

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

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The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 14*

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**Brit Chadashah**  
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 14

## *The fool says in his heart*

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### Introduction

The Bible duplicates itself on a few occasions. Psalm 14 is almost repeated verbatim in Psalm 53.

### 14:1-3 The assessment of humanity

*1 For the choir director, a Psalm of David.*

*The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;  
There is no one who does good.*

*2 The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men  
To see if there are any who understand,  
Who seek after God.*

*3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;  
There is no one who does good, not even one.*

This Psalm by David was given to the chief musician to be sung in the Tabernacle. This Psalm reads as a Mash-kil (משכיל) an "instruction." This is a teaching set to music to make us wise.

### *Fool said in his heart*

There are multiple words in Hebrew for the word *fool*. Let me give you five such words:

**1. The simple Fool** (פְּתָאִי) (*peth-ayi*). This type of fool believes everything, such as every weird and wonderful teaching, even those that are not based on the word of God (Proverbs 22:3). He is not able to discern (Proverbs 7:6–7) so he must be given clear instruction (Proverbs 1:4). Occasionally this word is translated as fool and sometimes as simple.

**2. The perverse fool**, אָוִיל (*eveel*) or one who despises wisdom (Proverbs 10:14). A fool who always blames things that goes wrong on other always (Proverbs 27:3). The worst thing about this fool is that he believes himself to be (always) right (Proverbs 12:15), and as such he despises wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7)

**3. The quarrelsome fool** כְּסִיל (*kesil*) or the unreasonable fool, speaks before he is able to think, and as such his words gets him into trouble. With his words he brings destruction (Proverbs 18:6–7). It is best to stay away from the *continually argumentative* fool because it leads to more harm than good (Proverbs 13:20).

**4. The scoffing fool** לֹוֹץ (*loots*) is one who has contempt, especially towards God. He not only rejects truth but chooses to go contrary to the revealed will of God. These are the scoffers or scornful in Psalm 1:1. They will not accept instruction (Proverbs 13:1).

**5. The stupid / wicked fool** נָבָל (*nabal*) is the fool mentioned in Psalm 14. He does not take wisdom into account as he goes about living. He ignores God and is morally insensitive. The story of Nabal can be read in 1 Samuel 25. In Isaiah 32:4-7 this word *nabal* is translated as a

vile person, for he pursues folly that leads to iniquity and ungodliness. This fool wants to drag everybody down with him into his sins. So the fool in our Psalm is the man deliberately choosing to go against God. He thoughtfully selects the profane things of the world.

### *Says in his heart*

The phrase “*says in his heart*” is the same language that is used about Esau (Genesis 27:41), Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:26) and Haman (Esther 6:6). They are people who said things *IN* their heart. None of these were Godly men, and here we see the phrase again: the *fool / nabal* also *says in his heart*. However our hearts are not upright but wicked (Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 3:17). It is well summarised by Yeshua “*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander*” (Matthew 15:19). Friends we should not reason *in our heart*, but like the saints of old Speak **TO** the heart like Hannah (1 Samuel 1:13) and David (1 Samuel 27:1), for we are but dust (Genesis 3:27). We need to heed the words of David to Solomon, and set our hearts and our souls to seek the Lord our God (1 Chronicles 22:19), rather than reason (follow) our own hearts (Proverbs 3:5-7).

In this psalm David is not focussing on the individual *fool* but uses it as a collective or a group. So too in our society we have groups who wilfully try to push us towards atheism and wickedness by abandoning the principles that God has laid down for us.

God assessed the condition off all mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike, and found none seeking after God (Genesis 6:5). Even worse, we have become corrupt (Genesis 6:11-13). The word here means *to decay*, or ruin and reflects on the decay of ethics and morals. Abominable deeds are forms of idolatry (1 Kings 21:26) and unfaithfulness (Ezekiel 16:52).

I hope you can see the contrast between the *fool / nabal* who thinks highly of himself and God’s opinion of the *fool*, which is very different (Romans 3:23).

### **14:4-6 God's punishment of the wicked**

**4** *Do all the workers of wickedness not know,  
Who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
And do not call upon the Lord?*

**5** *There they are in great dread,  
For God is with the righteous generation.*

**6** *You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted,  
But the Lord is his refuge.*

It is astonishing to David that fools, now described as workers of wickedness, continue on their way having no regard for God or for the consequences of their actions on society. They are truly acting like Nabal, with a total disregard for God.

The fools devour my people as one who eats bread. This seems to be a Biblical expression referring to the oppression of the saints (Psalm 27:2 and Proverbs 30:14). It is well worth our time to reflect privately on today’s society and see the parallels. Yet the wicked are in grave danger for God is with His people. When evildoers persecute the godly, they bring judgement eventually on themselves.

In verse 6 we see the plural you (ye). These are the fools who try to shame the Godly counsel of the righteous and by doing so cause distress to the humble, yet God is a refuge for His people (Psalm 46:1; 61:3; 62:7-8; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2, 9; 142:5)

## 14:7 Longing for the Kingdom of God

*7 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.*

David longed that the oppressed might be rescued, i.e. receive salvation ישועה (*yeshuat*). Salvation in the Tanach (Older Testament) was often seen in a physical rather than a spiritual context, yet here we can see both. David prayed that God would be their refuge and rescuer and at the same time longed for the kingdom of God (Isaiah 11:6-9; Zephaniah 3:14-16). In the kingdom Zion (which is another name for Jerusalem), will become the capital and the Lord will be crowned king over all the earth there (Psalm 2:6).

David adds the phrase “*When the Lord restores His captive people.*” This is a catchphrase used by the later prophets to describe Israel’s return from exile (Jeremiah 30:18; Hosea 6:11; Joel 3:1), but since Israel was not yet in exile, that cannot be what David meant. Most likely it refers to the LORD lifting up the righteous from a place of suffering and affliction to a place of restoration, as was the case with Job (Job 42:10). As such when the LORD restores the fortunes of His people then Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be Glad (Psalm 126:1-6).

## Supplemental note

In the Septuagint, the Jewish translation to Greek made before Yeshua came, verse 3 is significantly longer:

*Psalms 14:3 “They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together: there is none that does good: no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they acted deceitfully: the poison of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and unhappiness in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

The apostle Paul quotes the first three verses of this Psalm including this version of verse 3 in Romans 3:10-18. His purpose there is to let us know that all of us, Jew and Gentile, are under sin and are in need of the Saviour.

*Selah*

*We hope this illuminated your understanding  
Blessings in Messiah Yeshua  
Paul & Sue Cohen*