. God will save his church from its enemies. He will save all believers from their own sins, that they may not be led captive by them, which will be everlasting joy to them. From this work the Redeemer had his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Psalm 14:3 "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one".

The secret of there not being one (lies in verse 2 above). Children of men are those who have not been adopted in to the family of God and made sons of God. The sons of God stop being children of men when they give themselves entirely to the Lord. Worldly people (children of men), are all living in sin as this Scripture says. Christians look at the blessedness of being sons of God.

1 John 3:1-2 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." "Beloved,

now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

There is a special name that only the sons of God can call Him.

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Can you call the Father Abba?

Psalm 53:4 "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people [as] they eat bread: they have not called upon God."

(In Psalm 14:4), it is: "have all the workers", etc. There are none of them but what have, unless given up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, to believe a lie, as antichrist and his followers (2 Thess. 2:10; see note on Psalm 14:4).

"Who eat up my people:": As they eat bread.

"And drink their blood": And are drunken with it (Rev. 17:6).

"They have not called upon God": But upon their idols, upon the Virgin Mary, and saints departed (In Psalm 14:4), it is, "upon the Lord".

The answer to their problem is before them here. They have not called on the name of God. When they do evil to the people of God, they are actually attacking God. It is as if they are blind and deaf to the things of God. They have eyes to see, but they do not see and ears to hear, but they do not hear. To deny there is God is the most insane thing anyone could do.

Psalm 53:5 "There were they in great fear, [where] no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth [against] thee: thou hast put [them] to shame, because God hath despised them."

"In great fear": The verse describes a sudden reversal in the fortunes of war. The haughty enemy besieging Israel was suddenly terrified and utterly defeated. Historical examples of such unexpected terrors to Israel's enemy are recorded in (2 Chron. Chapter 20 and Isa. Chapter 37).

"Scattered the bones": Perhaps nothing was more disgraceful to a nation at war than to have the bones of its dead army scattered over the land rather than buried.

We see with David, that the people of the world who deny God have no future to look to. Their fate is hell.

Luke 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Those who do not trust in God have terror overcoming them in our day, because they can see how man can destroy the earth and everyone in it. The only people who can feel peace in this is those who have heaven to look forward to. God Himself will destroy the wicked.

Psalm 53:6 "Oh that the salvation of Israel [were come] out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, [and] Israel shall be glad."

Or, "who will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel?" The Targum adds, "except the Lord"; and this is a request to him for it. And (as in Psalm 14:7), it may be a wish for the first coming of Christ, to work out salvation for his people. Here it may be expressive of the desire of the church for his coming in a spiritual manner, in the latter day, to take to himself his great power, and reign. To destroy antichrist, and deliver his people from bondage and oppression by him. When the Gentiles shall be gathered in, the Jews will be converted, and all Israel saved (see Rom. 11:25). It is in the original text, "salvations"; denoting the complete salvation of the church. When all her enemies will be destroyed, and all peace and prosperity shall be enjoyed by her (see notes on Psalm 14:6).

"When God bringeth back the captivity of his people": Who have been carried into it by antichrist (Rev. 13:10).

"Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad": For now, the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's. The marriage of the Lamb will be come, and the bride made ready, through the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews. Which will occasion the twenty four elders, the representatives of the Christian church, to give thanks to the Lord God Almighty. And cause many voices to be heard in heaven, expressing great joy on this occasion (Rev. 11:15).

This is two-fold in its meaning. Israel being established as a nation, and the natural Jew coming back into the land is the first part of this. The other meaning here is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the second coming of Christ. There is a physical house of Israel, who are the natural Hebrews. They are Israelites by birth. Spiritual Israel is the Christians who are adopted into the family of God.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

What rejoicing there will be when we see our King of kings and Lord of lords!

Psalm 53 Questions

1. The fool hath said in his heart, _____ _ _ _ _.
2. When is an atheist not an atheist?
3. In verse 2 of chapter 53 of Psalms, God looked down to see if there were any that did what?

4. What city did God destroy, because He could not find 10 righteous men?
5. Where is the secret of there not being one found who sought God?
6. What are Christians called that shows God is our Father?
7. What is a name that only the sons of God can call Him?
8. When an evil person attacks a believer, who is he really attacking?
9. They have eyes to see, but they do not _____.
10. Who are the only people in this world who know true peace?
11. Who is the physical house of Israel?
12. Who is the spiritual house of Israel?