

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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Psalm 14 — No, Not One

1.0 Introducing Psalm 14

1.1 Repetition

- Psalm 14 (placed in Book 1 of the Psalms) is repeated with some changes as Psalm 53 (in Book 2).
- Psalm 14:1-3 is cited in the New Testament in Romans 3:10-12.

1.2 Psalm Type

- Psalm 14 is characteristic of communal laments. God's people were praying about their persecution at the hands of the wicked.
- The use of the imagery of the "fool" and the inclusion of the term "Maskil" in the heading of Psalm 53 both indicate a connection with wisdom literature.
- Psalm 14:7 (= 53:6) presents a prophetic pronouncement about the restoration of Israel.

2.0 Reading Psalm 14 (NASU)

14:1 *A Psalm* of David.

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."
They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;
There is no one who does good.

14:2 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men
To see if there are any who understand,
Who seek after God.

14:3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;
There is no one who does good, not even one.

14:4 Do all the workers of wickedness not know,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And do not call upon the LORD*?

14:5 There they are in great dread,
For God is with the righteous generation.

14:6 You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted,
But the LORD is his refuge.

14:7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!
When the LORD restores His captive people,
Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.



* In the New American Standard Bible (Updated) "Lord" was erroneously printed.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 14

3.1 Outline

- I. Depravity (vv. 1-3)
 - A. Depravity Explained (1)
 - B. Devotion Examined (2)
 - C. Depravity Exposed (3)
- II. Destruction (vv. 4-6)
 - A. Accountability (4a)
 - B. Accusation #1 (4b)
 - C. Announcement (5)
 - D. Accusation #2 (6)
- III. Desire (v. 7)
 - A. Rescue (7a)
 - B. Restoration (7b)
 - C. Rejoicing (7c)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “The fool”
 - Not stupidity—a conscious choice.
 - A moral decision for evil.
- **v. 1** “There is no God”
 - Practical atheism vs. philosophical atheism.
 - Lives as though there is no God.
 - “God is unconcerned” (NET Bible)

Why is the one who denies God’s existence a fool?

“The reason the person is a fool and not merely mistaken is that he knows there is a God and yet chooses to believe and act as if there is none” (James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994], 1:115).

- **v. 1** “They are corrupt”
 - “The rebellion of the wicked infects for the worse the world in which they live” (Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002], 287).
- **v. 2** “The LORD has looked down from heaven”
 - Noah’s Flood – Genesis 6:5, 11, 12
 - Tower of Babel – Genesis 11:5
 - Sodom and Gomorrah – Genesis 18:21
 - Serious implications regarding judgment.
- **vv. 1-3**
 - 1c – “There is no one who does good.”
 - 3c – “There is no one who does good, not even one.
 - A kind of inclusio that brackets the description of the wicked.
- **v. 4** “Who eat up my people as they eat bread”
 - Daily, casual, self-centered exploitation of people.
- **v. 6** “the LORD is his refuge”
 - Related to the verb “take refuge” in Psalms 2:12; 5:11; 7:1; 11:1.
 - See the same noun in Psalm 46:1.
- **v. 7** “out of Zion”
 - See Psalms 2:6; 9:11.
 - The Davidic Kingdom’s capitol.



- v. 7 “When the LORD restores His captive people”
 - “His captive people” could be translated “the fortunes of His people.”

A Comparison of Psalms 14 and 53

1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds ; There is no one who does good.	1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice ; There is no one who does good.
2 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.	2 God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there is anyone who understands, Who seeks after God.
3 They have all turned aside , together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.	3 Every one of them has turned aside ; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.
4 Do all the workers of wickedness not know, Who eat up my people <i>as</i> they eat bread, <i>And</i> do not call upon the LORD ?	4 Have the workers of wickedness no knowledge, Who eat up My people <i>as</i> <i>though</i> they ate bread <i>And</i> have not called upon God ?
5 There they are in great dread, For God is with the righteous generation .	5 There they were in great fear where no fear had been ; For God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you ; You put them to shame, because God had rejected them.
6 You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, But the LORD is his refuge.	
7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.	6 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

Color codes: black = no difference in Hebrew text

blue = difference in Hebrew text is visible in English

red = difference in Hebrew text is not visible in English

- Different collections —
 - ◆ Psalm 14: “**LORD**”
 - ◆ Psalm 15: “**God**”
- Different contexts —
 - ◆ Psalm 14:5-6 – David
 - ◆ Psalm 53:5 – Hezekiah/Sennacherib?
- Psalm 52 (1 Samuel 22): the story of Doeg the Edomite
- Psalm 53 (1 Samuel 25): suggestive of Nabal
- Psalm 54 (1 Samuel 23; 26): the incident with the Ziphites

4.0 Singing Psalm 14

- 1 Lord of all worlds, let thanks and praise
To Thee forever fill my soul;
With blessings Thou hast crowned my days,
My heart, my head, my hand control.
O, let no vain presumptions rise,
No impious murmur in my heart,
To crave the boon Thy will denies,
Or shrink from ill Thy hands impart.
- 2 Thy child am I, and not an hour,
Revolving in the orbs above,
But brings some token of Thy power,
But brings some token of Thy love;
And shall this bosom dare repine,
In darkness dare deny the dawn,
Or spurn the treasures of the mine,
Because one diamond is withdrawn?
- 3 The fool denies, the fool alone,
Thy being, Lord, and boundless might;
Denies the firmament, Thy throne,
Denies the sun’s meridian light;
Denies the fashion of his frame,
The voice he hears, the breath he draws;
O idiot atheist! to proclaim
Effects unnumbered without cause!
- 4 Matter and mind, mysterious one,
Are man’s for threescore years and ten;
Where, ere the thread of life was spun?
Where, when reduced to dust again?
All seeing God, the doubt suppress;
The doubt Thou only canst relieve;
My soul Thy Savior Son shall bless,
Fly to Thy Gospel, and believe.



- 1 God looks down on man.
Are there any who understand?
Are there any who seek the Lord, and to do God's will?
Have all gone astray, running rampant in their evil ways?
They will pay with their lives.
- 2 Will they ever see?
Are they blinded by iniquity?
Will they ever know the salvation of the righteous soul?
It is those who fear: they are children whom the Lord holds dear, and is near.
They are saved.

— Stephen Pearson

5.0 Praying Psalm 14

- Lord, don't let me act or talk like a fool. [v. 1]
- Oh, God, I am a sinner – there is nothing good in me that I should deserve salvation. [vv. 1, 3]
- Thank you, Lord, for being with the righteous. [v. 5]
- You are my refuge, Lord. [v. 6]
- Oh, Lord, save your people Israel. Deliver Zion. [v. 7]



6.0 Applying Psalm 14

- It is foolish to live as though God does not exist.
- All have sinned and have turned aside from God's way.
- The Lord will restore His people Israel.

