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Psalm 53

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 53.

Topics.

- There is none who seek after God, they have all become corrupt.
- Those who eat up God's people as bread, have no knowledge.
- There were they in great fear, where no fear was.
- God has despised and rejected them and put them to shame.
- God has scattered the bones of him that camps against thee.
- O' that salvation come out of Zion! When God restores his people.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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BOOK TWO (PSALM 42-72)

PSALM 53:1-3

To the Choirmaster: According to Mahalath. A Maskil of David.

There is None who Seek after God, they have all Become Corrupt.

- **Psalm 53:1-3:** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. ²God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. ³They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

I have heard many sermons that use these verses to condemn the entire world's population as being grossly evil, corrupt and having absolutely no interest in seeking after God, but this teaching is contrary to many truths, the first being the following verse:

- The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. (2 Chron. 16:9).

This verse shines a light on the truth that amongst the sea of humanity there are men and women who God considers blameless toward Him; these are those God by His Spirit is seeking to draw into His Kingdom. Blameless in this context does not mean without sin, but that they are a decent person who treats people with respect and decency and does what is right and good. If blameless meant they were without sin they would not need saving since they would already be perfect as Christ was and we know that no child descended from Adam can attain to that glorious state.

If any one of us could Christ died for no reason. At one point the great prophet Elijah felt he was the only faithful man remaining, but God soon corrected his mistaken perception telling him there is another seven thousand others who belong to Him (Psalm 14).

- Elijah said: "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and *I, even I only, am left*, and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:10).
- The LORD tells Elijah: "I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:18).

Paul in his letters to the Romans references Elijah in the following verse:

- Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and *I (Elijah) alone am left*, and they seek my life." ⁴But what is God's reply to him? "*I have kept for myself seven thousand men* who have not bowed the knee to Baal." (Romans 11:3-5).

From Genesis to now there has never been a time when God has not had a faithful remnant devoted to Him and living a lifestyle that honours His name even if meant their death. This Psalm is not a blanket statement referring to every man woman and child on planet earth. The primary focus of David is upon the nation Israel. They have become so corrupt they are doing abominable sins, and by their corruptions are destroying God's people. They say in their heart there is no God most likely because they are suffering oppressing from their enemies and there land is not producing crops and what they do put their hand to, does not prosper because God is not blessing them because of their many corruptions. Following are three evidences that show that the focus of this Psalm is not upon the entire population of the world:

1. There is none who does good (v1) this verse cannot apply to the entire population of the world because God has always had faithful men and women on earth, there has never been an age in which the earth has been totally void of a remnant of His faithful. Added to this there has always been (and still is) secular men and women who have helped God's faithful suffering persecution and who have kind and compassionate hearts and give their lives to helping the poor and the helpless. Mercy, love, compassion and kindness are not limited to God's people only. Many who have not yet heard the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ have charitable hearts and give their lives to helping others. Should anyone doubt this statement just look at how many people rally together to help families who have lost their homes to bush fires, earthquakes and wild storms and freely give money, food and clothing to help them.
2. They eat up my people as they eat bread (v4) this verse shows that those in focus are those who are destroying God's people Israel, those who destroyed Israel were the false prophets and the false teachers who set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD and instead of leading the people to God led them away from him.
3. O that God would restores the fortunes of his people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad (v6) this last verse clearly shows that David's focus is upon the corrupt amongst the people of Israel.

Five characteristics of a fool:

1. They say in their heart there is no God.

This does not only apply to atheists, but also to the people of Israel who served God under the law and performed their duties and services not from a heart of gratitude, love and devotion, but from a sense of legal duty and because they were not prospering said in their heart there is no God. These kinds of religious people only serve God for the

worldly blessing they believe should be due to them because of their services, and when the blessings do not materialise, they turn bitter against God and many turn away altogether saying there is no God.

2. They rebel against God's will.

God's will is that all mankind would do what is right and good and love their neighbour as themselves, meaning that we should do good to others and treat everyone with respect and decency. No sane person deliberately inflicts pain on themselves and so we should not inflict pain of any sort upon others, physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, verbally or spiritually.

3. They are corrupt and full of wicked acts.

This, embraces using lies and deceit and perverting justice for one's own advantage; oppressing the helpless for gain and profit; twisting and distorting the Scriptures to expand one's own religious empire and using God's people as merchandise for one's own advantage.

4. They have no understanding or knowledge of what is important to God's heart.

The best example of this is the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests the Pharisees and scribes) they believed in God and strictly adhered to all the legal Levitical laws of God and to the ceremonial rites and holy days, but lacked love, compassion, mercy and grace which are far more important to God's heart than adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions.

5. They have turned from the LORD and do not seek after Him.

Only those who have known the LORD can turn from the LORD clearly this is the most foolish act indeed since it is only God who has the power to grant eternal life.

PSALM 53:4-5

Those who Eat up God's people as Bread, have No Knowledge.

- **Psalm 53:4-5:** Have those who work evil no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God? ⁵There they are, in great terror, where there is no terror! For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you; you put them to shame, for God has rejected them (despised them in KJV).

Who encamps against you: (v5) you can refer to Israel as a nation, Zion or Jerusalem.

Broken bones: refer to weakness of strength, despair and sorrow as expressed in the following verses:

- Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. (Psalm 6:2).
- For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. (Psalm 31:10).
- Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. (Psalm 51:8).

God hath scattered the bones: means God scatters the strength of the armies of the wicked and put them to shame, by giving Israel's smaller army the victory as God did with Gideon and his three hundred men who defeated the one hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites. (Judges 7:12) (Judges 7:16) (Judges 8:10). Verses (v4-5) have caused some confusion amongst theologians and been interpreted in various ways so to make them easier to understand I have paraphrased them in the following way:

- Have the wicked who work evil no knowledge of the power of God, who attempt to eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not acknowledge God? ⁵Were these enemies are God's people Israel are in great terror, but they should not be in terror, because God scatters the bones of those who camps against His people and Israel's armies put them to shame, for God has rejected and despised those who come against them.

There were they in great fear, where no fear was: (v5) Israel was in great fear of their enemy, but shouldn't have been since God was on their side and because of this there was no ground for their fear. Even though there appeared to be valid reason for such fear because of the might of the enemies surrounding them, God was their friend and they should have had faith that He would deliver them, especially since He had given Israel great victories against mighty odds many times before. It is certain the armies of Israel's enemies were far mightier than Israel's armies and because of this Israel was in great fear because of their lack of trust in God.

But they should have known that God rejects and despises their besieger and that the armies of Israel would scatter the bones of their enemies upon the surface of the earth and put them to shame because God was on their side. In contrast to Israel's terror and fear their surrounding besiegers had no fear of God or of man or any dread of judgment and punishment, but foolishly trusted in their own strength and forces, but instead of winning a great victory their bones laid bleaching on the dirt of the earth.

God has despised and rejected them and put them to shame: (v5) because He wholly disapproved of their character and their attempts to overthrow His people and by His power shown that they were not to be feared. Their feeble efforts to war against God were efforts to be looked on with contempt, and God demonstrated this by showing how easily they could be overthrown and scattered. It was a great shame for such a numerous and mighty force to have their hopes and confidence crushed and be overthrown and unsuccessful in their attempt to defeat and conquer a people who they thought they would swallow up as a lion swallows its prey. It is certain this applies to a particular occasion when Israel or the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by enemies and a siege or attack was made and the besieger was overthrown and their bones scattered, unburied on the surface of the ground, but it is not necessary to know the exact battle to understand the message of the Psalm.

God hath scattered the bones of him that camps against thee: may be expressive of the shame and confusion that antichrist and his followers will be thrown into, when they shall make war with the Lamb and he overcomes them:

- They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." (Rev. 17:14).
- From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." (Rev. 19:15-18).

It may also be expressive of the nations that shall camp against Jerusalem in the days of Gog:

- Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. ⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released

from his prison ⁸and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. (Rev. 20:6-8).

Certainly those who make war on the Lamb and those who align themselves with Gog and Magog can not only be spoken of as fools who have no belief in God and who have no interest in seeking after Him or fear of his awesome power, but it can also be rightly said that amongst them there is none that do good, all are corrupt doing abominable iniquity (v1-2).

PSALM 53:6

Salvation would Come out of Zion! When God Restores His People.

- **Psalm 53:6:** Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores the fortunes of his people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

Upon seeing the corrupt state of Israel, David longs that the Messiah the Christ would come to Israel and bring salvation. This will ultimately be fulfilled when the Antichrists armies of the nations of the world are gathered against Jerusalem and the following prophetic words of Zechariah will be fulfilled:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, the priests and each family will greatly mourn by themselves as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zech. 12:10-14).

This world changing and breathtaking event will occur when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

FOOTNOTE

The scope of this psalm is almost the same as Psalm 14.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
