

Psalm 53 – Bible Study Notes A Picture of Mankind's Condition

Primary Focus: Man is wicked, evil, and will face judgment from God.

Background Info: A slightly revised version of psalm 14. Most of psalms 14 & 53 are nearly verbatim. Probably done by a temple musician. Timing of writing is probably during the reign of Hezekiah.

Basic structure:

- I. Man openly defies God's law (vv. 1-3)
- II. God will judge those who oppress His people (vv. 4-6)

Verses 1-3 – Man blatantly, willfully chooses to defy God's law

Verse 1 – Those who ignore God's existence and laws are fools, not uneducated. The phrase "there is no God" is a statement of defiance, not ignorance. Paul discussed this attitude in Romans 1:22. Because man denies God, he becomes evil and "corrupt" in God's eyes.

Verses 2-3 – Nobody is righteous in God's eyes; everyone is evil and corrupt. God seeks a righteous person, but finds all man is evil. The psalmist is describing the condition of two groups:

- Mankind as a group;
- Individual people.

"No one... not even one" (vv. 1, 3) emphasizes that nobody is righteous.

Life Questions

Describe the types of people who deny God's existence? How do we defy God's law in our lives?

Verses 4-6 – God will defeat and judge those who rebel and oppress His people

Verse 4 – Evil people oppress God's people. Their action is represents a failure of man to:

- Discern right from wrong (v. 4);
- Recognize that judgment comes to those who reject God (vv. 5ff).

When we are left to our own desires, we choose to commit evil acts.

Verses 5-6 – God will defeat and judge those who oppose Him and His people.

Verses 5b-6 are different in psalms 14 & 53.

The temple musician altered psalm 14 to deal with a specific crisis.

Probably regarding the impending invasion of Assyria during the reign of King Hezekiah (Isaiah 37).

Psalm 14 – mainly deals with individual people rebelling.

Psalm 53 – mainly deals with a nation rebelling against God.

Leaving dead bodies unburied is disgraceful in the Near East.

God will shame those who oppose Him.

God will defeat those who reject Him.

“salvation of Israel... out of Zion” – prophecy of the Messiah.

Jesus is the Messiah who came to save all in Israel and the world.

Those who accept Jesus can “rejoice” and “be glad” in God’s grace.

God alone brings victory over your enemies and saves us from judgment.

Life Questions

What is God’s opinion of rebellion? How can our nation receive God’s protection? What does it mean to “rejoice” and “be glad” in God’s restoration?