

Psalm 14

We've been looking at Psalm 14. In verse 1 of Psalm 14 God began revealing some doctrine to the people, giving them some wisdom. And really he wasn't showing them anything new, he was just calling their mind to some things that he had already told them earlier, in the law. He was reminding them of what he had told them in passages like Deuteronomy 32, something that they would be familiar with and would know by heart. And so he was bringing that to their mind to remind them of some truths that they need to understand.

He wants them to acknowledge that they've been fools. That it is the fool who has said in his heart that God doesn't exist, that he doesn't see their distress and is never going to help them. It is the fool who blames God for their oppression and persecution. Who thinks that God isn't giving them what they deserve.

And what God wants them to realize is that he *isn't* giving them what they deserve. They deserve far worse, but he's going to lighten their eyes and revive them for his own sake. They have been corrupt, they haven't served him faithfully, with their whole heart. Their hearts have been impure and they've been seeking deliverance through vile men, instead of through God and his chosen savior.

And so God was telling them not to be fools and blame him for their trouble. Not to think that he wasn't doing them right because he hadn't brought perfect salvation yet. But instead to acknowledge that it was their own fault that God hadn't saved them. That they had been corrupt, not serving God with a pure heart. That they weren't seeking to him only, they weren't prepared for salvation. And so God is not to blame for their trouble. They are. It is their own wickedness that has prevented their full deliverance.

And so we saw last time in verse 2 how God, after calling all of that to their mind, then began to build on that. He told them that he had looked down from heaven on them, to see if they were prepared for salvation. He had looked to see if there were any that understood these things that he just brought up in verse 1, and were seeking God. Seeking his mercy in that understanding that it was for his own sake, for the glory of his name that God would sustain and ultimately deliver them.

So God has shown them what foolishness is, told them what he was looking for, and now in verse 3 we're going to find out what he saw when he looked down upon the children of men.

Verse 3

The failing of the faithful, the ceasing of the godly, that David talked about in Psalm 12, is just about completed.

When he looked down God didn't see any that understood, and sought him with all their heart in their distress. They were all behaving as fools, corrupting themselves with the salvation of men. And so that's why God didn't choose to bring perfect salvation at this time. The hearts of the people weren't prepared to receive it. Instead of them being all prepared, they were all turned aside, following after other saviors, and not the LORD.

ASIDE

Now when it says that they are all gone aside, that has implications from the law.

Exodus 32:8 They have turned **aside** quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And so to turn aside was to cease following God only, and follow idols and false gods as well.

And that's just like what they've been doing.

They've been unfaithful to him. And so God has repeatedly compared that to idolatry here, because even though they weren't following idols, the end result is still the same: they weren't following God with all their heart.

Deuteronomy 5:32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn **aside** to the right hand or to the left.

But they've stopped walking on the straight and narrow way, they're not walking in the words of the LORD. They've turned aside to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

And so to turn aside is to be unfaithful. To not follow something wholly.

Numbers 5:12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go **aside**, and commit a trespass against him,

And so it called a woman being unfaithful to her husband "going aside".

And that's what they've been doing here. They've been unfaithful to God. And as a result the godly seed is ceasing, as we talked about in Psalm 12.

And again this relates to Deuteronomy 32. Here's what Moses said when he gave that song to them:

Deuteronomy 31:28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them.
29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn **aside** from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.
30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

And so Moses gave them that song to bring them back to God once they had turned aside. And now God is building on that ministry here in these Psalms. He's purifying the hearts of the people to turn them back, and make them faithful to him. Because right now all of the people have turned aside, following vanity, instead of following the LORD and his anointed savior.

And you know, this was something that Samuel warned them about when God first ordained the kingdom:

1 Samuel 12:19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

And so what they were really doing there was the very same thing that they've been doing here. They were seeking a king to deliver them instead of just trusting in God to deliver them. So not much has changed here in the intervening years, maybe about 50-80 years that have passed. The people are still seeking deliverance through men of their own choosing, instead of through the LORD.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not **aside** from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;
21 And turn ye not **aside**: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

How true was that? Samuel just predicted there exactly what they've been doing here. They've turned aside from the following the LORD and are following vain things that cannot deliver them. That can only prevent God's full deliverance from coming.

They've turned aside, just as he warned them not to, and haven't served the LORD with all their heart.

But you know, when they did that there, and asked a king, Samuel told them not to fear. He told them that if they would still follow the LORD with all their heart, God wouldn't destroy them.

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

And so he told them that even though they were turning aside, if they would return to following the LORD, he wouldn't forsake them. He wouldn't forsake them, for his name's sake.

That's very much the message that David has been given for the people here in this Psalm.

God wants them to understand, as the people did there, how great their wickedness was.

But he also wants them to understand that for his name's sake he will not forsake them. He isn't going to hide his face forever. If they will just follow him with all their heart, he will deliver them.

They just need to understand this, and seek him with all their heart, not corruptly, not turning aside, but in faithfulness.

Now this going aside that we talked about, how they weren't following God faithfully, that's something that was also true of the generation at the time of Christ.

Jesus said:

Mark 7:8 *For laying **aside** the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

And so the men of that generation had gone aside, following men instead of God. Following the counsel of men instead of his pure words.

And of course we talked about that when we went through Psalm 12 and looked at Proverbs 30. How they looked to their own wisdom instead of to the pure words of the LORD.

They weren't faithful to God's word, but turned aside. And so they weren't faithful to his salvation, but turned aside from it as well. And because of that it didn't come. That generation wasn't prepared to receive it either.

And so even to this day Israel still awaits that deliverance.

ALL

So he says that they have all turned aside.

Psalms 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and **all** the nations that forget God.

Psalms 12:3 The LORD shall cut off **all** flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

And so all those that turned away from God, that forgot him, and instead followed flattering lips, would be cut off and destroyed.

And so it is no wonder that salvation isn't coming. They are all gone aside, and all those that go aside will be destroyed. And so God can't bring salvation now, because there is nobody to save. They would all have to be judged and destroyed.

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy."

TOGETHER

Now when he says "they are all together become filthy," he isn't saying that they are completely filthy, not that they are altogether filthy, but that they have all become filthy together.

In other words, they've joined together in becoming filthy.

There was nobody that stood aside, that was set apart, they all just became filthy together.

There was none that resisted, that continued walking uprightly. They all just followed the crowd, and went aside after the others.

Psalms 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel **together**, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

And so all of them have together walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and stood in the way of sinners, and have sat in the seat of the scornful.

And now he's telling them not be scorners. Not to be fools and say there is no God.

We said there in Psalm 1 that that was a progression. That if they walked in the counsel of the ungodly they'd end up sitting in the seat of the scornful.

And now here they are.

And so this is why salvation hasn't come. God said that the man that didn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly would be blessed. But they haven't meditated in the law of the LORD, they've all taken counsel together, speaking vanity every one with his neighbor.

And so they haven't received the LORD's blessing, they haven't received perfect salvation.

BECOME

And so it says that they have all together become filthy.

They've *become* filthy. That means that they didn't start out that way.

They didn't start out filthy, but once they started walking in the counsel of the ungodly, that progression led them to the point where they were filthy.

They started out pure, just as each one of us does. But we become filthy.

Isaiah 1:21 How is the faithful city **become** an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

22 Thy silver is **become** dross, thy wine mixed with water:

So they had judgement and righteousness, but now they've stopped following the words of the LORD, the pure silver. They aren't doing the statutes and judgements, they are doing the dross of injustice instead.

They've forsaken the word of the LORD that made them go upright, and become dross. "The LORD made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions."

Ezekiel 22:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all **become** dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

And so again it speaks of them becoming dross. And because of that he would bring judgment upon them, melt them, try them, and purify them by destroying the wicked.

Lamentations 4:1 How is the gold **become** dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

And so God made them to be faithful, as fine gold. But they've become dim, they've become dross, and he would cast them out.

And so here in Psalm 14 God is reminding them that he gave them the law and made them go upright, but that it is they who have corrupted themselves and become filthy.

And that's why he didn't fully deliver them.

Not because of him, not because of what he did, what he made them. But because of them, what they've done, what they've made themselves, what they've become.

FILTHY

So they have become filthy.

Now something filthy is something that's unclean. And not just unclean, but utterly unclean. It's messy and putrid and horrible. Its filthy.

Now in the OT the term filthy is used mainly to refer to idolatrous practices.

Ezra 9:11 Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the **filthiness** of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

And of course, abominations is often used in reference to idolatry and the practices associated with it.

And so God had told them to separate themselves from the people of the land, and not to intermarry with them lest they be led away into idolatry, and partake in their filthiness.

Ezekiel 16:36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy **filthiness** was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

And so it talks about the filthiness of their idols, their abominations.
And it also uses whoredom as a picture of that, as he often does in the OT.
And so we also find in the Bible that filthiness is used in reference to sexual sins. Mainly in the NT.

And so here in Psalm 14 when he says they have become filthy he's talking about their lack of faithfulness toward him. That they have forsaken him for other saviors.
Just as if they were serving false gods, they've corrupted themselves and become filthy, and haven't been pure, they haven't been serving the LORD alone, with all their heart.
They haven't kept his covenant and produced a godly seed, they've gone aside and married the daughter of a strange God.

And so in describing their wickedness in these three verses, God has been using some key words to point out exactly what they are doing.
Their doubt of him, their unfaithfulness to him, is just as if they hadn't been serving him at all, but had been serving other gods.
And so when we look at this passage we can apply it in a very general sense, that there is none that doeth good. And it is quoted that way in the NT.
But what God is doing here is choosing his words very carefully to focus in on their main sin, the issue that he wants to deal with here.
And that is their impurity in following him. They haven't been pure, they've corrupted themselves, and become filthy. Instead of seeking to him alone for salvation, they've been seeking to vile men.

Psalms 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.
2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.
3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

And so God has brought the people to the place where he wants them to acknowledge their wickedness in this matter. That what they've been doing is akin to idolatry.
That none of them are pure in regard to this. Despite God's goodness and truth toward them, they've corrupted themselves, and become filthy. They haven't sought him wholly as their only deliverer.
And so there is none deserving of his deliverance.
When God looked down on them, he couldn't find anybody who was worthy of salvation.
Anybody who was wholly seeking him for it.
And so that is why it hasn't come. Not because God doesn't exist, not because he's unjust, not because he's never going to bring judgement. But because of the unfaithfulness of his children.
And so God has brought them all the way to see that none of them is worthy of salvation. And that it hasn't come because they haven't understood this and been seeking God for it, seeking his mercy. Instead they've been seeking it from ungodly men.

And so now God has completed his rebuke. He's totally turned them around in their thinking on this. He's gotten them to repudiate everything that they were doing to bring their own deliverance. He's gotten them to utterly reject that and to see and understand what is needed

here: to seek God, to seek understanding from him, and lightening of the eyes through his pure words.

And so now that God has said that, now that he's fully revealed the depth of their wickedness, he can take the next step here.

He said all of that so he could say what is in these next few verses.

He's now going to reiterate his promise of salvation to them. And it's going to carry a little sting with it. But ultimately it's going to point them to a future hope.

I just mentioned Proverbs 30, that prophecy about the generation at the time of Christ.

Proverbs 30:12 *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their **filthiness**.*

And so it said that generation would be filthy, but yet pure in their own eyes. Just as it says here that they have all together become filthy.

And so salvation couldn't come at that time. The people were filthy, and wouldn't purify themselves with the words of the LORD.

But there will come a time when it will come:

Isaiah 4:1 *And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*

And so there will come a time when the house of Israel will once more be purified, before their salvation comes.

And God is going to do that in part by destroying the wicked from among his people. And so there will be many widows who will enter into salvation without their husbands.

2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

But for those that are left, God is going to bless them with all the fruit of the earth.

3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

And so only those in the book of life will enter in. And they will be called holy?

But how will they be purified?

*4 When the Lord shall have washed away the **filth** of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.*

And so at that time God will have washed away their filth.

That's something that will happen during the tribulation.

And it talks there about the filth of blood, specifically. And that hearkens back to Numbers 19, where it talked about the red heifer and how they were to be cleansed from blood through a ceremony involving the burning of a red heifer.

And so we said how that Israel was unclean with the blood of Christ. The filth of his blood is upon them. But they would be cleansed from that during the tribulation.

And that would happen by the washing of water by the word, mingled with the ashes of the judgement of the great whore who rides the scarlet colored beast.

*And so it says here in Isaiah 4:4 "When the Lord shall have washed away the **filth** of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."*

And so it through the judgement and burning of the whore that Israel will be purged from the filth of the blood of Jerusalem.

And then, and only then, will their salvation come. Once they are purified, and their filth removed.

Another passage that talks about their filthiness is Isaiah 28.

We've looked at that a few times, and we could have looked at it a hundred times more. It's a very relevant passage to much of the prophetic aspects of these psalms.

Isaiah 28:1 *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!*

And so he mocks Israel who has rejected him, and chosen Ephraim instead of Judah, and David, and his anointed savior.

He says, "Oh, you're proud of your crown, but you're all just a bunch of drunks. You're so drunk with your own pride that you don't know what you're doing. You've rejected the LORD's salvation in favor of your own deliverers."

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

But God does have a Savior, and his salvation and judgment will come. And then what will become of those who rejected it?

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

And so it will vanish away so fast that the moment Christ sees it it is destroyed.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

And so then when the crown of the rebellious is destroyed, the LORD will be a crown to the rest of his people.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and **filthiness**, so that there is no place clean.

Psalms 14:3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become **filthy**: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

And so how is there going to be anybody to save? If they are all filthy, if they have all been drunk, and been fools, and rejected the LORD, then who are those that he will crown?

9 Whom shall he teach **knowledge**? and whom shall he make to **understand** doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

The 144000. Young virgin males. Babes and sucklings. God's ordainers of strength.

They will have knowledge, unlike the workers of iniquity.

And they will understand and see God.

And so the LORD will look down upon the children of men, to see if there are any that understand and seek him, and he will see the remainder of Israel, that they are holy, serving him faithfully, crying out with all their heart for salvation.

And he will come and deliver them.

Verse 4

So now God is shifting focus. He is turning from his rebuke of all the people generally, and he's now zooming in on the oppressors.

See, now God can point out the faults of their enemies, now that he's established their faults.

Now that they can see their own wickedness, he can rebuke the wickedness of the oppressors, and the people won't be puffed up. They can only look on meekly and let God do the rebuking, let him do the judging. Because if they started pointing out their oppressors' faults, they'd be hypocrites, because they've had just the same heart, they've been doing many of the same things.

And so now God can say this, now that the people's hearts are more in the right place, and they'll respond to it correctly.

So God asks, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?"

Everything that God says in this verse is a slap in the face of the people.

He lays it on real thick right here because he doesn't want the people to lose sight of the things that he's just told them. He doesn't want them to forget that none of them is righteous, that none of them has been faithful. They're in no place to jump in here and start ranting against their oppressors.

See, when God asks, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?", you have to remember that he just told them that he's looked and he found none that understood.

No, none of the workers of iniquity have any knowledge. And none of the other people do either. They've all be fools, and none has understood.

And so even though God is focussing on the oppressors now, he's still hitting the people a little bit too with what he says here.

WORKERS OF INIQUITY

Now the phrase here that God uses to refer to the bad guys, to the oppressors, is “workers of iniquity.”

Now David talked about the workers of iniquity in Psalms 5 and 6.

We looked at Psalm 5 as we were going through verse 1 of Psalm 14, talking about a fool’s response to trouble on this earth.

Psalm 5 gives David’s response to his trouble, which makes quite a contrast with what a fool would do.

Psalms 5:1 Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

And so in David’s trouble he cried out to God. He didn’t blame God, instead he sought the LORD’s help.

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all **workers of iniquity**.

And David did that because God would take no pleasure in him if he became foolish, and charged God.

He knew that in his trouble he must continue to seek the LORD, because if he became wicked and did evil, God would take no pleasure in him.

And then he not only wouldn’t be delivered now, he wouldn’t be able to stand in God’s sight in the day of judgement.

And so David wouldn’t become a fool and start working iniquity just because he was experiencing trouble. Because God hates all the workers of iniquity.

Now, what exactly did he mean by workers of iniquity? Well he explains that further in the next verse:

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

And so those that speak falsehood, that are deceitful, and shed blood; they are workers of iniquity, that will be destroyed.

In so in Psalm 14 when it calls the people’s oppressors the workers of iniquity, it’s referring back to these same things that David’s persecutors have been doing all along.

They’ve been speaking falsehood and deceit in an attempt to gain power. They’ve even been willing to shed innocent blood to take the kingdom.

But David said that he wasn’t going to become a fool in his distress, he wasn’t going to become like them in an attempt to deliver himself, because all such people would be destroyed.

And unfortunately that hasn’t been the response of the rest of the people. Their response to their oppressors has been to forsake God and attempt to deliver themselves, even if that means becoming like the workers of iniquity.

They too “have done abominable **works**”, as it said in verse 1.

But now that God is getting them to turn from that and see their folly, he's going to lay into their oppressors who are continuing to work this iniquity.

And so the people need to leave off their abominable works and say with David in Psalm 6:

Psalms 6:7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.
8 Depart from me, all ye **workers of iniquity**; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.
9 The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.
10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.

And so like David, in their distress they need to cry out to God, that he would lighten their eyes. And instead of becoming like the workers of iniquity, they need to tell those wicked men to depart from them.

They need to trust in God who has heard their prayer, and will one day destroy their enemies. Who will lighten their eyes, and not let the workers of iniquity prevail.

Now it called their oppressors here the workers of iniquity. And of course when salvation comes, all of the workers of iniquity will be destroyed.

It talks about that in Luke 13:

Luke 13:23 *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,*
24 *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*
25 *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*
26 *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.*
27 *But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye **workers of iniquity**.*
28 *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*
29 *And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*
30 *And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.*

And so when salvation comes, the workers of iniquity will be cast out.

KNOWLEDGE

So God calls their oppressors the workers of iniquity here. And he asks, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?"

"Don't they know anything? Why are they continuing to work iniquity? What fools!"

You see, David has been trying to convey knowledge to the people, even his oppressors, all along here. He's been trying to give them understanding. And they've rejected it.

In Psalm 4 David admonished his oppressors, saying:

Psalms 4:2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

3 But **know** that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

So David asked his persecutors how long they would turn his glory, the LORD, who had delivered him from Absalom, into shame. How long they would scoff at his trust in God and follow vanity and falsehood.

Couldn't they see that God had delivered him? Didn't they know that God has set apart the godly and will hear when they call unto him?

But they didn't know, and they refused to hear.

And now God asks the same question of the people's oppressors, and all those that work iniquity with them.

Don't they know that God has set apart the godly, that he will hear when they cry out to him?

Don't they know that God himself will uphold the foundations of salvation, and that he will prepare all the hearts of the people?

Don't they know that when the oppressed of Israel are godly, and cry out to the LORD in faithfulness, he will hear them and salvation will come?

Don't they know this? Why are they continuing to work iniquity?

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

The wicked need to understand that just because salvation isn't coming now doesn't mean that it isn't going to come. God has postponed it because of the corruption of the people. But he has set apart the godly for himself, and he will keep and preserve them from this generation for ever, and he will prepare the hearts of the people, and when they are pure, when they are no more corrupt, he will hear them, and salvation will come.

Psalms 9:9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that **know** thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

And so those with knowledge, those that know the name of the LORD, they will put their trust in him. Because they know that he will not forsake those that seek him.

Psalms 9:16 The LORD is **known** by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsaion. Selah.

God is known by the judgement that he executes. He made a name for himself on this earth though executing judgment and justice. That's how he got glory for his name, when he brought his people out of Egypt.

The workers of iniquity must be ignorant fools if they think that God isn't going to execute judgment against them. Don't they know?

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may **know** themselves to be but men. Selah.

So if they refuse to know the name of the LORD, to know that he is a God of judgment, they'll be sure of one thing in the end: he is the LORD who will execute his will against them, and they will be but men.

And so God is rebuking the wicked oppressors. Asking, "Don't they know?"

And at the same time he is warning all others of the foolishness of this. He is warning them all not to work iniquity.

Many of the people have been just so foolish. They've been working iniquity, doing abominable works, to bring their own salvation.

They've been acting as if they didn't know that the LORD was a God of judgment who would hear the cry of the godly, and will one day bring salvation, and destroy the oppressors.

They've been acting like fools, as if they were totally ignorant of that.

And so again, in his rebuke of the oppressors here, God is also pricking all the people. There's no place here for them to get a holier-than-thou attitude. Because they've all done this.

But now is the time to stop, to cease to work iniquity, and stop joining with the wicked. But instead to tell them to depart, and put their trust in the LORD, if perhaps he will revive them, and lighten their eyes.

EAT UP

So the workers of iniquity have no knowledge, and continue to *eat up* the people.

Now when it says that they eat up the people what does it mean by that?

Well that's a figure of speech that is used elsewhere in scripture.

Isaiah 3:14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have **eaten up** the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

So they oppressed and destroyed the poor. They beat them out as if threshing wheat, and ground them as to make flour for bread.

And so the poor were consumed by them, and they took their substance for a spoil.

And God told them that he was going to enter into judgement with them.

Woe to all the workers of iniquity! This is something that God will judge them for.

Ezekiel 34:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

3 Ye **eat** the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

And so the shepherds, the pastors of Israel, those that were supposed to be feeding them, were eating them instead.

And so their spiritual leaders, those that should have been feeding them speaking unto them the words of the LORD, weren't. And they were destroying those that were fed.

Much as in Psalm 11 it talked about the wicked shooting at all the upright in heart. Those that understood the word of the LORD and were preparing their hearts for salvation were being destroyed.

And the workers of iniquity are going to just keep on doing that. Despite all that has happened here, despite God's deliverance of David, despite his ministry of purification and enlightenment to the people, despite his promise of future judgement, they still think that they are going to destroy the foundations. They continue to oppress, they continue to be fools.

BREAD

"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread." Now saying that they eat them up as they eat bread is significant for several reasons.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou **eat bread**, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

And so God told man that he would eat bread. And ever since, that has been a staple of our diet.

Over and over in the Bible it will talk about somebody eating, and it will mention bread. It won't just say, "they sat down to eat," but, "they sat down to eat bread." Because bread was a staple, it was something that everybody ate, no matter how rich or poor. You didn't sit down to eat without eating bread. Every meal included bread. It was practically synonymous with eating.

And so to say that they eat up the people as they eat bread, is to say that they do it continuously. They do it three times a day. They don't sit down to eat without having caused some of the poor to fall. The destruction of the poor and of the godly is as much a staple of their diet as bread is.

And so their oppression is nothing to them. It is just a part of life. It is something that they do daily, that they can't live without, any more that you could live without eating bread.

Ceasing their oppression would seem like an absurd idea to them. That would be a totally foreign concept. That'd be like telling somebody, "stop eating."

And so they are going on just like they have no knowledge of God, of his justice, of his judgement, of his mercy. As if they have no knowledge of what is going on here.

They're behaving like the fools that God said they were in verse 1.

There's no sense to it. No reasonable person would do what they are doing. But the idea that they should do anything different is utterly strange to them. Their oppression is just a part of their life, as far as they're concerned. It's just what you do. Just like you eat bread, you oppress the poor. Both things are necessary and totally innocent.

Now, just for an example of this, of what this might look like, let's take a look at 1 Kings 21:

1 Kings 21:1 And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would **eat no bread**.

5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou **eatest no bread**?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and **eat bread**, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

And so Ahab wouldn't eat until he'd caused some man to fall. He wouldn't eat bread without eating up the people of the land.

And those guys they sent the letter to, they were just the same way. They just did what the letter said. As if it was just as innocent as any other request.

They were to declare a fast, and not eat bread until they had slain an upright man.

And so that's what the oppressors of the people are like here.

They don't care anything for the lives of the people, and will slay them for their own profit. Eating them up just as they eat bread.

CALL

"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD."

You know, David called upon God in Psalm 4, and admonished his enemies to do the same. In Psalm 4:1 he said "Hear me when I **call**, O God." And then he turned to his persecutors and said:

Psalms 4:2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I **call** unto him.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

So David told them that God would hear the call of the godly. He exhorted them to put their trust in the LORD.

But the oppressors still won't do that. The people are beginning to turn and call upon the LORD, but the workers of iniquity still won't. They still refuse. What's wrong with them? Have they no knowledge? They're fools.

And in the next verse he tells them what is ultimately going to happen to them:

Verse 5

GREAT FEAR

Used six times. Six being the number of man. Because when they are in great fear, it will be because they will know themselves to be but men, but that God is in the congregation of the righteous.

Psalms 9:20 Put them **in fear**, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

And so it is looking forward here to the day when salvation will come. They workers of iniquity may not fear God now, they may be fools and not care if he even exists, but one day he will put them in fear.

Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with **fear**, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

And so there men of power were admonished to fear the LORD, and server him, not to be fools, but to know that God would bring salvation and judgement. That he would give the whole world to the Son, and that he would do with it whatever he wills.

And so those that reject him will be in great fear, and he will dash them to pieces.

And so it is looking forward here. This is prophetic.

And so the term "great fear" is only used once more in the book of Psalms, and then it is used only in the NT. And we'll look at that in a little while.

And so there will come a time when salvation is perfected, and all of the workers of iniquity destroyed.

And we know that that isn't coming yet. But at the same time, God is also telling the people here that he is going to uphold them. That there is going to be a reprieve. That they are going to be delivered from their oppressors.

The son that he will set upon the throne will be Solomon, the son of David. And he will give him peace through strength. And he will destroy the wicked.

And so God has heard the cry of the people.

Full salvation will not be revealed yet, because the people aren't prepared for it. But because they are one more crying out to God, and acknowledging their corruption and filthiness, God is going to bring them some deliverance.

He's going to continue to uphold the anointed seed of the Savior, and put all the workers of iniquity in fear.

Now we said how this "great fear" that it talked about was prophetic.

Well, when Jesus walked this earth the first time, when God walked in the generation of the righteous, he put some people in great fear.

When they saw his miracles, it scared some of them.

For example when Jesus healed the devil-possessed man who lived in the tombs:

Luke 8:36 *They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.*

*37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with **great fear**: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*

And so these folks living in the country of the Gadarenes were scared of Christ. When they saw how he healed that man that nobody could tame, they were fearful and asked him to leave.

Why? Because many of them were workers of iniquity.

They obviously didn't keep the law, or they wouldn't have had much use for several thousand head of swine, which were an unclean animal they weren't supposed to be eating.

And so having this man of God among them put them in fear.

And of course that is just a foreshadowing of what it will be like when Christ returns.

There will come a time when the earth will see that God is in the generation of the righteous of Israel, and will be put in great fear.

Revelation 11:3 *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

*11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and **great fear** fell upon them which saw them.*

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

*And of course then right after that, is when Christ returns.
And so when the people of the earth see that God truly is in the generation of the righteous of Israel, when they see his Spirit enter into the two witnesses and raise them from the dead and carry them up to heaven, they will be put in great fear.
Because then they will know that God is coming to bring judgment and salvation, and that they are but men.*

GENERATION

Now look carefully at what it said:

“There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.”

Now that’s interesting.

We’d tend to want to say “God is in the congregation of the righteous.” But that’s not what it says. “God is in the generation of the righteous.”

What does that mean?

Well, that’s something that we’re going to discover more as we go through Psalms. That’s a thread that is going to weave through here as we go forward.

But in simplest terms what it means is that there is coming a generation in Israel that is going to be all righteous. And God is going to be with them and in them.

And so there is coming a time, when their hearts will all be purified and prepared, and they will all with one voice cry out to God for salvation, and he will bring it. And the workers of iniquity will be put in fear.

And so again, he is looking forward to the eventual fulfillment of their total deliverance.

But also in the mean time he is looking at the coming generation. The generation of Solomon. You see the wicked thought that when David died, that would be the end of the upright. The foundations would have been destroyed, and the godly and faithful would cease out of the next generation.

And David saw that that was what was about to happen. The wicked were about to prevail. He said:

Psalms 11:3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the **righteous** do?

But in Psalm 12 David got a promise from God, that he wouldn’t let that happen:

Psalms 12:5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this **generation** for ever.

And so from that very generation God would preserve the godly through his words.

And so from that very generation the LORD would uphold the foundations. He purify the hearts of the people, and set them in safety.

And so the wicked think that the coming generation will be totally free of the upright.

Deuteronomy 32:5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked **generation**.

And so the wicked think that with the death of David the godly will die out.

But they're wrong. Have they no knowledge? God has promised to keep the upright through his words.

And so instead God will be in the next generation, a generation of the righteous, and all the workers of iniquity will be put in great fear.