

Psalm 53 is almost an identical repetition of Psalm 14, but there are three noteworthy differences:

1. In Psalm 14 the name of God (Elohim) shows up three times and the name LORD (Jehovah) shows up four times. There are a total of seven names for God used in this Psalm and both names would indicate that Gentile and Jewish atheism is the subject.

In Psalm 53 the name God (Elohim) shows up seven times, seemingly suggestion that Gentile atheism, rather than Jewish atheism is the subject of Psalm 53.

2. In Psalm 14 the superscription is “for the choir director, A Psalm of David.”

In Psalm 53 the superscription is “for the choir director; according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David.”

The Hebrew word “mahalath” is related to one that refers to a soothing sound as a harp. This word is specifically used to soothe one who is hurting or sick (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 464).

A “maskil” means this is to be carefully studied because instruction in this Psalm can bring one to great happiness and blessing.

3. In Psalm 14:5-6 the emphasis is on God protecting the righteous who are attacked by the wicked.

In Psalm 53:5 the emphasis is on God destroying the wicked that are attacking the righteous.

Now the primary point of this Psalm is this:

**GOD’S PEOPLE CAN FIND GREAT COMFORTING JOY WHEN THEY ARE HURTING BECAUSE OF ATTACKS OF GODLESS ATHEISTS, KNOWING THAT GOD WILL PUNISH THE GODLESS AND DELIVER THE RIGHTEOUS.**

This is a Psalm of wonderful hope in the midst of a God-rejecting, God-mocking world. Israel lived and still does live in a world in which she is dominated by foreign godless nations. In fact, this Psalm will become very applicable during the Tribulation when the Antichrist, the ultimate atheist is ruling the world and trying to destroy Israel.

Now there are three main parts to this Psalm:

**PART #1** – The description of a fool.

Let us remind ourselves again that the noun “fool” does not refer to one who is incapable of learning. The word refers to one who has lost strong coloring, who is withered and faded (*Ibid.*, p. 528).

The fool is a person who has heard truth, but does not have a good color when it comes to living truth. He may be very religious, but he is also very foolish.

Now there are seven qualities in this Psalm that describe a fool:

**(Quality #1)** - The fool says in his heart there is no God. **53:1a**

Now do not overlook the fact that the fool does not necessarily say there is no God by his mouth, he says it in his heart. By using the noun for God, “Elohim,” the text suggests that a fool denies the existence of the sovereign, majestic God who is the Creator. The fool becomes his own “god” and elevates himself to being God.

Some man whom I will not name just sent me a copy of his book and in the book he says this: “Our ultimate destiny is to be gods...”. Now this is another form of foolishness. This person does not deny the existence of God, but he elevates sinful man to the same level as God. He is a fool.

**(Quality #2)** - The fool is corrupt. **53:1b**

The word “corrupt” means that behind the scenes fools are sunk down into that which is sinful and evil. A fool does not submit himself to righteousness, but to that which is corrupt (*Ibid.*, p. 814).

**(Quality #3)** - The fool has committed abominable injustice. **53:1c**

The fool has done things and said things that are unjust abominations in the sight of God. We are presently seeing this kind of thing taking place in the state of Michigan with certain judges who are suggesting that abominable things are right. Our state and country are being led by a bunch of fools.

**(Quality #4)** - The fool does not do good. **53:1d**

What this means is nothing a fool does is viewed by God as good even if the fool does what society says is good.

**(Quality #5)** - The fool has turned aside. **53:3a**

The fool turns aside from any path of wisdom or righteousness.

**(Quality #6)** - The fool joins with others who are collectively corrupt. **53:3b**

It is totally amazing that those the Bible classifies as fools form a collective bond. Atheists, Agnostics, Homosexuals, Lesbians all form into groups. Then there are cultish religions such as Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, Muslims who all believe they are above the God of the Bible. Collective fools is what they all are.

**(Quality #7)** - The fool attacks faithful people of God. **53:4b**

Notice the target of the fool—the faithful people of God. Fools attack, destroy and eat up God's faithful people who love Him and His Word.

These are seven qualities of one who has faded and is foolish in the sight of God.

**PART #2** – The perception of God of the lost fool.

According to **verse 2**, God looks down from His high, holy heaven at puny, sinful man. Who thinks he is so important.

Now the term “sons of men” (**v. 2**) refer to those who are unsaved. This term specifically describes people who will be in the Tribulation. However, it also describes us prior to God saving us.

**(Perspective #1)** - No unsaved person understands the ways of God. **53:2b**

The idea here is that God looks down from heaven to see if any man understands and no one does. That word “understand” is one that means to look at something, to understand it and to turn one's mind toward something (*Ibid.*, p. 790). In this case, the idea would be that God looked to see if any man naturally turned his mind toward God. God described what He saw in **Genesis 6:5** - “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth **and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**”

**(Perspective #2)** - No unsaved person seeks after God. **53:2c**

The truth is humans, by their own nature, will seek anything but God and the truth is at times so do we. F. B. Meyer said many people will look at a nation like Russia and say how sad that this nation is filled with poor atheists. But what they don't realize is that many people in our own country are practical atheists, living as if there is no God. They don't care about God, His Word or His work.

Now the word “seek” means to seek something aggressively. In fact, it presents the idea of doing such an intense search for something that a path is trampled down (*Ibid.*, p. 209). The point is no unsaved person on his own will ever trample down a path seeking after God.

**(Perspective #3)** - Every unsaved person has turned aside to his own way. **53:3a**

Godless people are not interested in God's way; they are interested in their own way. Godless people don't care about God's way.

**(Perspective #4)** - No unsaved person does good in God's sight. **53:3b**

Any act, even what society would deem as a righteous act, is nothing but filthy rags in the sight of God. From God's perspective, no unsaved person does anything that is good from God's moral, spiritual and ethical analysis.

**(Perspective #5)** - No unsaved person realizes that he is attacking God's people and heading to judgment . **53:4**

Godless people think nothing of attacking Godly, faithful people.

**(Perspective #6)** - Every unsaved person will be brought to the place of great fear when he faces the God who will reject him. **53:5**

Deep in the minds and hearts of those who are lost is the awareness that the clock is ticking and I am going to face God. It is so ironic but there will come a day when they will fear the God they denounced.

Herbert Lockyer researched many of the final words that were said by those who had lived their lives as an atheist or agnostic.

He wrote this: "Infidels and agnostics are usually cowards when the death dew lies cold on their brow. Unprepared to enter eternity, they lose their braggadocio as its gates open to receive them. What fear grips their hearts and how pathetic and hopeless their last words are! The only Light that could have shone through the gloom of death and pointed them to the skies was rejected, and they die, even as they lived, without God and therefore without hope."

For example, one of the most celebrated authors was Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) who wrote the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. This is one the great historical works ever written. But Gibbon was a God-mocker and his final words were these: "This day may be my last. I will agree that the immortality of the soul is at times a very comfortable doctrine. All this is now lost, finally, irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful" (Herbert Lockyer, *Last Words of Saints and Sinners*, pp. 130-131).

**PART #3** – The anticipation for Israel. **53:6**

Israel needs to realize deliverance will eventually come to a world of Israel-haters and God-mockers.

God will one day reverse everything and Israel will be saved. Jacob, who is Israel, can be glad and rejoice for the future is bright.

By the way, this is one of the great defenses against atheism—explain Israel. Explain Israel's existence.