

## THE PSALMS

### Series: Selected Psalms Phase 1

### Psalm 14: The Deprave Man's Folly Psa. 14:1-7

#### Today's Study: Psa. 14:1-7

1. Denial and Depravity of the Godless v. 1
2. Divine Evaluation of Mankind Vv. 2-3
3. Disregard for Morality and Dread Characterize the Ungodly Vv. 4-6
4. Deliverance is of the LORD v. 7

#### INTRODUCTION

##### 1. Highlights from Psa. 10 Part B (10:12-18)

###### (a) Introduction to Psalm 10:12-15

Previously (Psa. 10:1-11), we saw David complaining regarding the presence of evil people, now he seeks God's intervention. He makes a solemn address to God, entreating Him to remember the cry of the afflicted. As believers it seems natural and easy to voice our complaints and become frustrated when evil doers succeed and the oppressed continue in their hurt and abusive condition (see Psa. 73, NB Vv. 13-18).

. . . The psalmist presented some arguments to enforce the appeal to God, why He should intervene:

- (1) He, God, had seen all the atrocities and the wrong-doers' efforts to conceal what they have done.
- (2) The poor and afflicted had wholeheartedly committed himself (themselves) to God with a firm confidence that God would protect those who relied on Him.

###### (b) Cry of the Afflicted Psa. 10:12a

###### (1) Arise and Address the Situation (10:12a)

- He requested that God instantly intercept, put an end to the evil acts of the wicked and bring deliverance from their oppression. It was a call to **take action**, especially realizing that the wicked finds comfort in the idea that they would never be held accountable.
- **"Arise, LORD"** (10:12a) . . . also used in Psa. 3:7. These cries are based on human perception, as a result of their prevailing adverse situation. However, the fact is: God never slumbers, become inactive, etc. (Gen. 28:15; Psa. 121).
- The appeal made in Psa. 10:12a was requesting God to personally appear and address the prevailing situation.

- It was an appeal that God would manifest Himself; because of the confusion characterizing those who claim that God is not aware of their evil deeds.
- It was an appeal that God would manifest His power, He was to utilize it for the maintenance of His own purposes; He was to **“Lift up Your hand!”** against these oppressors and unleash His power to the full extent!

(2) **Alternatives for the Afflicted** (Psa. 10:12b).

- The word ***humble*** (v. 12b) refers to the afflicted. These were the depressed and beaten down from abuse and mistreatment. The just God must not be unfamiliar with their conditions.
- The irony of this issue is that the oppressors, in their presumption, say that God has forgotten these afflicted ones! The psalmist’s desire is that God would appear so that the wicked can see their folly.

(c) **Clarifying His Complaints Psa. 10:13-15.**

(1) **Callousness and Contempt of the Wicked** (10:13).

- It is difficult to understand the evil of the wicked and why they revile God and refuse to accept the fact that He will judge them.
- It was (is) a mind-boggling thing to understand how man, the creature so weak and feeble could so defiantly withstand and blaspheme the true and living God and yet the facts are plainly lived out and cannot be denied.
- **“He said in his heart”** (10:13b), the idea conveyed here is that all the evil of the wicked is the work of the heart (Matt. 12:34; 15:18; Luke 6:45).
- **See Psa. 10:13c:** This is the actual feeling of wicked men, that they are not required to give an account of their conduct, or that God will require them to be accountable of their evil actions.

(2) **Commitment of the Afflicted** (Psa. 10:14)

- David maintained an affirmative position, his confidence in God remained resolute, he knew whom he served and that there was no change in Him (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 40:8).
- Although men act as if their conduct was not observed, God has been intimately acquainted with **all** their works. The workers of iniquity cannot hide themselves; God indeed sees **all** the malicious evil acts done by the wicked.
- C. H. Spurgeon notes:  
*“God is all-eye to see, and all-hand to punish the enemies. From divine oversight there is no hiding, and from divine justice there is no fleeing. Wanton mischief shall meet with woeful misery, and those who harbor spite shall inherit sorrow.”*
- **“The helpless commit himself to You”** (10:14b): The word **“commit”** (**“commiteth” KJV**) or **“leave”** means that they leave their cause with

God; they trust in His protection and interposition; in this commitment they were calm, confident and felt completely covered.

- **Defender or helper** (10:14c) of the fatherless is a general character of God—the character in which He has revealed Himself to man. Compare Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; **Psa. 68:5**; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 49:11; etc.

(3) **Search Out and Strip the Wicked** (Psa. 10:15).

- David calls upon God to help the weak by breaking “**the arm of the wicked and evil man,**” (10:15a) that is to weaken him, make him powerless so that he cannot continue to oppress others.
- “**Seek out his wickedness**” (10:15b): This is a desire of the psalmist, that no evil act of the wicked should be forgotten but that all acts met with the full measure of justice.
- Barnes note:  
*“If it is right to punish the wicked at all, it is right to deal with them just as they deserve; if any wickedness may properly be punished, all may be; and, whatever may occur, the sinner may be assured that he will not be punished merely for a part of his sins. If God punishes the wicked at all, there will be nothing left unpunished.”*

(d) **Confidence in the Most High Psa. 10:16-18**

The psalm ends with praise for the LORD and assurance of ultimate victory. He focuses on thanksgiving to the everlasting King because He granted the desire of His humble and oppressed people; He has defended the fatherless and punished the wicked who oppressed His poor and afflicted children. Although the passage (Psa. 10) began with a sense of frustration and anguish; it ends with a hopeful tone! What God has accomplished for His people produces confidence, a trust that He will hear and act according to His justice.

(1) **Superiority of God Acknowledged** (Psa. 10:16)

- The sovereignty of God is best expressed in the OT concept of kingdom. The sovereign is not one who controls the action of his subject in minute details, but one who wins their loyalty or crush their revolt.
- The psalmist speaks in this situation as if what he desired was actually accomplished and as if the enemies of the LORD, were actually overthrown. He was so confident that this would happen that he speaks as if it was already done. (compare Rom. 7:7) (See also Psa. 6:8, 9; 9:18).
- David was firm, resolute and with unwavering confidence, he was fully assured that God is the Supreme Ruler of the earth. He is inferior to none, cannot be conquered and He reigns from eternity to eternity.

(2) **Satisfied That God Has Heard and Will Act** (Psa. 10:17-18)

- David was fully assured that his prayers were heard, that God carefully took notice and was keenly observant, the cry of the afflicted has never gone unnoticed (Example **Ex. 3:7-8**; Prov. 15:29; Micah 7:7) and justice will be done.

- **God has heard the cry of the oppressed and has never denied their petition, they have never sought Him in vain!**
- David was sure that his prayer had been heard, he was confident that God would “*prepare*” or “*establish*” (v. 17b) the hearts of the oppressed. He would dispel their fears and decrease their anxiety by the assurance of His favor and by His gracious intervention.
- (See Psa. 10:18b). One of the most common forms of wickedness in our world is oppression—the oppression of the fatherless, of the poor, of the dependent—the oppression of government workers, and the oppression of the enslaved.
  - The most hurtful thing is that it is done by man. This reality is not limited to the days of David but seen throughout history and seems to be at an extreme level in our days.
  - Barnes notes:
 

*“Frail and weak man strives to feel that he is better than those clothed with a skin not colored like his own, or born in a more humbled condition of life; and, in defiance of all the laws of God, and all rights of his fellow men, he crushes and grinds them to the earth. For such sins God will interpose, and He will yet show Himself to be the helper of the fatherless and the oppressed. May He hasten the day when oppression and wrong shall cease in the world.”*

## 2. Introduction to Psalm 14

### (a) Title and Relevant Information

The title of the psalm is simply stated: ***To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.*** This title is also the same as in Psa. 11 and 12, with some additional information in Psalm 12.

Psalm 14 is virtually identical with Psa. 53. In **Psa. 53**, the title indicates that these psalms belong to a group referred to as ***Maschil*** or ***Maskil***; meaning “enlightened” or “wise,” because they impart wisdom; they are regarded as teaching psalms; (some other examples: Psa. 32, 42, 44, 78; etc.). Most of Psalm 14:1-3 are quoted by Paul in Rom. 3:10-12 as showing the universal corruption of the unredeemed human heart.

As observed, Psa. 14 is dedicated to the Chief Musician and this is repeated in the titles of fifty-three psalms. It has been noted by some scholars that the title of these psalms clearly indicated that they were not intended solely for the private use of believers, but to be sung in the great assemblies by the appointed choir who were under the supervision of “***the Chief Musician,***” or as one scholar refers to him as “***the Master of Music.***”

### (b) Occasion on which Psalm 14 was written.

We do not have specifics as to the occasion upon which Psalm 14 was written. A variety of possibilities have been suggested but they are mere conjectures. It

seemed to have been composed under the influence of a heart-rending conviction of the depth and extent of human depravity, and by observing widespread irreverence and neglect of God. Such condition was not limited to the time of David or to any one specific time or country in the world, immorality is a universal catastrophe.

G. Campbell Morgan notes:

*“The thought of the whole psalm is the safety of godliness, and the peril of ungodliness.”*

(c) **Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible (POSB), presented the following, introduction to Psalm 14:**

*“History documents the record of man’s inhumanity to man. Who could imagine or create a story that parallels the true account of human civilization? No fictional horrors can compare to the actual atrocities that take place on our planet.*

*David pondered the sinful condition of man and God’s perspective of the human race in this fourteenth psalm. Scripture does not inform us of any specific event that prompted this psalm, but it concerns those who oppose and attack God’s people, the Hebrew nation. It contains a national message for Israel, a prophetic message for every member of the fallen human race.”*

**3. Divisions of Psalm 14**

We will be discussing the psalm noting four main divisions:

- (a) Denial and Depravity of the Godless v. 1
- (b) Divine Evaluation of Mankind Vv. 2-3
- (c) Disregard for Morality and Dread Characterize the Godless Vv. 4-6
- (d) Deliverance is of the LORD v. 7

**A. Denial and Depravity of the Godless Psa. 14:1**

The opening line of this psalm summarizes Scripture’s assessment of those who reject God. The term used here for **“fool”** is **“nabal”** which implies a stubborn, irrational form of willful ignorance. The problem with such a person is not poor intellect, or lack of evidence (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-20), but a choice in their will—in the heart (Jer. 17:9)—to live as if God does not exist (Psa. 14:1).

Here is an example of someone who displays both theoretical and practical atheism; he denies God in thought, word and action. **The true atheist is either foolish or wicked; foolish because he ignores the evidence that God exists or wicked because he refuses to live by God’s truths.** We become atheist in practice when we rely more on ourselves than on God, who in such situation is not acknowledged or appreciated. The fools mentioned here are aggressively perverse in their actions. To speak in direct defiance of God is utterly foolish, according to the Bible.

*“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” (Psa. 14:1 NKJV).*

1. **Moral Perversity** (Psa. 14:1a)

(a) Heinous and perverse character (v. 1a)

*“The fool . . .” (v. 1a NKJV)*

(1) As noticed in our text God’s allegation against depraved humanity commenced by calling attention to the most wicked among sinners: **“the fool.”**

- There are three Hebrew words for **fool** in the *Old Testament*, this usage in v. 14, is the strongest, **“nabal.”**
- *“This is the person who has descended to the depths of depravity, one who is morally reprehensible and completely unconcerned about others. Being totally void of conscience the wicked individual preys on others.” (POSB)*

(2) The word **fool** is often used in Scriptures to identify a wicked man—in reality sin is the essence of **folly**.

- Compare Job 2:10; Psa. 74:18; Gen 34:7; Deut. 22:21.
- The Hebrew word is translated **vile person** in Isa. 32:5-6. Elsewhere it is expressed as **fool, foolish** and **foolish man**. It is designed to convey the idea that wickedness is essentially folly or its usage will help some to see the evil and devastation of pursuing a godless life.

(3) Spurgeon notes:

*“The atheist is a fool pre-eminently, and a fool universally. He would not deny God if he were not a fool by nature and having denied God it is no marvel that he becomes a fool in practice. Sin is always folly, and as it is the height of sin to attack the existence of the Most High, so it is also the greatest imaginable folly.”*

**Spurgeon further notes:**

*“To say there is no God is to contradict the plainest evidence, which is obstinacy; to oppose the common consent of mankind, which is stupidity; to stifle consciousness which is madness.”*

(4) **“THE FOOL!”**

The **“fool”** is a person who lives as if there is no God. **Fools reveal their rebellion against God in two ways:**

- **First**, they reject God’s revelation, for they do not believe what the Bible says about God; they scorn the moral principles of God’s Word and rely on their own ideas to determine what is right and wrong.
- **Second**, they do not seek God, submit to God’s Word, nor pray to God or trust Him concerning their daily lives.

(b) Heart contemplates evil (v. 1a).

*“. . . has said in his heart. . .” (v. 1a NKJV)*

- (1) David has shown that not only what the fool said to be significant (14:1a); but where he said it is also very important . . . ***“in his heart”*** (v. 1a).
- The God-denying man ponders and is not merely troubled by intellectual objections to the existence of God; ***“in his heart”*** he wishes God away, typically for fundamentally moral reasons.
    - Those who ***“practice evil”*** (John 3:20) has a reason to oppose the light of God’s truth because it exposes their sin and guilt (see John 3:19-20).
    - The man that David refers to in this verse is not an atheist, for primarily intellectual reason, but one who deep within the recesses of his mind, rejects and dis-acknowledges the reality of God.
  - This God-denying man may not have verbally made this statement to others.
    - He may not have taken the position openly that there is no God.
    - However, it is a thought that continually passed through his mind, and he has cherished it.
- (2) This phrase ***“said in his heart”*** (Psa. 14:1a) also reminds us that it is possible to say ***in his mind*** that there is a God, but deny it in his **heart and life**. The reality is: **One may believe in God in theory, yet be a practical atheist in the way that he lives.**
- Man may say with his mouth that he believes in God, and yet in his heart and lifestyle say the opposite!!
  - The evil propensity dominates his mind and heart but he had not become audacious enough to verbally express his folly.
  - While men’s heart portrays what they are therefore we must not be surprised at the prevalence of evil skepticism; **a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit** (Matt. 7:17-18; Luke 6:43-45).
- (3) This is a vivid description of the wicked, who he is internally: **He is one that said in his heart, ‘There is no God’; he is an atheist:**
- **“There is no *Elohim* or *Yahweh*, no judge or governor of the world, no Divine oversight over the affairs of men!”**
  - These God-denying men, cannot doubt the being of God but will question His supremacy.
  - This doubt and denial is ***“in his heart,”*** it is not his awareness but his conception.
    - He cannot satisfy himself that there is none, but he wishes that there was none, and delights himself with the inclination that it is possible that there is none.
    - He cannot be sure that there is one, and therefore is willing to think there is none.
- (4) The atheist has made an intentional decision not to give credence to the revealed facts of God, although God has placed the knowledge of Himself within each individual (2 Peter 3:5). None of us are without excuse as God

has revealed His existence to us in the world that He has created. In fact, nature itself enkindles our inner consciousness of God (Job. 12:7-10; Psa. 19:1; **Rom. 1:19-22, NB v. 20**).

(c) Heretical and godless (v. 1a)

*“There is no God” (v. 1a NKJV)*

(1) The words **“there is”** are not in the original.

- The exact translation would be **“no God,” “nothing of God,” or “God is not.”**
- The idea is that, in his perception, there is no such thing as God, or no such being as God.
- The message conveyed in the passage is to make known the assumption of him who is referred to as a **“fool”** who says **“no God!”**
  - The established fact is: The belief that there is no God is customarily established on the desire to live a wicked life.
  - The opinion that there is no God is accepted by those who lead and enjoy an evil lifestyle and their rejection of God supports them in their depraved lifestyle and as a result removes from them the fear of being accountable in the future.

(2) **“The fool said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” or “no God” . . .**

Spurgeon notes:

*“So monstrous is the assertion, that the man hardly dared to put it as a positive statement, but went near to doing so. It is not merely the wish of the sinner’s corrupt nature and the hope of his rebellious heart, but he manages after a fashion to bring himself to assert it, and at certain seasons he thinks that he believes it.”*

(3) David Guzik . . . Enduring Word noted the following:

*“There are many powerful arguments for the existence of God; among these are:*

- **The Cosmological Argument:** *The existence of the universe means there must be a Creator.*
- **The Teleological Argument:** *The existence of design in the universe means there must be a relational God.*
- **The Anthropological Argument:** *The unique nature and character of humanity means there must be a relational God.*
- **The Moral Argument:** *The existence of morality means there must be a governing God.”*

**NOTE:** Brief definition of two words used in the above quote:

**Teleological:** The Theological Usage: Relating to the doctrine of design and purpose in the material world.

**Anthropological:** Relating to the study of human kind . . . example: human behavior, human biology; etc.



## 2. Mankind Without God is Morally Impure (Psa. 14:1b)

### (a) Corrupted within and without (v. 1b)

*“They have done abominable works” (v. 1b NKJV)*

- (1) They have done that which is to be abhorred, which is to be detested and that which is fitted to fill the mind with horror!!
- (2) In this instance (Psa. 14:1b), David is showing the result of denying the reality of God. It leads men into corruption and despicable acts.
- (3) Note two brief quotes by Spurgeon:
  - *“Where there is enmity to God, there is deep inward depravity of mind.”*
  - *“When men begin with renouncing the Most High God, who shall tell where they will end?”*

### (4) Corruption results in devastating consequences!!

- The antediluvian world was characterized by wickedness and the inhabitants were grossly corrupted; it was a period when violence and depravity was so prevalent that God had to destroy the then world (Gen. chaps. 6-8, NB 6:1-13, highlight Vv. 11-12).
- The adverse effects of corruption are seen in the illustration by God in using Jeremiah’s girdle (Jer. 13, NB Vv. 1-7, highlight v. 7). **The marred girdle (v. 7) symbolized how God would destroy the pride of Judah and Jerusalem because they refused to follow God in obedience.**

### (b) Contrary to moral standards (v. 1c)

*“There is none who does good” (14:1c NKJV)*

#### (1) Depravity is universal. **“There is none who does good.”**

- All have fallen into sin; all fail to do good.
- None are found who are inclined to worship their Creator and keep His laws.
- This fact was originally spoken at the time of David (Psa. 14:1) but it was applied by the apostle Paul in Rom. 3:10, read Vv. 9-18).

#### (2) You have heard the proverb “One bad apple spoils the whole bunch.” **The fact is that corruption is a rottenness which spoils everything it contacts.** Note how the fool manifest his evil:

- **First**, his efforts are regularly derogatory—depraved, detestable, despicable. He habitually does that which God hates.
- **Second**, he normally does that which is evil, failing to do that which is God-fearing, virtuous and valuable. Far too many have ignored the fact that we are accountable to God for the good that we fail to do as well as the acts of evil that we commit (James 4:17).

#### (3) Spurgeon notes:

*“Those who do the things which they ought not to have done, are sure to leave undone those things which they ought to have done. What a picture of our race is this! Save only where grace reigns, there is none that doeth good; humanity, fallen and debased, is a desert without an oasis, a night without a star, a dunghill without a jewel, a hell without a bottom.”*

### 3. Man Who Lives Up to His Name “Nabal”

- (a) Atheistical thoughts are very foolish and wicked thoughts, which are the fundamental causes of such great amount of wickedness in this world.
- (1) The Word of God is a *discerner of these thoughts*, and places a reasonable identification on him that harbors evil thoughts.
  - (2) ***Nabal is his name, and folly is with him***; for he thinks against the clearest light, against his own knowledge and convictions, and the common sentiments of all that is wise and sober.
- (b) Note the following quote from POSB:  
*“The Bible records the life of a man whose name was actually **Nabal**, the word for fool (1 Sam. 25). He was a man who truly lived up to his name (1 Sam. 25:25). In every way, he was an example of the person who denies and defies God. Take a close look at his character and action:*
- (1) *He was crude and harsh (1 Sam. 25:3)*
  - (2) *He was evil and mean in all his dealings (1 Sam. 25:3)*
  - (3) *He was ungrateful (1 Sam. 25:7-11)*
  - (4) *He was uncaring (1 Sam. 25:7-11)*
  - (5) *He was selfish (1 Sam. 25:7-11)*
  - (6) *He was called a son of Belial—a worthless wicked scoundrel (1 Sam. 25:17, 25)*
  - (7) *He was unapproachable and unreasonable (1 Sam. 25:17)*

*Nabal was suddenly stricken by the LORD after a night of drunken revelry. He finally died after spending ten days in a coma (1 Sam. 25:36-38). God’s judgment will likewise fall upon all fools who deny and defy Him. We need to guard carefully against living as if He does not witness our deeds. Never forget that a day of judgment is coming when He will judge everything we say and do (Ecc. 11:9; 12:14).”*  
 See Gen. 6:11-12; Psa. 74:22; Isa. 32:6-7; Ezek. 8:12

### B. Divine Evaluation of Mankind Psa. 14:2-3

*From God’s eternal and holy perspective, the human race is like something beautiful which has been ruined or corrupted. The phrasing used here is echoed by Paul when he points out the universal nature of humanity (Rom. 3:9-12). Even when a person tries to be ‘good’ the effort is still tainted by the effects of sin (Isa. 64:6). In this context David is noting complete depravity of those who reject even the existence of God.*

#### 1. Evaluation for Spiritual Understanding (Psa. 14:2)

*“The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see there are any who understand, who seek God” (Psa. 14:2 NKJV)*

##### (a) Sovereign oversight (14:2a)

*“The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men” (14:2a NKJV).*

- (1) The all-seeing eyes of God (Psa.11:4; 33:14; 66:7; etc.) is an important matter that fools have purposely ignored.

- We have in our text a valid depiction of God’s continuous surveillance of all activities on earth.
  - The posture of God, seen in v. 2a, is as if He is literally leaning over heaven and scrutinizing earth’s activities (Psa. 139, NB Vv. 6-12).
- (2) The idea of *bending forward* speaks of an intense and concentrated looking, this posture is seen when we bend forward to examine anything attentively or when we look out for someone who is expected to come.
- God looked down intently, so as to secure a close examination of mankind, for the expressed purpose of determining whether there were any that did good.
  - He looked at all men; He examined all their pretensions and He saw none who could be exempted from the charge of depravity.
- (3) The omniscient God always has a clear oversight of all mankind’s activities; it’s is as if observing from a watchtower or other elevated places of observation; ... ***“The LORD is represented as gazing intently upon men.”***
- (4) Spurgeon notes:
- *“He will not punish blindly, nor like a tyrant command an indiscriminate massacre because a rumor of rebellion become to His ears.”*
  - *“He who is looking down knows the good, is quick to discern it, would be delighted to find it, but as He views all the unregenerate children of men, His search is fruitless, for all the race of Adam, no unrenewed soul is other than an enemy to God and goodness.”*
- (b) Search for spiritual awareness (14:2b)  
*“To see if there are any who understand, who seek God” (14:2b NKJV)*
- (1) To see if any were acting wisely, that is ***“in seeking God!”***
- Acting ***wisely*** as noted here (v. 2) stands in contrast with the ***folly*** referred to in verse 1.
  - Righteousness, a God direct, God controlled life, is always represented in the Scriptures as true wisdom (Job 28:28; Psa. 111:10; Prov. 2:6; 16:16; etc.).
    - Wisdom is demonstrated by a desire to become acquainted with the being and excellence of God; as well as the actual perfection of that knowledge.
    - There is no other way that the true character of man can be better determined than by the actual experience when one becomes acquainted with the character of God who made and govern the universe.
- (2) Spurgeon notes:  
*“The object of the LORD’S search are not wealthy men, great men, or learned men; these with all they can offer, cannot meet the demands of the great Governor; at the same time, He is not looking for superlative eminence in virtue, He seeks for **any that understand** themselves, their state, their duty,*

*their destiny, their happiness. He looks for them **that seek God**, who if there be a God, are willing and anxious to find Him out."*

- (3) Once more note briefly the contrast: The fool says "There is no God," but the person of understanding recognizes that there is a God and seek Him!
- (4) Another important thought to be noted is that God examines each individual, all **the children of men**.
- God does not pronounce judgment on human collectively but individually.
  - God knows everyone and maintains an accurate account in heaven (Rev. 20:12). All will be judged accordingly and no one will be able to make excuses when he or she stands before God in judgment (Rom. 1:20; 2:1-3; 3:19).

## 2. Evil and Corruption Characterize the Godless (Psa. 14:3).

*"They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No not one" (Psa. 14:3 NKJV).*

(a) Departure from the way of righteousness (v. 3a)

*"They have all turned aside" (v. 3a NKJV).*

- (1) What we have here is the result of divine investigation as noted in the previous verse.
- The result, as seen by God Himself, was that all were seen to have gone aside and have become depraved.
  - The words "**gone aside**" (KJV) means: **To go off, to turn aside or away, to depart**; for example, to turn out of the right way or path (see Ex. 32:8).
  - In essence "**turn aside**", means: **To turn away from God; to fall away from His worship; to an apostate condition!** (1 Sam. 12:20; 2 Kings 18:6; 2 Chron. 25:27). Note also Deut. 28:20; 1 Sam. 8:8; 1 Kings 11:33; etc.)
- (2) "**They have all turned aside.**" This speaks of universal apostasy.
- This turning away from the established standards of God began with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-13).
  - Scripture speaks of the human race collectively here, because there is no exemption to these statements.
  - **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way . . .** (Isa. 53:6a)
    - Every person, at one time or another, has preferred following his or her own selfish way, not acknowledging nor obeying God's righteous commandments; we are all guilty, and therefore we need Christ who paid the price for our transgression
    - In the fall of Adam (Gen. 3), sin as, an active principle or power, gained entrance into the human race (Rom. 5:12-19; Gen. 15:21-22). As a result, (1) sin and corruption entered into Adam's heart and life and (2) Adam's sin was transmitted into the life-stream of the human

race, corrupting all people thereafter (Rom. 5:12-19; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-22; etc.)

- When God created the world and looked upon His work, He saw that it was good (Gen. 1:31); but sometime later He looked upon man and saw gross evil and corruption (Gen. 6:5). **Man has gone aside from the right of their duty, the way that leads to happiness and have turned into the path of the destroyer.**

(b) Depravity was widespread and deeply rooted (14:3b)

*“They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one”* (v. 13b NKJV).

(1) The emphasis continues on the fact of universal depravity (see Rom. 3:23). Everyone has fallen short of the standard of God (as noted above) . . . we have all **missed the mark!!**

(2) The words **“became filthy”** (KJV) **“became corrupt”** (other translations) (v. 3), is derived from the word meaning **“stinking”, “gone bad”, “depraved”**.

- In the Arabic the word means **become sharp** or **sour as milk**; therefore, conveys the idea: to become corrupt in a moral sense.
- The word is found only here and in the parallel Psalm 53:3 and in Job 15:16 and in each case rendered **“filthy.”**
- As used in our text it refers to **character**, which means that their character was morally corrupt or defiled.

(3) Before The Fall, Adam was the embodiment of all purity and goodness. Sin has put a disgraced and debased nature upon man. Man **has become corrupt** (v. 3b) **and putrid**. All their faculties are so dysfunctional that they have become repugnant to their Maker and utterly incapable of answering the purpose why they were created.

- They do no good, but are unprofitable burdens of the earth; they do God no service, bringing Him no honor, nor do themselves any real kindness.
- They do a great deal of hurt. **They have done abominable works**, for such is the outcome of sin (Jer. 44:4). **There is no God; for those that “profess to know, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work”** (Titus 1:16 NKJV).

### C. Disregard for Morality and Dread Characterize the Godless Psa. 14:4-6

*“Old Testament Scripture often uses the imagery of oppressors ‘eating’ those they abuse (Prov. 30:14; Psa. 27:1-2; Micah 3:1-3); despite this, David is confident that those who refuse to acknowledge God will face judgment (Hebrews 10:31; Rev. 20:11-15). Though evil people often persecute others, believers can take comfort knowing that God will make all things right (John 16:33; Revelation 21:1-5). He remains a safe place, like a shelter, for those who believe in Him.”* (bibleref.com)

1. **Absence of Justice—No Desire for God** (Psa. 14:4)

*“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the LORD” (14:4 NKJV).*

(a) Ignorance . . . deliberate or unintentional? (14:4a)

*“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?” (v. 14a NKJV)*

(1) Read again v. 4 (Psa. 14). This verse can literally be read as: **“Do they not know, all the workers of iniquity, eating my people, they eat bread; Jehovah they call not.”** There are several statements in this verse confirming the fact of the depravity of the godless.

- They have no knowledge of God.
- They find pleasure in the errors and imperfections of the people of God—encouraging themselves in their own wickedness by the fact that the professed friends of God are inconsistent in their lives.
- They do not call on the name of the LORD, or that they offer no worship to Him.

(2) It can be difficult to convince sinners of the evil and danger of the way that they live, because they feel secure in their evil lifestyle.

- There are three things within this verse (v. 4) that the wicked need to consider but have stubbornly refused to do so: (a) they need to see their wickedness (b) . . . their folly and (c) . . . their danger.
- While they are likely to believe themselves to be very wise, good and safe, the fact remains that their doom is certain.
- They are **the workers of iniquity**; they design it, they practice it, and take much pleasure in it!!

(3) The suggestion (in v. 4) is that the workers of iniquity has a basic knowledge of the moral law of God (note again Rom. 1:20).

(4) *“This proof of human depravity is everywhere manifested still in this world—in the fact that men have the opportunities of gaining knowledge of God if they choose to do it; in the fact that they voluntarily neglect those opportunities; and in the fact that the reason of this is that they love iniquity.”* (Barnes).

(b) Inconsistencies confirm their godlessness (14:4b)

*“Who eat up my people as they eat bread” (v. 4b NKJV)*

(1) Evil doers never seem to learn; they are barefaced in their wickedness!

- One of the reasons that motivated David to write this psalm was the continued persecution of God’s people by the wicked.
- Unfortunately, this immoral act is frequent in today’s world just as it was in David’s days and possible to a greater extent.
- The haters of God’s people actively consume the people of God in the same manner they eat their daily meals (Micah 3:1-3).
- They find great delight in afflicting the believers and they seem to get renewed power when they conquer others.

(2) Hatred of God and corruptness of life are motivating impulses which produce persecution.

- Men who have no deliverance experience of God, enslave themselves to become workers of iniquity; they have no desire to seek the LORD for salvation, but they find great pleasure in persecuting the poor and despised people of God.
- Spurgeon notes:  
*“As pikes in a pond, eat up little fish, as eagles prey on smaller birds, as wolves rend the sheep of the pasture, so sinners naturally and as a matter of course, persecute, malign, and mock the followers of Jesus Christ.”*
- Matthew Henry notes:  
*“It is meat and drink to persecutors to be doing mischief; it is as agreeable to them as their necessary food. They eat up God’s people easily, daily, securely, without any check of conscience when they do it or remorse of conscience when they have done it; as Joseph’s brethren **cast him into a pit and sat down to eat bread**, (Gen. 37:24, 25; see Micah 3:2-3).”*

(c) Indication of their wickedness (14:4c)

*“And do not call upon God” (14:4c NKJV)*

- (1) Such an attitude shows the absence of any religious concerns! It reflects the practical atheism of the wicked!
- (2) They have nothing to do with the worship of Jehovah. They demonstrate this evidence of wickedness that they do not pray; that they do not request the blessing of their Creator; they do not publicly acknowledge Him as God
- (3) There can be no more distinctive evidence of man’s depravity that the facts of him not acknowledge his Creator.
  - He gives God no reverence!
  - He never desires His favor!
  - In the midst of trials, temptations and the perils of life he does his uttermost to make his way through as if there were no God!
- (4) Those who do not care for God’s people, for God’s poor, do not care or have any desire for God, but live in defiance of Him.
  - The reason people run into all manner of wickedness is because they do not call upon God for His grace.
  - A powerful reminder to focus on is: **“What good can be expected from those who live without praying or having any desire for God!”**

## 2. **Anxiety and Fear Plague the Godless** (Psa. 14:5)

*“There they are in great fear, For God is with the generation of the righteous” (Psa. 14:5 NKJV).*

(a) Fearfulness haunts, despite their daring denials of God (v. 5a)

*“There they are in great fear” (14:5a NKJV)*

- (1) The Hebrew rendered verse 5a as: **“they feared a great fear.”**

- The idea is, that they were in great terror or consternation (anxiety, dismay, distress, etc.).
  - In spite of all their efforts to prove that there is no God, there was such proof of His existence, and of Him being a friend of the righteous; consequently, He is the enemy of such as they themselves were and it filled their minds with agitation.
- (2) They were fully aware that the way that they lived seriously endangered them.
- They had ostracized and terrorized God’s people and their consciences were condemning them.
  - They had great delight in consuming and it was as if they had drained the blood of the saints but eventually their bowels churned and became the gall of asps (Job 20:12-16)
    - Wickedness may taste sweet but afterwards that pleasure turns sour. An evil deed contains its own destructive outcome. The viper’s tongue contains poison.
    - **Sin is destructive!!**  
**Psa. 34:21 (NKJV):** “Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate righteousness shall be condemned.”
    - **See also:** Psa. 140:11; Prov. 8:36; 11:3; Isa. 3:9; etc.
- (3) One of the established facts that I have learned from my early days as a Christian it is to be careful what I say about or do to any Christian!!
- Those who terrorize God’s people, will one day experience the terror of the LORD themselves.
  - The ungodly have no fear of the LORD in the present time (Rom. 3:13-18); but that will quickly change when the LORD rises in defense of His abused people.
    - The wicked will be stricken with an intense and tormenting fear, without warning!
    - Indeed!!: **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”** (Rom. 10:31 NKJV).
- (b) Fellowship and presence of God (14:5b)  
*“For God is with the generation of the righteous” (14:5b NKJV)*
- (1) The word **“generation”** (v. 5b) as used here applies to the righteous, with reference to them being a race or as a class of men.
- Compare Psa. 24:6; 73:15; 112:2.
  - The people of God has always been a distinctive group (Matt. 5:13-14; etc.). In reality, the Church of Jesus Christ is a **“Called out community!”** (2 Cor. 6:14-18, NB v. 17)
- (2) The fact conveyed in Psa. 14:5 is that there was undeniable evidence of visible proof that God dwelt among the righteous, and He was their friend.
- (3) The evidence that God was among the righteous would, of course, distress the wicked because of the reality that God was the friend of the righteous, it



meant that ultimately He was the enemy of the oppressors of the people of God and such reality expose them to His wrath.

- They have the option to close their eyes to the truth but they cannot but perceive the portrayal of God in the character of His truly gracious people, nor can the wicked fail to see that He works for their deliverance.
- **Like Haman** (The Book of Esther), **the wicked instinctively feel apprehensive when they see God's Mordechai's!!** (Example Esther chaps. 3 and 6).

(4) The presence of God ***"in the generation of the righteous"*** is the guarantee of sure vindication of right and condemnation of evil.

- Let scoffers beware, for they persecute the Lord Jesus when they persecute His people; the union is very close between God and His people; it amounts to a mysterious indwelling, ***for God is in the generation of the righteous!***
- Note carefully Christ's address to Paul (Saul) at his conversion (Read Acts 9, NB Vv. 4-5).

**Acts 9:4-5 NKJV . . .** two highlights without comments:

- v. 4: ". . . **Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**"
- v.5: ". . . **I am Jesus whom you are persecuting . . .**"

### 3. **Aggressively Thwarts the Rights of the Poor** (Psa. 14:6)

*"You shame the counsel of the poor, But the LORD is his refuge" (14:6 NKJV).*

(a) Despise and oppress the counsel of God fearing people (14:6a).

*"You shame the counsel of the poor" (14:6a NKJV)*

(1) Evildoers are focused on pursuing their aggression and ill-treatment of others especially the poor, until God brings them to justice.

- As noted in other lessons, in general, the **poor** are those who are beaten down, humiliated and oppressed and are incapable to defend themselves.
- It is the ultimate objective of oppressors to obstruct the counsels or plans of the afflicted, desiring to see them ruined.

(2) They ***shame the counsel (plans) of the poor*** (v. 6a) and reprimand them because they made God their refuge; similar was done to David (see Psa. 11:1).

- These are grossly wicked men, and have a great deal to answer for, who not only reject righteousness but are determined to live a God-rejected life; a life that has no guarantee of safety and happiness.
- Those who make a mockery of righteousness and the saints do so at their own peril; *"Now therefore, do not be mockers. Lest your bonds be made strong" (Isa. 28:22a) . . .this is a warning!*

(3) In this particular usage **"poor"** (v.14:6a) actually refers to the righteous; the righteous afflicted, the needy, and in humble circumstances.

- What is seen here is that the wicked had ridiculed those who were in circumstances of poverty, depression, want, troubling circumstances, had no other resource and who sought their comfort in God.
- The reproaches by the wicked tended to take away their last consolation, and to cover them with confusion; it was appropriate therefore, that those who had done such heinous acts be overwhelmed with fear.

(b) Divine refuge for the God fearing (14:6b)

*“But the LORD is his refuge” (14:6b NKJV)*

(1) The taunting opposition of the wicked versus the resolve to stand!

- Some taunting questions the enemy thrust into our faces:
  - What can your God do for you now?
  - Who is that God that can deliver you out of this situation?
  - Where is the reward of your praying and beseeching?
  - Etc.
- Spurgeon notes some ways that the poor takes counsel:
  - *“He takes counsel with his own weakness and sees that he must depend on God*
  - *He takes counsel with his observations and sees the end of the wicked.*
  - *He takes counsel with the Bible and know it to be the Word of God.*
  - *He takes counsel with his own experience and see that God answers prayers.”*
- Despite the effort of the wicked to discourage the afflicted he could hear in his heart, mind and soul, the songs of victory:
  - Press along saints, press along  
In God’s own way  
Press along saints, press along  
In God’s own way  
Persecution we must bear  
Trials and crosses in our way  
For the hotter the battle  
The sweeter the victory!
  
  - Yes, the hotter the battle  
The sweeter the victory!
  
  - And he said in confirmation:  
**I Have Decided to Follow Jesus** *(Partial quote)*  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
No turning back.

- (2) Irrespective of the opposition, the afflicted was positive, resolute and steadfast, ***the LORD was his refuge!!***
- He knew that irrespective of the situation he could call on God, he placed his trust in God!
  - This source of comfort, being under attacked by the doctrine of the wicked—that there was no God, was what they intended to try and destroy.
  - **The reality is that atheism cuts off every hope of man, and leaves the desolate to despair. It would put out the last light that gleams on the earth, and cover the world with total and eternal night . . . pitch darkness!!**
- (3) The righteous is assured of God’s presence (v. 5b). They have a refuge in God, that is their ultimate protection (v.6b).
- This is as much their security as it is the terror of the enemies, who may jeer them for their confidence in God but cannot jeer them out of it.
  - In the judgment day it will add terror and confusion of sinners to see God own ***the generation of the righteous***, which they have hated and mocked!
- (4) **A Shelter in the Time of Storm . . . (Partial quote)**

**Verse 1**

The Lord’s our Rock, in Him we hide,  
A Shelter in the time of storm;  
Secure whatever ill betide,  
A Shelter in the time of storm

**Refrain**

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A weary land, a weary land;  
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A shelter in the time of storm

**Verse 4**

**O Rock divine. O Refuge dear,**  
A Shelter in the time of storm;  
Be Thou our Helper ever near,  
A Shelter in a time of storm.

**D. Deliverance is of the LORD Psa. 14:7**

The psalmist longs for Israel’s complete deliverance from her enemies—which comes when God deals with the wicked in defense of Israel. In general man has been oppressed by his sinful nature and our only way of deliverance is salvation through Jesus Christ.

The psalm ends with a hopeful look forward, to the time when Jesus will come back to establish His earthly kingdom (Rev. 19:11-16). This total victory is part of many Old Testament prophecies (Isa. 9:6-7; Zech. 9:9-10; 14:9-11, 16-20). With this final triumph over sin, all God's people will have a reason to celebrate.

*"Oh, that the salvation would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad" (Psa. 14:7 NKJV).*

### 1. Redemption of and Through God (Psa. 14:7a)

#### (a) Deliverance desired for the oppressed (14:7a)

*"Oh that the salvation of Israel of Israel . . ." (14:7a NKJV).*

#### (1) **"Oh that the salvation of Israel"** . . . the actual Hebrew renders as: **"Who will give out of Zion salvation to Israel?"**

- The word **Israel** refers primarily to the Hebrew people, and then it is generally to designate the people of God.
- Reference is being made here in regards to what we saw in previous verses: the general prevalence of iniquity, practical atheism and the sufferings of the people of God.

#### (2) **"Oh that"** . . . it expresses a deep and earnest desire as if the desired thing was in the hand of another and he would pass on that blessing or favor.

#### (3) David knows that the LORD was a refuge for His people and that the workers of iniquity would never win. Yet that was hard to see at that particular time due to prevailing circumstances, so David expressed his great longing that God would bring the victory and deliverance He had promised His people.

#### (b) Divine covenant was already established (14:7a)

**"O that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion"** (v. 7a NKJV)

#### (1) We have discussed the meaning and significance of **Zion** in other lessons.

- **Zion**: The ancient Hebrew word refers to "a Canaanite hill fortress in Jerusalem captured by David (2 Sam. 5:7) and called the City of David."
- **Zion** can refer to one of three places: (1) **The hill** where the most ancient areas of Jerusalem stood (Psa. 48:1-2). (2) **The city of Jerusalem** itself (Micah 4:2). (3) **The dwelling place of God** (Psa. 132:13).
- **Zion (Psa. 14:7a)** . . . it is referred to as it is the dwelling place of God (Psa. 9:11; 132:13); the place from where He makes known His power.

#### **Note the following:**

- **Psa. 3:4**: ". . . He heard me out of His holy hill."
- **Psa. 20:2**: ". . . and strengthen you out of Zion"
- **Psa. 128:5**: "The LORD bless you out of Zion . . ."
- Here **(14:7a)** the phrase, **"O that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion"**, expresses (as indicated earlier) a yearning that God, who had His dwelling in Zion (Psa. 9:11; 132:13; Joel 3:17), would put forth His power in granting complete deliverance to His people.

(2) Note the following quote from POSB:

***“Salvation it will come out of Zion (the Jews)***

*From the very concept of the Hebrew nation, God promised that Israel would be redeemed by one of her own, a Jew. God promised Abraham, the father of Israel, that the Messiah would come from his seed (Gen. 22:18). As Abraham’s grandson Jacob lay dying, he prophesied that the Messiah would descend from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Later, the LORD promised David that the eternal King of Israel would come from his house and sit on the throne (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The prophets declared that the Savior would come from and to Zion (Psa. 2:6; Isa. 59:20; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9). The record of the Messiah’s Jewish genealogy is provided by Matthew in his gospel (Matt. 1:1-7).”*

2. **Restoration Accompanied with Great Blessings** (Psa. 14:7b and 7c)

(a) Reinstatement highly anticipated (14:7b)

*“When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people” (14:7b NKJV)*

(1) ***When the LORD brings back the captivity”*** this is precisely saying: ***“In Jehovah’s bringing back the captivity of his people.”***

(2) Some have used ***brings back the captivity of His people*** and dated this psalm to the time of the exile. However, this was **not** referring to the Babylonian captivity . . . **Note the following:**

- **Job 42:10:** We have the same phrase ***“The LORD turned the captivity of Job”***, simply noting that God restored the fortunes of Job.
- **It should also be noted that even if the term used here in Psa. 14:7** means literal captivity, the phrase ***“bring back the captivity ...”*** the phrase was used (a) **Hosea 6:11** and (b) **Amos 9:14**, long before the Babylonian captivity.
- **As used in Psa. 14:7, “captivity”** is used in a general sense, speaking of anytime or situation where God’s people are oppressed.

(b) Rejoicing and great blessings anticipated by the restored

*“Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad” (v. 7c NKJV)*

(1) ***“Jacob”*** is another name for the Hebrew people because they are descendants of Jacob (Isa, 2:3; 10:21; 14:1; 41:21; Amos 7:2; etc.)

(2) The thought expressed here (14:7c) is that the restoration would produce great joy to the people of God which is something they earnestly desire to take place as soon as possible. With such ultimate restoration and such complete salvation, the people of God rejoiced with great anticipation.

(3) The hope for salvation (deliverance) will be realized!

- When David was driven out by Absalom and his rebellious accomplices, David comforted himself with assurance that God would, in due time, ***turn again his captivity*** to the joy of all his good subjects.
- Here in this psalm, David is looking even further (as indicated earlier):

- He had in the beginning of the psalm lamented the general corruption of mankind.
- While he looked at the depravity of man, in the midst of melancholy, he desired the salvation which should be wrought out by the Redeemer, who was expected to ***come to Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*** (Rom. 11:26).

(4) I will close with a quote by Commentator Willem A. VanGemeren  
*“The psalmist anticipates an era when God will vindicate His people and deliver them from the fools who oppress and harass. In Jesus’ coming Jews and Gentiles are further assured of God’s concern, vindication, and presence with His people. When the Jews are restored to faith in Jesus the Messiah, they will rejoice and all Christians will join with them in giving praise to God’s faithfulness.”*

## DO NOT JUST READ THE BIBLE STUDY AND OBEY IT!

### 2 Tim. 2:15 NKJV

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

### 2 Tim. 3:16-17 NKJV

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**PSALM 14**  
**Review Questions**

1. (a) Which other psalm is virtually the same as Psalm 14? (b) To which group of Psalms do they belong and how are they defined?

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2. (a) Answer True or False (b) Explain your answer.  
The title of Psalm 14 indicates that the psalm was written when David fled from Abraham.

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3. (a) In essence, what is the Hebrew term used for *“fool”* as used in Psa. 14:1? (b) What does it imply?

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4. We noted in our lesson that an atheist is either *foolish* or *wicked*. Briefly explain this statement.

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5. In what two specific ways do fools reveal their rebellion against God (as noted in our lesson)?

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6. The phrase ***“said in his heart”*** (Psa. 13:1a), conveys several established facts, list three of those noted in our lesson.

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7. What is the basic, and fundamental reason why some willingly accept the theory that ***“There is no God?”***

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8. As noted in our lesson, what is the result of denying the reality of God, noted by David, for example Psa. 14:1b?

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9. Complete the following:

*This is a partial quote from our introduction for Psa. 14:2-3.*

“From God’s eternal and holy (a) \_\_\_\_\_, the human (b) \_\_\_\_\_ is like something (c) \_\_\_\_\_ which have been ruined or (d) \_\_\_\_\_. The phrasing used here is (e) \_\_\_\_\_ by Paul when he points out the (f) \_\_\_\_\_ nature of humanity (Rom. 3:9-12).”

10. Briefly explain the message conveyed in Psa. 14:3a, ***“They have all turned aside.”***

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11. Note three statements implied in Psa. 14:4 that confirms the depravity of the godless.

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12. Complete the following by choosing the correct answer:

“Those who do not care for God’s people, for God’s poor, do not care or have any desire for God, but \_\_\_\_\_.”

- (a) live in harmony with Him.
- (b) live in defiance of Satan.
- (c) live by the church's standards.
- (d) live in defiance of Him.

13. Explain: **“There they are in great fear”** as used in Psa. 14:5a.

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14. Why do the wicked becomes distressed with the fact that God is with the righteous?

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15. Briefly explain: **Oh that”** as used in Psa. 14:7a.

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