

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

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The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 53*

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ברית חדשה

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If you don't know Yeshua as your Messiah, we encourage you to search out the Scriptures for yourself. God promised in the book of Jeremiah, "*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:13). And we hope you will make contact with us so that we can share more about the Messiah, His life and ministry.

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# Pondering Psalm 53

## *The fool says in his heart: a repeat*

### Introduction

On a few occasions the Bible seems to duplicate itself; we can see this in the significant overlaps between the books of Kings and Chronicles, as well as the four Gospels, which should be studied together so that both the similarities and differences can be seen. A harmony of those books is very helpful when studying parallel passages. As we study Psalm 53, which is almost Psalm 14 verbatim, we will look at the differences, but I will not repeat all that was brought out in Psalm 14. To read Pondering Psalm 14 again please go to <https://www.britchadashah.com.au/ponderings/> click on Psalms and download the pdf.

### Why a repeat?

In my sanctified imagination I suspect that God knows we are hard of hearing, and find it difficult to follow Him, so there is a need for us to hear it again. In these two psalms He speaks to us personally, but also collectively as part of the nations. It should cause us to pray for our leaders, that they would hear and obey the voice of the Lord, rather than be foolish.

### Comparing Psalm 14 and 53

1. In verse 1 (the superscript) David adds that this is to be played according to, or upon the “*Mahalath*.” This is also mentioned in Psalm 88, yet nobody knows for sure what it means. Even Rashi wrote: “**on machalath** the name of a musical instrument. Another explanation: concerning the malady (מחלתן) of Israel when the Temple will be destroyed.”<sup>1</sup>
2. A difference is that Psalm 14, which is in Book One of the Psalms, uses “the LORD” (*Yahweh*) in verses 2, 4, 6, and 7. In contrast Psalm 53, which is in Book Two, does not use the Name of the LORD but the generic term “God” (*Elohim*).
3. Finally, as these two psalms come to a close, we note a further distinction.

Psalm 14:5-6 (NASB95) <sup>5</sup> There they are in great dread, For God is with the righteous generation. <sup>6</sup> You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, But the LORD is his refuge.	Psalm 53:5 (NASB95) <sup>5</sup> There they were in great fear <i>where</i> no fear had been; For God scattered the bones <i>of him</i> who encamped against you; You put them to shame, because God had rejected them.
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What we see is that in Psalm 14 David focuses on the deliverance of the righteous; while in contrast, Psalm 53 focuses on God’s defeat of the foolish.

We note the difference between Psalm 14:5-6 and Psalm 53:5 can be seen in three segments:

- <sup>5a</sup> There they were in great fear *where* no fear had been;
- <sup>5b</sup> For God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you;
- <sup>5c</sup> You put *them* to shame, because God had rejected them.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.53.1?lang=bi&with=Rashi&lang2=en>

The specific context is unknown, but reading carefully it seems to be indicated that Nabal (1 Samuel 25) is in the picture in Psalm 14, yet he is not the fool in Psalm 53. There is a much wider conflict going on.

- <sup>5a</sup> There they were in great fear *where* no fear had been

A number of commentators, amongst them Charles Ryrie, see “*a miraculous deliverance as the background.... perhaps 2 Kings 7:6-7.*”<sup>2</sup> While it may form a background, I think that it is too specific. We see *the fool*, that is those who deny God, both in Israel and the Nations, at some stage fleeing from Him. They will be in great dread or fear of Him, while they previously had not feared Him. The imagery that comes to mind is the Ezekiel War (Ezekiel 38-39) and the great tribulation (Luke 21:25-28; Revelation 6:15-17). They will fool-heartily not believe in God, especially during the Tribulation, even though they will have noted that believers are missing (due to the rapture), the ministry of Elijah (Malachi 4:5 in the Hebrew Bible 3:23), the building of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple, the rise of the beast of the sea (the Antichrist) and the beast of the land (the false prophet). Even so, foolish people will not repent (Revelation 9:20-21, 16:9-11), although they will recognize that certain things, such as the wrath, are happening, because of God and the Lamb (Revelation 6:16), yet they fail to fear Him.

- <sup>5b</sup> For God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you

In the *eschaton* (the end times), the foolish nations who deny God will be led twice against Israel. They will firstly be led by Gog, who is the leader of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal<sup>3</sup> (Ezekiel 39:1) and allied nations from the north; and secondly, by the Antichrist (Revelation 13:3). They will encamp against Israel (Ezekiel 39:11; Revelation 16:16). In both cases this is a foolish attempt, as God will keep Covenant (Genesis 17:9; Deuteronomy 7:9; Daniel 9:4) with the nation of Israel. Although God has allowed Israel to be harmed, due to their unfaithfulness to the Lord and the Covenants (Leviticus 26; Jeremiah 34:18), God always remains faithful to them (Deuteronomy 7:9).

The NASB translates this verse *God scattered the bones of him*, while the Septuagint puts this in the plural *them*, because the Hebrew can be read either way. The plural would enable us to see that it is not just the leader Gog, but all of Israel’s enemies; their bones are scattered and their bodies are left unburied (c.f. Ezekiel 39:9). Rather than gathering their bones together, as Ezekiel prophesied in Ezekiel 37, these bones are scattered, which is a curse from God (Jeremiah 8:1-3).

- <sup>5c</sup> You put *them* to shame, because God had rejected them.

In that scattering we see they are brought to shame, as God has rejected them (here we do note the plural). The bones will eventually be gathered, but that process will take seven months (Ezekiel 39:12). It is absolute foolishness, for God foreknows they will rebel against Him and His Anointed (Messiah Yeshua), and He knows what will happen. He even warns everybody who is willing to listen (Psalm 2).

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<sup>2</sup> Footnote to Psalm 53:5 in the Ryrie Study Bible NASB.

<sup>3</sup> **Young Literal Translation:** O Gog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal,... Arnold Fruchtenbaum in *Footsteps of the Messiah* comments: “The name *Rosh* is the basis for the modern name *Russia*. These names, then, cover the modern territories of northern and southern Russia in Europe and Siberia to the east in Asia. The modern nation of Russia encompasses all these areas of Ezekiel. As if to avoid any further possible doubt, verse six adds that these come from *the uttermost parts of the north.*”

**53:6.**

*Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!  
When the Lord restores His captive people,  
Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.*

We with David long that the oppressed might be rescued, i.e. receive salvation יְשׁוּעָה (yeshu'ot), and a restoration of the kingdom of God (Isaiah 11:6-9; Zephaniah 3:14-16), in which Messiah Yeshua will reign. When the LORD restores the fortunes then His people Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be Glad (Psalm 126:1-6) it is then that Jews and Gentiles will also celebrate together as we are both grafted into the Olive Tree (Romans 11:11:24).

*I hope this illuminates our understanding of this Psalm a little.  
Blessings in Messiah Yeshua  
Paul & Sue*