

This psalm of David is one of the most famous of all of his psalms. In fact, certain verses from this psalm are used in different passages of Scripture. From David's perspective this psalm is very personal. From Israel's perspective this psalm is very prophetic. From Paul's perspective this psalm is very practical.

When we read Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 they appear to be almost identical. But John Phillips points out they are not identical and there are a few differences (*Psalms*, p. 107). He says:

- 1) Psalm 14 is personal and Psalm 53 is private.
- 2) Psalm 14 is pragmatic and Psalm 53 is prophetic.
- 3) Psalm 14 is about the past and Psalm 53 is about the future

Although there may be some truth to his observations, Psalm 14 is very important.

The Apostle Paul used this very psalm in his development of the grace Gospel in the book of Romans. In Romans 3:10-12, Paul quotes this very psalm to prove that all are sinful and depraved and guilty in the sight of God and need to believe totally and only in Jesus Christ to be saved. The Apostle Paul makes this psalm practical to every human, whether Jew or Gentile, whether male or female, whether adult or child.

However, when David wrote this psalm, he did not write it with Paul's Gospel in view. He wrote it in the midst of a real historical background and he wrote it in view of the nation Israel.

As we glance down through the psalm, there are certain observations we may make:

1. The primary time period when this psalm becomes extremely applicable is when many people are atheistic and extremely corrupt. **14:1**
2. The primary time period when this psalm becomes extremely applicable is when God's people, especially Israel, are being eaten alive. **14:4**
3. The primary time period when this psalm becomes extremely applicable is just prior to Israel being restored and just prior to Israel rejoicing, when she longs for deliverance from God in Zion. **14:7**

Based on these observations, we agree with Dr. Merrill Unger who says this psalm "reflects the moral conditions that will prevail at the time of Israel's great trouble before restoration to Kingdom blessing" (Vol. 1, p. 762). **This psalm specifically describes what the world will be like during the Great Tribulation, just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ to reign as King of Israel.**

There is a theme that we do see in this psalm:

**UNTIL JESUS CHRIST REIGNS IN THIS WORLD, GOD WILL BE DENIED AND REJECTED AND WICKEDNESS WILL DOMINATE AND GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE PERSECUTED.**

David saw a depraved world in desperate need of a reigning, righteous Messiah. As we near the end of the Church Age, this reality will become more and more evident. As we near the moment when God's program will swing back to Israel, we will see an escalation of these very characteristics.

Let us observe from the superscription that this psalm was written by David for the choir director. What this means is that these truths, many of which are negative, were to be presented at worship services. We tend to be living in a time when many want a worship service that makes everyone feel good about themselves.

Godless people should not ever feel good about themselves when they go to a place that truly worships God. They should see themselves honestly, they should see their depravity, they should admit their sin and evil and then respond to God's amazing grace.

Now there are three main parts to this psalm:

**PART #1** – David presents a portrait of a fool. **14:1-6**

The word “fool” in Hebrew is not one that refers to a person who cannot think. In fact this word refers more to a person's character than it does to his comprehension. This particular word “nabal” is one that refers to someone God considers to be stupid or foolish or out of their minds because he is impious and has despised and abandoned the things of God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 529).

A fool is one who has deliberately closed his mind and heart to the true Word and will of God. He is blinded by worldliness, he seeks after vice and lives a life that is lawless and self-centered. **What makes this person so foolish is that this mindset and lifestyle does have eternal ramifications.**

In this context, there are six traits brought out about a fool:

**Trait #1** - The fool says in his heart there is no God. **14:1a**

Now the first thing to observe is that God does classify people as fools and so should we. J. Vernon McGee said that he had a friend who had been quite successful in dealing with atheists. He said one day his friend was with a group of men and an atheist said, “I don't believe there is a God. Man doesn't have a soul, and when he dies, he dies like a dog.” He then proceeded to go on raving like a madman. When Dr. McGee's friend had an opportunity, he approached the man and said, “I understand you said you are an atheist.” Immediately the man launched into a tirade about his belief there was no God. Dr. McGee's friend said, “I would like to ask you a question. The Bible says that a fool has said in his heart there is no God. The word fool means insane or mad. Either you were not sincere when you talked about God as you did or you are a fool and a madman. I would like to know which one it is.” The man turned and walked away.

**Now carefully observe a critical point; a fool does not necessarily say in public that there is no God; he says it in his heart.** Fools are good at playing religion. They can give the impression that they really believe in God and are in touch with God when in all reality they deny Him and His Word in their hearts.

One theologian used to say you may be certain “there are many atheists on earth, but there are none in hell.”

Now what makes an atheist such a fool is that he denies:

- 1) The external realities of God—God’s existence is proved by all kinds of external realities such as creation—Romans 1:20;
- 2) The internal realization of God—God has put intuitive knowledge in every human—Rom. 1:19;
- 3) The written revelation of God—which reveals truth about God in writing.

To deny these things does make one a fool.

**Trait #2** - The fool is corrupt and does abominable things. **14:1b**

The fool does not give any thought to the Word or will of God; he only does and says and thinks what he wants. His life is filled with things God classifies as abominable and he is completely given over to godless immorality.

Look at our present political leaders. Many of them are promoting homosexuality and saying it is okay. This will bring the judgment of God to our country. This is an abomination to God and it will bring His wrath. But leaders are so corrupt they promote that which is of a fool.

**Trait #3** - The fool bands together with other fools. **14:3**

All fools have a common denominator; they hang out with other corrupt fools. They all turn aside from the Word and will of God and they form a special bond which is glued together by their godless corruption. Fools tend to flock together with other fools who love the same filth. Drunks love other drunks. Drug addicts love other drug addicts. Sex perverts love other sex perverts. False religions lure people of like mind to their religion.

People who are not right with God have good camaraderie with others who are not right with God. They have all turned aside from God and His Word and they form their friendships on that basis.

This is why atheists band together; homosexuals and lesbians band together. Criminals band together. That is what fools do. They stick together.

**Trait #4** - The fool devours God's faithful people. **14:4a**

Fools are workers of wickedness and one of the wicked things a fool does is to attempt to devour the people of God. Fools convince themselves that they are calling the shots and are unaccountable to anybody. They mistreat God's faithful servants, thinking they are getting away with their evil.

When Jesus was here, he predicted that this is a Christ-hating, saint-devouring world (John 15:18). If you are a believer, you will be hated by many people for that very reason.

But here is the reality of this. Devouring God's people may appear to be a great sport, but it is in all reality suicidal. God will not ever permit His people to be persecuted for very long.

**Trait #5** - The fool will not pray. **14:4b**

No fool will ever humble himself and cry out to God for salvation or for help. This by the way is the only way out of the foolish status—cry out to God. Fools are not about to do that.

**Trait #6** - The fool will put to shame the counsel of the afflicted. **14:6**

The fools try to mock, scoff at and shame the true words of those who love God. A fool tries to disregard the Word of God. When you tell a fool "this says the Lord," they will respond "that is just your opinion." When you tell a fool the Bible is inspired by God, he will respond that it is just another book written by men.

But what the fool does not realize is that God is always the refuge of His people. When God's people are presenting His truth and His counsel, He is carefully watching over them. It is not the afflicted who will end up being ashamed; it is the fool.

**PART #2** – David presents God's perspective of the fool. **14:2-5**

In contrast to the "fool" of **verse 1**, we meet the LORD (Jehovah) in **verse 2**. God's perspective is entirely different from the fool's perspective. God is looking and watching and He does see. God's perspective of a fool may be summed up in two assessments:

**Assessment #1** - All fools are depraved. **14:2-3**

Now we may observe from this psalm that God does see a group that He classifies as "the righteous generation" (**v. 5**).

When God looks at the world, He sees all under sin. The only people who are not viewed as being under sin are those He classifies as righteous. In this dispensation, the only one who would have this classification of being righteous would be one who believes in Jesus Christ.

When God says “there is no one who does good,” and when He says “they have all turned aside,” what He means is that this is His view of all humanity. **We may not all be atheists, but we are all sinners.**

Depravity does not mean that every person is as bad as he may be; it means that all are sinners in and of themselves and there is nothing they can do themselves to change their sin status. Men without Christ, who actually think God looks at them favorably, are fools. God sees every one of them. They have all turned away from Him and not one of them is good in His estimation. They are all depraved.

**Assessment #2** - All fools are doomed. **14:5**

Fools should be living life in dread that they are going to face an angry God who will be against them and they will be doomed. Their atheistic heart and their mistreatment of the righteous is something God takes note of and He will bring every fool to eternal shame and damnation. The fool's only hope is to change their thinking and turn to God.

**PART #3** – David presents the promise of promotion for God's people. **14:7**

Deliverance will come for God's people and it will come out of Zion, which is Jerusalem. When that happens there will be restoration and rejoicing. The Tribulation will be an unparalleled period of persecution against Israel. However, Jesus Christ will return and He will restore and He will reign. Israel will one day rejoice and be glad.

**The ultimate cure for atheism will be the coming of Jesus Christ.**

**PRACTICAL THOUGHTS:**

1. Fools are real—they have corrupt hearts and lives and they hate God's people who present truth.
2. God is a refuge for His people being demeaned and persecuted by fools.
3. God will eventually bring a fool to ruin—God watches; God waits; God judges.
4. God will eventually bring the righteous to rejoicing.