

Psalms 18-09-20

This is Thursday evening, it is the 20th of September 2018, and we continue our study in the Book of Psalms. We tackle tonight Psalm 14. Psalm 14.

There will be much riffling of pages, so if you've got a bookmark or two handy, you might want them because we've got two other places in particular that we're going to be looking at that are helpful parallels to our passage. And we're going to ask ourselves, this is a fairly well-known passage, but I really want to get at the answer to the question, so what, when we have come to understand what David has put into this Psalm. It's important material, as I say, it is referenced elsewhere in Scripture, but when we come away from it, having seen, you know, the thoughts of the fool and so on, what do we do with that information? So we're going to endeavor to find the answer to that question.

If I don't at least suggest a couple of answers before the class is over, stick your hand up and say, hey, didn't you say you weren't going to answer that question? Because the purpose of our Bible study is to have something with which to make application, to live our lives in a way that pleases God, lays hold of righteousness by faith, advances us now and in the ages to come, and if it doesn't do that, you know, we need to do something different. Let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin. Father, what a wonderful gift it is to have the treasury of truth that is contained in your Word and to have your Holy Spirit to teach it to us.

We thank you for the opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and attempting to improve our understanding of this portion of your Word, and we ask your blessing on it as we look at it together. May our lives, as a result of this evening's study, more fully reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, who saved us, who has given us this privilege and this opportunity and this bright future we have before us. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Psalm 14, let's read it. As familiar as it is, sometimes we find something we forgot to pay attention to in our previous perusals. Psalm 14, it is to the chief musician, it is a psalm of David, it is a mizmor, and obviously for reflection by the congregation, since it is put into the hands of the chief organizer, the chief musician.

The fool has said in his heart, no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt. None who does good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call on the Lord? There they are in great fear, for God is with the generation of the righteous.

You shame the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge. Oh, that 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.

Now if your eye is like mine in going through this psalm, a lot of it kind of tracks and flows and makes good sense. You get a little bit confusing in verse five. I get the workers of iniquity consuming the people.

There they are in great fear, for God is with the generation of the righteous. You shame the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge. That's a little bit confusing.

And I'm not real sure how we got to the captivity of his people unless somehow this was composed in Babylon. I mean if this is a Psalm of David, what captivity is he talking about? This would be anachronistic. Children of Israel may have been oppressed.

They may have been tangled with and messed with by the Philistines and the various other neighbors, but captivity? Captivity, there's been two great captivities. The Assyrians carried off the ten northern tribes, and the Babylonians carried off the two southern tribes. So this would be one of these, it's a fake David Psalm.

If you're talking about when is God going to come out of Zion and bring back the captivity, this would be something Ezekiel and the people by the river Kabar might write, but it wouldn't make sense in David's day. So a few things to straighten out here. But first of all, we have an interesting text here.

Of course it's famously alluded to by those who want to talk about depravity and the inability of man to generate any kind of good. Everybody's all together corrupt. It's kind of the Romans 3 thing, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And so this is one of several passages that is appealed to. So we'll talk about that in a minute. But here's my first question, my first of several.

How did this get in the hymnal? Now you can look in any one of them. We've got the Inspiring Hymns, we've got our GTBC hymnal, you've got the Broadman hymnal in the Baptist Church, and many others. But there's a section for Christmas hymns, there's a section for Thanksgiving, there's a section for salvation, there's a section for peace in time of crisis and all that.

But do you ever flip through there and you find one that says, the fool has said there is no God, his deeds are all corrupt, his abominations are all his thoughts, and he never cleans it up. You just don't find that as a hymn. Let's all get together and sing about the abominable fools.

I can't find an English hymn, maybe we ought to write one and sing it. But here it is in the beginning of the hymnal. It's not exactly the old 100, but here's Psalm 14 and it's a song.

It was to the chief musician. It's set to music. And we're singing about the fool that's corrupt and abominable and eating the people like bread.

Even when you refer to Satan, Martin Luther's great mighty fortress is our God. He talks about

how Satan's going to be defeated. He brings him up and one little word shall fell him, and it's uplifting.

Well, this kind of ends with, when is God going to come and deliver the people? It doesn't really the assurance that you find from Martin Luther. So that's part of my question is, what's this doing here? And in answering that question, we answer the question I first proposed is, how does this help us in our day? So let's start out here. The fool has said in his heart.

You can probably, if you think for a second, guess what the Hebrew word is translated fool. It's the same as the name of Abigail's husband. It's the Nabal.

The Nabal has said in his heart. And of course that guy is sort of famous for having bad judgment in not supporting David and his band of hearty heroes during the time they were being tracked down by Saul. And his heart basically turned to a rock and he died and David ended up with another wife.

But this is what it says. The fool has said in his heart, and you notice there is an italics. It's just no God, no God.

That's what he says. Now I mentioned this as a homework question last time. What is the reason for the change in number of pronouns? We start out with singular in verse one and before you get out of the verse, it has switched to the plural.

Why is that? I asked myself. Maybe it doesn't trip anybody. I couldn't find anybody that anywhere.

I checked all the commentaries I've got and nobody said, well, here's why we think the number of the pronoun changed, but it just bugs me. Why does it change? Why doesn't he say the fools have said in their hearts, no God, but it's singular and then it changes. Well, I think there's no accident here.

There's got to be a reason. So then I was thinking, well, suppose the quote mark should not stop after the word God and this is the words of the fool continuing. Not only is there no God, but maybe the people who belong to God, he's accusing them of being corrupt.

The godly are corrupt. The godly are abominable. The godly, there's none of them who does good.

They're no better than me. These holier than thou God fearing people. And I thought maybe it's a clue here that you shouldn't end the quote.

However, I was disabused of that possibility by looking at Romans chapter three. This is one of our two parallel passages because Paul quotes this and it's really helpful when the old Testament is quoted in the new. It keeps us from, you know, running down some primrose path.

I don't actually know what a primrose is, but I know the primrose path is a bad thing for some reason. So we don't want to go down a bad path. So keep your finger here and turn over to Romans chapter three.

Now we're tempted to jump into the middle of the chapter. If you look at your new King James down around verse 10, you see a lot of italics, which is the signal that it's an Old Testament quote. Does yours have italics like mine does there along about verse 10? And you notice there's none righteous, no not one, there's none who understands, none who seeks God.

This is a quote from this first several verses of Psalm 14. And notice that Paul says, we've previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin in verse nine. As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, there's none who understands, there's none who seeks after God.

Well, Paul is quoting Psalm 14 in support of the notion that Jews and Gentiles alike are charged with sin. So he would be ripping it badly out of context if David is here quoting the fool, talking about the righteous and accusing them of being unrighteous, that it wouldn't be a valid quote. So we can safely dismiss that as a possibility.

This is not a continuation of the quote, it is in fact talking about fools. So I'm back to, and you might just put a marker there, we'll be back to Romans three in a little bit. But as we look at our first few verses here, in verse one, they are corrupt, they have done.

The reason, in my view, my suggestion to you is, the reason the person changes here is, this is point A, it is a title. And David says, this song here, this is talking about the fool as a category. You know how in Hebrew it's so often the case that when you use a feminine plural, it abstractifies something, it puts it in the realm of ideas and tells you that it's a metaphor or it's, for example, in Ecclesiastes, Kohelet, it feminizes the kohol, who is the one who calls an assembly, and Kohelet puts this in the realm of the abstract.

Well, in the same way, if you put something in the singular, just like we say man, you know, man is a mammal. Well, that's kind of what's happening here. So this is almost a superscription after the superscription, and it says, I'm going to talk a little bit about the fool saying there is no God.

So it's a category descriptor, which isn't a blinding insight, but that's why the person changes because now when it says they, we're going to talk about this category. Why is this important? Why am I belaboring it? Here's why. You got to keep the category in mind because everything he says here doesn't apply to everybody.

It applies to category, nabal, and not to others, not to others. And this is going to be backed up in Romans chapter three. That's why I had just put a sticky there in Romans three, because Paul does the very same thing.

And if you jump into the middle of the chapter, you miss it. In fact, you can't afford to almost

jump anywhere in the middle of Romans because you're going to miss something. You have to follow the flow of thought or you will misinterpret it.

And the people who press this into service of depravity are missing the point. And we're going to see it briefly tonight, but we're going to finish the Psalm and get to our application. So the nabal says in his heart, doesn't say he speaks with his tongue or he broadcasts it in the public square.

He says in his heart, no God. Now, why would he say this? Your innocent, primal, unblemished, untouched person doesn't out of nowhere, as if by magic, say, you know what? There's no God. Some thought has to precede that.

What thought precedes the no God affirmation in one's heart? What had to precede that in your heart? Somebody said, there is a God. And you say, no, there's not. You don't just come up with the idea, no God.

You don't come up with a negative unless somebody proposes a positive, right? You can say no flying spaghetti monster, but somebody had to postulate such a thing as a monster before you say there's not one or, you know, who's, it's his teapot or whatever else. Schrodinger's cat. You have to have a proposition about Schrodinger's cat, where it is and whether it exists and did it die before you can say there is no actual Schrodinger's cat, right? You negate a proposition of something existing.

So what has happened here? Romans chapter one, the knowledge of God is in the heart of every man and there without excuse because they suppress that truth in unrighteousness. This is a truth that is revealed and it is rejected. It is suppressed.

It is negated. Fool says in his heart. Why does he say it in his heart? Because that's where the positive was proposed.

You know, there's a God. God's put eternity in their old testament and new affirms that God reveals himself apart from scripture. What may be known of God is manifest in creation.

But apart from that, God reveals himself in the heart and that knowledge is then rejected. So the fool essentially verse one rejects the revelation that there is a God. He says, no, there's not.

He says it in his heart. It all begins in the heart. Bob theme used to call this negative volition at the point of God consciousness.

David says, the fool says no God. And personally, I think David's is much fewer syllables and probably a little easier to hang onto. God's revealed says no.

Now that is the category of people that are now going to be described. Look at the rest of this. They now notice if we're going to talk about the depravity, the entire human race, what categories of people are there in the human race? You can say, well, there's believers and

there's unbelievers.

Well, let's break that down a little bit more. Because yes, there are believers, but there are faithful believers and those who live in the light of their knowledge of God. And there are those who are saved and who believe in God or who have believed in God, who have accepted Christ, but they've pretty much just wrapped that up in a storage box and stuck it in the safe and their life doesn't reflect any knowledge or concern of that whatsoever.

They're, if anything, worse because they're like the dog that returns to his vomit, you know, it's talked about in the New Testament. So you've really got two categories of believers. You also have two categories of unbelievers.

Have you ever thought about that? There's two categories of unbelievers. There's those who have not yet resolved for themselves the question, is there a God and should I be concerned? And those who have faced that question and said, no God. Some unbelievers are nabal and some are not.

Some are fools who are Romans chapter one. They have suppressed that truth. Others are considering they're wrestling with it.

Maybe it's not really come to a head yet. God hasn't brought them to that place of conviction and decision yet. They are, that is in prospect.

And many of those people are going to accept Christ as their savior. They are going to become a new creation. Old things will pass away and all things will become new.

So you've got basically four different categories in the human race. Now you can say, well, that's a lot of theological abstraction, but we have to understand this when we read scripture or we're going to mess it up. Because if you don't understand that distinction and what David is talking about here, you're going to apply this description to a wrong group.

It is not true that all unbelievers are abominable and none who does good and they've all turned aside. They've all become corrupt. There's none that does good, no, not one.

That is not true of part of the unbelieving world. It is only true of the nabal part, the part that has already said, no, God, the rejection in their heart is final. They're still alive.

They're still around. But this description does not apply to those unbelievers who have not yet, but are going to choose Christ. It's not true.

They're not necessarily abominable. They're not necessarily corrupt. And we'll see what some of these mean in more detail, but be aware, David put it in the singular so that you will know I'm talking about category fool who has faced this truth and rejected it.

So what is true of them? It says they are corrupt. Now this word corrupt is a, actually, uh, from the word Shakat and it means, um, to spoil a thing, to render it useless. Um, I opened up a little

thing looking for some, some meat to eat and the color had gone off and we were keeping it, you know, because it's not bad.

It's just kind of off. Well, Shakat means it's no longer what you want. Uh, and there's a big range there.

So, but there, it is not suitable to the purpose anymore. Now, the reason that's important, keep your finger here and turn back to Romans three, see verse 12, they have turned aside. They have together become unprofitable.

Well, that unprofitable is based on the Septuagint translation of the word for corrupt. And it's a little further down, but we've, we've got, uh, more than one reference to, uh, corruption here. Um, down in verse three, they have together become corrupt.

See that same word, both places, this is Shakat. And the Greek is, is accurate. They understood what the word means.

And you don't have to be guilty of the kind of corruption that sends you to jail. Uh, and you know, the, the kind of financial malfeasance that, that, uh, gets people in trouble or, or some other kind of rank that you, it's unprofitable. It is kind of like what Solomon talks about in Kohelet in Ecclesiastes when he says, you know, it's, it's Hevel, it's effervescent, it's ineffectual.

It doesn't last. It doesn't persist. It doesn't accomplish anything.

We talked about this recently talking about what human good is like. Um, it can be perfectly good. You can actually render aid.

An unbeliever can render aid, give you the shirt off their back, literally, but it, it perishes with the using. It's got no divine eternality as a component. And that's what this word actually means.

It's, it's spoiled. It, it isn't, it's got rot in it. It's hollow.

It's on the way out. So that's, uh, and you can see that in, uh, Romans 3 12, where the, and it's a valid translation of this word. It is unprofitable, unworkable, but here it says they are unprofitable now.

And the reason I'm kind of pointing this out is you can say the reason they say there is no God is that there's something broken in them. They're a corrupted machine. They've got missing parts.

They were sovereignly foreordained. You know, they were double predestinated not to be saved. And so they're, they're broken.

And that's why they say there is no God. That's not what this is saying. This unprofitableness is a result of there is no God.

It's not the other way around. So you can't work this chain backward. David says, look, he's a fool.

He says, there's no God. And he has this quality now because he has put himself in this category. It doesn't, you don't push the rope the other way.

They have done abominable works. There is none who does good. Now all unbelievers don't perpetrate abominations and some of them do good.

They are kind. They are, they love their families. They are loyal.

They are, they don't break the 10 commandments. This is the God rejecters we're talking about here. And it doesn't matter, you know, can a, can a God rejecter give you his shirt or remain faithful to his wife? Yes, they can.

But there is a change. We were talking earlier. I was talking earlier because I find the subject fascinating about how does your body know when it's, when it's dead? And they've done research on this because cell death happens well in advance of, of dying from lack of nutrition, because maybe your circulation has been cut off or whatever.

And they've studied this and found out that there is a nervous system signal that gets sent throughout the brain that creates a, a shutdown cascade in the body. And, you know, you can cut off circulation to one of your limbs and it will still stay alive even without nutrition for minutes and longer because it says, well, you know, surely it's going to come back. I mean, in a sense, it doesn't give up hope, but there is a, and this is a, an issue for medical facilities that handle organ donations and things like that, because you want to block the transmission of this cascade signal to the body so that organs remain viable, flatline brain, maybe there it's on a heart lung machine or whatever, but you don't want the body to know it's dead because once that cascade signal is sent, there's no coming back from that.

Everything shuts down and this is why CPR can no longer work. And once that signal is sent, it's, it's over. All of the cells say abandon ship and they quit and metabolism and everything else just ceases.

Well, that galvanizing signal that goes through changes the quality of the tissue in the body. It becomes something that is inevitably dead. When you finalize your decision that there is no God, there is in my estimation, by way of illustration, a similar sort of galvanic charge that goes through your soul and renders everything corrupt.

You're not capable of anything that isn't self-seeking, self-serving, that is not corrupt, useless at best, but is an abomination in God's sight. I've used the illustration before. If someone committed some horrific, I've, I've, I've thought about this.

I think the first time I saw something that really just repulsed me and, and sickened me that somebody did is, uh, I was in the fifth grade. I'd just gotten there, new school was Sequoia

down here. And, uh, everything is gone now, but there was a grade school building made of brick.

And a couple of the guys in my class that I was just learning names and so on was the first few weeks. It was still fall, but there was a pond out beside the school and there were frogs. Well, these guys found some large frogs at the edge of the pond and they went over to the, to the grade school building and they just threw these frogs against the brick to watch them splatter.

And I was just, I'm not very shockable. My dad was a Marine. I mean, I just, I'm not that shockable, but it was just so disgusting.

And that site and those two guys that did that, I never forgot it. And I went to school with them all the way through the 12th grade, but I never could trust those guys. There was just something incredibly mean in there that would make them do that and enjoy it.

Laugh about it. Go find more. Did you see that one? I mean, it was just, uh, grotesque.

Well, if one of those guys the next day came to me and gave me a new watch or did some kind of favor for me, I could not be pleased and impressed and overcome everything that I had seen, no matter what they did. They could do the nicest thing in the world. They could give me an expensive gift.

They could go out of their way to help me with a flat tire or whatever in, in later days. But, uh, I, I just, I could not find them acceptable because of some later action because of this previous insult. I'm bringing this up because if somebody, when God reveals himself and reveals his grace and salvation through his son in this age, and you say, I don't even think there is a God.

And that way I don't have to answer any of these questions. I don't have to be responsible for my sin because there's no such thing as sin, because there's no such thing as God. If there's no God, there's no absolute righteousness and I'm not on the hook for anything I do.

I have excused myself from judgment. I've excused myself from accountability. I've excused myself from responsibility.

Well, nothing that you do in that status can possibly be anything but an abomination in God's eyes. You are a quality of person that spoils anything you do. However good you think it is, or however good other people think it is, that shock sense signal has gone through and corrupted and spoiled everything.

This is category nabal. It is not all of the human race. Three other categories of people are not in this, right? Believers can, can put themselves in this category, but they're not there by default.

These people, once they make this no God decision, they are corrupt. They do abominable works. There is none who does good.

You can't find any good in these people because it's spoiled at the source. It's water from a bitter spring. It doesn't matter how much it is or how good it looks.

It's brackish water. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men. Now, verse two, the Lord looks down from heaven.

And what's he looking at? Is he looking at category nabal? Yes, but he's also looking at the other three categories. The Lord looks down upon quote, or parentheses here, all the children of men. And what is he looking for? When he looks down from heaven on the children of men, what is he looking for? He is looking to see if there are any who understand, if there are any who seek God.

Now, in looking in the entire world full of the children of men, does God look for and find those who are seeking him? Yes or no? Yes, he does. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. Seek him early.

Call upon him while he is near. We are enjoined. We are exhorted.

We are encouraged to seek the Lord. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things are added to you. God looks down upon the children of men and he sees a lot of people who are seeking him.

He looks to see if there are any who understand, if there are any who seek God. And there are those who understand. You are some of those who understand.

You are some of those who seek God or you wouldn't be sitting here listening. But they, and who is they? Category nabal. In the category nabal, they have all turned aside.

They have together become corrupt. None who does good, no not one. In that one of four categories.

It is not true that there is no human being that does good, no not one. It is not true that there is none who seek God. It is only true in category nabal.

You see why it's important to get these categories straight? Now, keep your finger here because this completes the description. Now David's going to ask a question in the next verse. But turn back to Romans chapter three because Paul makes this exact same distinction.

Start at the beginning of the chapter. What advantage then has the Jew? I wish we could read the first two chapters but we can't. What advantage has the Jew? What is the profit of circumcision? So he says, look, you've got Jews and Gentiles in the old economy.

Much in every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. Romans 3.3. What if some did not believe? Now we're taking category Israel, category Jew, and we're splitting it into two parts. Are you with me? Some did not believe.

Here's the people of Israel. To them were committed the oracles of God. So now they've got a choice.

Am I going to trust in these oracles and live my life in their light or not? Some did not believe. I've got two different kinds of Jews. Will their unbelief, the unbelief of this portion, make the faithfulness of God without effect? Now would anybody argue that no Israelites believed God's word? David didn't.

Daniel didn't. Moses didn't. I mean, it's absurd.

But he says, will their unbelief, so they, unbelievers in Israel, are those who have received the oracles of God and have set them aside. They don't make them the object of their faith. Will that nullify the effectiveness or the faithfulness of God? Certainly not.

Indeed, God is true, even if every man's a liar. It is written that you may be justified in your word, overcome when you're judged. But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Now Paul is advancing forward.

Follow the argument here. If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what is the unrighteousness he's talking about? People who are in Israel, i.e., they are sanctified, blood of the Passover lamb, baptized with Moses across the sea, and all the rest of it. But their unrighteousness is rejection of the word of God.

The oracles that were committed to them, they did not make them the object of faith. Remember in Hebrews, the promises of God were not mixed with faith in them that heard them, and they fell in the wilderness. They're not unsaved.

They're unsuccessful. They're unrewarded. They don't lose their salvation.

They were under the blood of the Passover lamb. They were baptized with Moses in the sea. They were fed with manna for 40 years.

They were in the wilderness, and God sustained them and fulfilled His covenant with them. He had a covenant with them. All that the Lord has said we will do at Sinai, this is failure of believers.

If our unrighteousness, the failure of believers, demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust? Certainly not, verse 6. But if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I still judged as a sinner? Without getting into the complexities of this, what he's saying is God has worked these failures together. The scripture has concluded all under sin. He says, look, here's my point.

If my people can't be faithful and be righteous, if even doing the works of the law they still fall short, what about you people that aren't even in the fold? You need something more. That's how the scripture concludes all under sin. The scripture that he's talking about is the Old

Testament scripture.

The law, the prophets, the writings says everybody is incapable of climbing the Tower of Babel and getting themselves into God's presence. My people can't do it and I gave them the law. So what then, verse 9, are we better? Not at all.

We have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin, all susceptible to sin, all incapable of escaping sin. Whether unbelievers or believers, whether Jew or Gentile, nobody can escape the pull of sin. As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.

There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside.

They have together become unprofitable. There is none who does good, no, not one. That's verses 10 through 12, and that's drawn from Psalm 14.

Who is he talking about? Go back to the context. Who proves the point in Israel that God is making, that the It's not Daniel. It's not Moses.

It's not Joshua. It's not the faithful believers. Go back to verse 3. What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God of no effect? Verse 5, our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, because it was in dealing with the unrighteousness, even of the faithful, in the law, sacrifice is required.

You've got to be sanctified. Nothing is sanctified without blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin, even among the faithful.

But the unrighteousness makes a point. But he is talking here about those who did not believe. They have become unprofitable.

There is none who does good, no, not one. That's the one-fourth. That is those who reject the word of God, who reject the presence of God, who reject the existence of God.

So Paul isn't saying everybody is under this description, just like David isn't saying it. Now, why does that matter? Back to Psalm 14. And by the way, we have, if you turn over several pages to Psalm 53, keep your finger in Psalm 14 and turn to Psalm 53.

This is my third passage. I said there would be two others outside of our primary. This is the third.

Psalm 53. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt.

They have done abominable iniquity. There is none who does good. God looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

Every one of them has turned aside. They have together become corrupt. None who does good, no, not one.

Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God? It's all virtually word for word through the end of verse four. Then in verse five, it changes. There they are in great fear, where no fear was, for God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you.

You have put them to shame because God has despised them. That's all completely different from verse five in Psalm 14. Then it ends the same.

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion. God brings back the captivity of his people that Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad. So, it's a duplicate.

And remember at the beginning, our introduction to Psalms, I mentioned that there are five different books within the Psalms. And notice that Psalm 53 is in book two. And it's one of the arguments that these collections may have circulated separately.

And this hymn was in both books. It tells you how important this information is that it's not just in one of the hymnals that were collected together in volumes one through five in a single volume. That's what they did with Dr. Criswell's revelation commentary.

They published it as separate volumes as he finished each one. And then you could get the single compendium five volumes in one. Well, that's what Psalms is.

It's five volumes in one. This song was included with modifications in two of those five volumes. So, is it important? Yes.

Why is it important? That's what we're looking at. So, first of all, it helps us in viewing the human race. It is helpful to know what the expectation is.

If you're dealing with somebody who is an avowed atheist, no good is going to come of that. Their work is tainted. Their thoughts are corrupt.

They have had that spiritual death transmission cascade transmitted through their system, and no good will come of contact with that. You can't preach them out of it. You can't argue them out of it.

You can't example them out of it. You're not going to benefit by any association or contact with them in business, in social affairs, in work. You have got to be on your guard, because what do these people do? Look at the next verse, verse four.

Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge who eat up my people as they eat bread. Notice within the song, you've got an explicit reference to a different category of people. If everybody is a fool, and if everybody says there's no God, and if everybody's corrupt and can't do any good, who are my people? And why are they eating them instead of each other? Remember Paul said, be careful that you don't bite and devour one another, that you're not consumed? Well, this is two different categories of people.

And category fool eats up my people like bread. It is not going to be profitable to associate with or rely upon these corrupt folks. And the question is, have they no knowledge? The answer is, of course they have no knowledge.

They have rejected the only source of true knowledge. They have rejected wisdom. And you got to put nuclear hazard tape around category fool when you encounter them, near or far.

Now we come to, and they do not call on the Lord. They eat up my people as bread and do not call on the Lord. Now, what if somebody does call on the Lord? Not in this category.

There are people who do call upon the Lord. There are those who are my people, right? So there is a distinction. These descriptions do not apply to them.

Now we come to verse 5, and I'm going to suggest to you a slight change here, and I'm not going to agonize through the Hebrew that informs it. I'm just going to say that by misreading the gap between the parts of a consonant, the difference between a hay and a taith, it's a little tiny gap. It's about the size of a tittle.

And if you're reading hastily, you change a word or you change the form of the word to mean something different. But let me just give you a suggested translation here for verse 5 that respects the Hebrew prosody, the poetry here. And this is going to be verse 5 and verse 6. So my suggested emendation, and this is actually somebody else's work, and I think they're right.

They say now it is a bit, they say a possible solution, though fairly radical. But in my, for what it's worth, my experience, I think this is what happened. What it should read, and you can write this in the margin as a possibility, is we started in verse 4, and you can see even in your New King James there's a little space there between verse 3 and verse 4, because this is kind of like the second stanza.

First thing is all about the description of the fool. Second one is their interaction with my people and with those who call on the Lord. They have no knowledge, who eat of my people as bread and do not call on the Lord.

Then in verse 5 it says, there they are in great fear. You don't know who the they is, but by fixing this little gap in the consonant, it becomes, there they caused great fear. There they caused great fear, but God is in the assembly of the righteous.

You've got this situation. There's fear being caused by these who eat of my people. You can imagine, you know, if there's a case of flesh-eating bacteria in your periphery, are you going to be afraid? Is it going to create great fear? Are you going to start figuring out, you know, how do I keep from catching this? Same thing.

They cause great fear. What is the antidote to that fear? God is in the assembly of the righteous. God is in the assembly of the righteous.

Now, second line, verse 6, it says, you shame the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge. Well, again, a slight misreading of the continental text. I think, I agree with this.

I think what it should say is, the counsel of the poor, they insulted. They shamed. This word translated, you shame the counsel.

It should be, they shamed. But the word, the root of this word is bush, B-U-S-H. This is where we get the word bosh and bosheth.

Those of you that have been listening through the newly digitized 2 Samuel, we're talking about Ish-baal, who is referred to in scripture as Ish-bosheth, right? So this is from that word that means, it's a very interesting word, the word for shame. And it has the idea of to insult, to belittle, to treat as nonsense, to treat as worthless. You think about the way people talk today in political circles and just grossly insulting, perverse, bilious, bitter, hateful.

And somebody does something good and noble, they impugn the motives. Well, he's just, you know, they read their motivation into this person. This is what it means.

So you impute nonsensicality to the counsel of the poor. And it says, but the Lord is his refuge. The conjunction here in the middle of this is not really an adversative, it's not a wow.

This is key, which is normally translated for or because. You shame his plan, his method of operation. Counsel here means, when you get together and form a plan of action, you say, here's what I'm going to do.

Remember in Psalm 13, verse 2, how long shall I have to rationalize in my soul? How long am I going to have to work through with my existing tool bag this situation? Lord, when are you going to appear and resolve this? How long do I have to keep making application? It's the same word for counsel. Well, the fool shames, he vilifies and makes sport of, makes fun of the counsel of the poor because God is his refuge. What's the connection? What's the first description of nabal? There's no God.

You're ultimately stupid. You're relying on your imaginary friend. You need a crutch.

You're weak. You don't have the tools to cope with reality as it is. You're like they mock Jesus on the cross.

Let him deliver him if he delights in him. He says God is his father, where's his father now? And they were mocking Jesus on the cross when he is in the middle of fulfilling the central part of God's plan and purpose in the whole human race. And they're mocking it.

They're imputing shame and disgrace to it. So that's the idea here. These workers of iniquity have no knowledge who consume my people like they eat bread.

And they are in fact consuming them. It seems as though the righteous are perishing and the wicked are prospering and they're getting over. And people who cheat and who shortcut and

who have no integrity are getting over.

And those who place their faith in God and say I'm going to do things right because they're right. Not necessarily that I'm going to get a better result. I probably won't in this world.

But I'm going to do things because I believe in God. There is no God. You're an idiot is the idea here.

So they cause fear. They say you know what's going to happen to you. You're going to be out there with nothing.

Your kids are going to starve. You're going to be a big drain on us because you're not participating in the system. You're not going with the human plan here.

You're trusting your God. And so they try to create fear and doubt that that you're making a huge idiotic mistake by following your Christian faith. And they repudiate and they impugn your counsels because God is your refuge.

Now this word for refuge there are a lot of words in the Bible for refuge in the Old Testament. This particular one I wish I could review them all. If I was Glenn Carnegie I would and we'd be here on Psalm 14 till like two months from now.

But let me just tell you what this word means. Remember cities of refuge? If you accidentally kill someone you flee to the city. So this is not that word.

That's getting behind a shield so that somebody doesn't get you. That's a different word. This word is really great.

It means it's used of a tower or a fortress or a rock. And let me just give you little snippets here to go real quickly. It's used a lot in the Psalms as you might imagine.

A lot of people have memorized Psalm 46.1. God is our refuge and strength our ever-present help in time of trouble. Well refuge and strength are synonymous there and it's our word. This is makseh.

M-A-C-H-S-E-H. Makseh. It even sounds strong.

This is not so much a refuge in the sense of a defense or getting down in a fighting hole or behind a bunch of sandbags. This is fortress refuge. I am impregnable.

I am up. This is used in Psalm 61 verse 3. You have been talking to God. You have been a refuge for me, a tower.

This is a big stone impregnable fortification. This is what the people in Jericho thought nobody could be. This is like the Titanic they thought nobody could sink.

And if it's God they're right. He is an impregnable fortress. But this is the strong word.

And so when it says here and I could give you many others. Do a concordance study on makseh. Just find the word.

Get the Strong's number or something and look them up. It's all through the scriptures. It's synonymous Psalm 62 verse 7. God is the rock of my strength and my refuge.

This is taking refuge in a position of power and impregnable strength. Well to us that's what our counsel is. That's where our position is in God.

We say well God's got it. You know if God before us who can be against us. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.

I am set. God is on my side here and there's no bigger better fortress than Psalm 91. The one who dwells in the secret place of the most high, abides in the shadow of the almighty.

He is my refuge, my fortress, my rock. In him will I trust. I'm under his wings.

Nothing can get me here. Well what we see as strength and impregnability the fool says is mockable, is ridiculous. They ridicule because God is his refuge.

Now verse 7 and it says oh that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion. And it sounds like oh that the pie would come out of the sky by and by you know. And that's not really what it says in Hebrew.

Although they say well it is a figure of speech but the literal Hebrew here is who will come out of Zion. Remember he is she and me is who. Well this starts out with me, am I, who.

And it literally says who will give. This is from Natan, Nathan. But Natan the Hebrew verb means to give.

So me yatein, me Natan, who will give out of Zion, who will give from Zion Yeshuat. Who will give Yeshuat of Yisrael. Then it says when the Lord Yahweh b'shuv Shabuth.

And this is a verb and it's cognate. Anytime you want to strengthen something, you know dying, you will die a death. When earlier when it said they have caused a great fear.

It says they have caused them to fear a great fear. It actually says they have caused them to fear a fear. And they put great in there because when you put the verb and the cognate accusative noun it means this is big.

They have feared a fear. Well they have great fear. Here it says when God brings back the bring back of his people.

This is both from shuv. And so to answer the question about the captivity, this doesn't mean captivity. This was a mistranslation based on a misunderstanding of the word.

They associate it with Shabbat which has to do with captivity. But this is shuv and the cognate

accusative noun from shuv. And shuv means to turn around, to return, to come back.

So who will give deliverance from Zion to Israel when the Lord turns around the fortunes. The noun from shuv means you know people talk about their fortunes in the sense that I suddenly got lucky or I suddenly had good fortune or I suddenly had bad fortune. But it always means I was going along and then something changed either for the better or for the worse.

Well shuv means to bring about a change, a change in direction. It's even associated with repentance from time to time. You know, come back, why will you die oh house of Israel type of idea.

So who will give deliverance from Zion when God changes and turns around his people, what's happening to his people. Right now they're being eaten like bread by these nabal types. And why does he ask the question, who will turn it around? What did he just say in the preceding section here? The generation of the righteous recognizes that God is in their midst.

The poor take refuge in a tower of strength in God and they look to the one who will eventually reverse these fortunes. And they may have to be patient. We've seen the patience again in that second Samuel study.

Saul gets anointed as king and you know a few weeks later he's acting as king, fighting battles, leading armies, going after Nahash and the rest of it. David gets anointed and it takes three different anointings before he's finally on the throne of all Israel. He's anointed in the presence of his brethren and then nothing happens and he does Goliath and he plays the harp or the lyre actually.

And then he's off and he's being chased. It's years, years, years. He's the anointed king of Israel and everything seems to go against him.

He's being chased. The priest at Nabal gets slain on his account and he's like, oh my gosh, I make one little slip. I go to a place and get some help and of course his big mistake there wasn't eating the bread, it was picking up the sword.

Remember he does two things in Nab. And Jesus says the bread thing was okay, just like it's okay for my disciples to eat the heads of these grain. Jesus did not say it was okay for him to take.

He says, have you got any weapons here? And the priest says, all I've got is the sword of Goliath. And David says, give me that. It's symbolic.

Think about it. You're going to take up the sword of Goliath? How helpful was his sword? He got his own head cut off with that thing. But David takes that because he's running away and he's relying on human strength.

He hasn't appealed to the Lord. It's going to be a while before he starts inquiring of the Lord.

During this interim time when we're getting flack and the fool seems to be getting over and we say, who? It's just like in the last one.

How long, Lord? Remember these things are coming in pairs. And so you've got Psalm 13 and Psalm 14 together. At the beginning, he says, how long? In 13.

At the end of 14, he says, who is going to do this? Well, it's the Lord. But he's asking the question, you know, if you've already got a volunteer picked out and you say, who's going to fill up the water bucket for me? And somebody's looking right at you. Well, this is an appeal on the part of David.

And he says, who, looking skyward, is going to bring deliverance out of Zion? Who's the only one in Zion who can bring Yeshua out? It's the Lord. So it's a rhetorical question. Hey, you poor people, God is in your midst and you've made him your refuge.

So who's going to bring deliverance? That one. So it ends on a really positive note here, just as Psalm 13 did. You remember it moved from questioning and frustration to stability and finally to a calm confidence.

And 14 does the same thing, but it looks at a more universal picture. You can be looking at your immediate circumstances in 13, you look at the world in 14, and you recognize that God has a purpose in letting these raisins wrinkle up in the sun, that he's leaving them there for a reason. They're making a point.

And we have to have confidence through that. So it's a wonderful song. It, as I say, was repeated in the second book in Psalm 53.

There is a change in verse five, and I'm still investigating that. And if I think it's worthwhile, we'll talk about it a little next time. Otherwise, we'll move on to Psalm 15, which is a fresh question.

Who may abide in your tent? And it's good diversion after 13 and 14 because you're looking at the seeming success of the wicked. This is David turning his attention to something fresh. You know, when you're trying to break a bad habit, you can't just keep thinking about, you know, don't smoke, don't smoke, don't smoke.

Or, you know, I'm not going to be impatient. I'm not going to be impatient. I wish I could get over this impatience problem.

You know, you have to substitute. You have to turn your mind to something else. You know, Kojak used a lollipop so he wouldn't smoke.

But you've got to find something else to occupy your mind. You can't just be sitting there saying, I won't, I won't, I won't. You've got to say, I will.

And that's where Psalm 15 is going to take us next time. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word and for preserving these wonderful

thoughts from your servant David, a man after your own heart, who learned obedience through the things that he suffered, even as his greater son, the Lord Jesus, did in his time on this earth.

Both of them are wonderful examples for us, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts, help us see their pertinence and application in our own circumstances, strengthen us, keep us, help us to remember that we are in the strong tower, and there is nothing that can remove us from your strength and from your care and from your perfect plan for our lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.