

Sovereignty over Sin

Psalm 53: 1-6

The psalm we have read today is very similar to Psalm 14, with only minor differences in the wording. Although we can't know for certain, many think David wrote Psalm 14 regarding the past history of Israel – the time in Noah's day, possibly during the rebellion and iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, or even the wickedness of Pharaoh and Egypt during the time of Moses and the Exodus. Others believe David wrote about personal experiences, possibly in regard to Saul or Nabal.

One major difference in the two psalms is the choice of wording regarding the name of the Lord. Clearly David penned these words guided by the Spirit, and Psalm 53 speaks of God, *Elohim*; whereas Psalm 14 speaks of the LORD, *Jehovah*. It has been noted that in the first book of psalms, Psalm 1-41, Jehovah is the name primarily used for God. In the second book of the psalms, Psalm 42-72, Elohim is the prominent name used for God.

It is also suggested that Psalm 14, a Psalm of David set to music, was later pulled out by the musicians and set to a different tune in Psalm 53. Many scholars suggest this was likely done as Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was encamped against Jerusalem during the reign of king Hezekiah. Regardless of the setting, the truths it reveals never change. Mankind is capable of all manner of wickedness, and God is sovereign over men, caring for His people.

As we examine the [certainties](#) of this psalm, I want to consider: [Sovereignty over Sin](#).

I. The Depravity of the Sinful (1-5) – The majority of the psalm deals with the utter depravity of the sinful and wicked. It reveals:

A. Their Rejection (1a) – [The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God](#). Whether considering those of the past or people within his day, David contemplated those who denied the very existence of God. Had he thought of the days of Noah and the great flood, the wrathful destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the events surrounding the Exodus, either event would have revealed the awesome power of God within the lives of humanity and within nature itself. His generation had experienced the mighty hand and provision of God enough to prove His existence as well. Yet there were many who denied the existence of God.

- Our world is filled with those who embrace this attitude. They refuse to acknowledge that God does in fact exist. They view Him as nothing more than a myth or legend passed down through the generations by weak and ignorant people. David described these as fools. "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.”ⁱ

B. Their Corruption (1b) – *Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.* David realized those who denied God were corrupt, engaging in abominable works, accomplishing nothing good or spiritually beneficial for themselves or those around them. The word corrupt speaks of the atmosphere present in Noah’s day. The thoughts of men were continually on evil, seeking any means necessary to fulfill their lustful desires.

- Sadly, we are experiencing an increase in such activity today as well. Many will stop at nothing to satisfy their lustful desires. There are no limits or restraint within society. We have created a culture that refuses to stand against anything for fear of offending or preventing someone from their desires, no matter how vile and corrupt they may be.

C. Their Identification (2) – *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.* The context of this statement reveals few desired the ways of God or sought Him in any way. As the Lord looked upon humanity, He saw an apathetic people who cared little, if any, for the Him. Would you not agree that our society has declined to such a state here in America as well? The majority today are unconcerned about the state of our world, with no desire to seek the Lord or please Him with the lives they live.

D. Their Multiplication (3) – *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* As David pondered the lives of men, he realized society as a whole had completely abandoned the Lord, seeking only to satisfy their sinful desires. They had become apostate before the Lord, refusing any measure of righteousness.

- We are not there yet, but we are getting perilously close. I am thankful for the remnant of believers within our society, but America is heading toward a wholesale apostate culture. We cannot abandon the ways and Word of God and expect a different outcome.

E. Their Incomprehension (4) – *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.* This refers to their lack of knowledge and understanding. They were so focused on their desires, fully determined to obtain them at any cost, that they failed to see the effects of their sinful ways. They had no moral compass and felt as if

they were accountable to no one. These denied God and refused to even consider His existence or judgment.

- I am getting to the point where nothing really surprises me anymore, but I do wonder what many are thinking, and often if they are thinking at all. Does the majority really believe there is no accountability? Do they think they can live as they please, with no regard for God or His demands, and never face their actions? As troubling as this may be, it is also tragic.
- [Who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.](#) Those whom David speaks of sought to consume and destroy any measure of resistance. They viewed those who followed the Lord as a threat to their indulgence. They would stop at nothing to promote their agenda and fulfill their lustful desires.
- You will have to agree that we too are experiencing such behavior on a larger scale today. There is a movement within America to silence the Christian voice and remove any hindrance to sinful indulgence. I fear the Bible believing, God honoring Christian will soon be pushed to the fringes of society, marginalized and isolated because of our stand.

F. Their Apprehension (5a) – [There were they in great fear, where no fear was.](#) David knew these were embraced and celebrated by the majority, but they were isolated from the Lord. They had never submitted to Him and had no relationship with the Lord. God will not honor sinfulness and utter wickedness. David knew they may have enjoyed a season of revelry and indulgence in this life, but they would all stand before God in judgment.

- As I consider the landscape in America today, I am saddened by what I see. Most have no desire for the Lord. They refuse to embrace the finished work of Christ as the means of salvation. Their focus and passion are pleasing the flesh. They live their lives, never knowing or experiencing the grace of God, and yet they will stand before Him in judgment.

G. Their Retribution (5b) – [for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.](#) The wicked may have believed they had overcome, gaining a position of prosperity and dominance, but God was aware of their deeds. Judgment would come from the Lord, and it would be severe.

- Believers are opposed and persecuted today, but the Lord is not unaware of their suffering. He will come again in power and great glory, judging sin and Satan. All the wicked will stand before the Lord and receive their just reward. I had rather suffer with my Lord now than to suffer apart from Him following the Judgment!

II. Deliverance from the Sinful (6) – While considering the depravity of mankind, David was not left without hope. While sin had ravaged the lives of many, the Lord remained sovereign. In Him there was hope. Consider:

A. The Desire (6a) – *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!* Regardless of the time period David was contemplating, we do know he lived prior to the coming of Christ. Although that event had yet to happen, David looked forward to the coming of Messiah with great anticipation. He knew the sovereign plan of God would never be derailed by the dictates of men.

- We too can rest with great anticipation. We live on the other side of the first advent; but prior to our Lord's ascension, He promised He would come again. We live in a world consumed with darkness, but hope remains. The wickedness of our day cannot prevent the return of Christ!

B. The Dependence (6b) – *When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.* David knew God had been faithful to His people throughout their history. If he spoke of the Exodus, he knew God had delivered them from bondage in Egypt. If through inspiration he spoke of the coming bondage in Babylon, he knew God would be faithful in restoring His people. David knew God would not ultimately forsake those who were His.

- God will restore Israel when He comes to establish His kingdom. We can rejoice in the sovereign power of God in relation to that event, but it has no personal implication for us. However, we can rejoice knowing that the Lord will preserve the saved. We may be forced to endure difficulty and trials, but we will prevail in Christ. All of the saved will be gathered into His presence as He returns for the church!

C. The Delight (6b) – *When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.* Those who served the Lord may have groaned under the adversity they faced at the hands of wicked men, but their adversity would not last forever. When God brought restoration, joy would return. They may endure a season of suffering, but God would carry them through and provide joy again!

- I don't know how dark this world may get. I believe we will face some difficult and trying days, but we must keep our focus on the Lord. It is always darkest just before the dawn. The difficulties and trials we may endure will not compare to the joys we will share in the presence of our Lord. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy is coming in the morning!

Conclusion: David dealt with great wickedness in his day, and that wickedness continues today. We are no longer a majority, but our Lord remains sovereign. He will provide for His own and He will also deal with the wicked. All have an appointment to stand before the Lord in judgment.

I am thankful to rest in the sovereign grace and power of the Lord. If you belong to Christ, you have nothing to fear. He will provide the strength and courage needed to endure. If you are yet unsaved, I urge you to come to Christ in repentance and faith today!

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Psalms I.