

A LOOK AT EARTH FROM HEAVEN

Psalm 14

Intro: The importance of this Psalm is seen in three ways:

- (1) It is in the Word of God, meaning that it was composed under the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) It is repeated in Psalm 53. The basic difference between the two is that there is a contrast in the use of the names of God. In Psalm 14 we have Elohim (translated, "God") three times; Jehovah (translated "Lord") four times. In Psalm 53 we have only Elohim--7 times!
- (3) It is quoted in the New Testament. Cf. Rom. 3:10-12.

We do not know for certain the background of either of these Psalms, but that is not the important thing. What we have here is:

- (1) The observation of David concerning men (v. 1).
- (2) The revelation of what God sees when He looks upon the hearts and lives of men (vv. 2-4).
- (3) Taking up the theme of "my people" which the Lord sounds in v. 4, David consoles the people of God. Cf. vv. 5, 6.
- (4) Turning back to the world scene, David closes with a prayer for the fulfillment of God's promises when salvation will come "out of Zion" (v. 7).

The fact that Paul quotes from this Psalm in Romans 3 is an indication that these views of man underwent no change in 1,000 years--and they have not changed down to the present hour!

Let us look first at

I. DAVID'S VIEW OF MAN--AND THE REASON FOR IT (v. 1).

This is his doctrine of anthropology, speaking from a theological point of view.

A. The practical evidence. Three things sum up what David sees when he looks at man.

1. "Corrupt." Cf. Gen.6:11, 12. It was this that brought on the flood, and man had not changed since. In violating all that man knows to be right he has ruined himself.
2. "Abominable works." Man seems intent on doing and doing again those things which God abhors, the things which are in direct violation of His will.
3. "None that doeth good." Here David is speak-

ing of that which is according to the will of God. No man of his own will deliberately seeks to do things because they are pleasing to God. (He is not denying that there are good things which unregenerate men do.)

What is the reason for such a sight?

- B. The cause: "The fool hath said in his heart, ". . . No God."

We do not have here the denial of the existence of God, but rather the rejection of God as far as daily life is concerned. ALL EVIL IN THE WORLD, ALL THE DISTRESS THAT MEN FALL INTO, IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE REFUSED TO LET GOD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THEIR LIVES.

It seems that even God gives men more credit than to deny that there is a God. Cf. Rom. 1:21-25 where we have the expression, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

Then as we pass on to v. 2 it becomes apparent that David is amening God.

II. THE REVELATION OF GOD CONCERNING MAN (vv. 2-4).

Here we have "A LOOK AT EARTH FROM HEAVEN."

- A. What "the Lord" is looking for. Cf. v. 2. Some render this, "The Lord looks down." Though we are reminded of the period before the flood, and of the tower of Babel, this is what God is doing in all generations.

"The children of men" are lit., the sons of Adam. Man is so alienated from God that he does not understand that seeking God should be his great aim in life. THIS IS WHAT GOD SEES IN EVERY GENERATION. THIS IS WHAT HE SEES TODAY.

- B. What He sees (v. 3). The universality of these expressions is unavoidably clear.

He sees men turning away from the truth that they know, becoming sour like milk that has spoiled, and yet no one concerned about those things that are pleasing to God.

But more than that . . .

- C. What adds to His amazement (v. 4). Ungodly men see

to destroy the people of the earth who are seeking to please God. God calls them, "My people." And He has His people in every generation--men whose hearts have been responsive to the grace of God. But men who do not know the Lord will:

- (1) Ignore the testimony of creation.
- (2) Stifle their consciences.
- (3) Reject the testimony provided by the people of God.

In fact they will seek to destroy the people of God as routinely as they eat a meal--and with just as much pleasure!

With this we come to the end of what God says. Now David concludes the Psalm by showing

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN STATED IN THE PSALM (vv. 5-7).

First

A. For "the workers of iniquity."

1. "They were in great fear" (v. 5). This is a very intensive expression. In spite of all that man does to find joy, pleasure, peace, he is gripped by fears of all kinds. He can never find what he really wants except in God.

In spite of this they

2. "Have shamed the counsel of the poor." The lowly place of the people of God is to be seen in the word, "poor." Though the wicked have not found the answer, they steadfastly refuse to listen to the people of God. They scorn the message which could bring them to God and to His blessing.

- B. For the people of God. Note the way that David changes from "Lord" to "God" in v. 2, and now again in vv. 5, 6.

In v. 5 we have the presence of God with His people; in v. 6 we have the power of God for His people!

Cf. Romans 8:35-39. This has always been true, and it is our consolation.

BUT IS THIS ALL? CAN WE LET THE WICKED GO ON WITHOUT ANY FURTHER EFFORT, OR JUST SATISFIED THAT WE KNOW THE LORD? How does David answer these questions?

C. For David himself (v. 7).

David is positively assured that God will fulfil His purposes in spite of the opposition of ungodly men, and so instead of being discouraged, he sees that the one and only hope is to be found in the coming of the Lord--when the salvation of Israel and of the nations of the earth will come out of Zion!

Concl: Do you share David's faith tonight? Do you see what he saw when he looked at the lives of men? Do you "amen" God?

But do you also know that the coming of the Lord is the only hope? How tragic that Israel as a nation did not recognize Him when He came. They treated Him as they had treated all of the prophets before Him. Nevertheless, though three thousand years have gone by since David wrote these words,

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

These are not days for us to change to the ways of the world. Nor are these days for us to be discouraged because of the advances that evil is making in the world.

These ARE days for us to recognize that the needs in the hearts of men are just what they have always been, that we must continue to walk with the Lord and to bear witness for Him, trusting Him to touch others as He has touched us. And we must live in that constant expectation of His return, knowing that His coming, first for the Church, and later to the earth, is the only hope for a world so completely corrupted by sin.

Let us never forget that our Lord, who knew men as no man knows himself, was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes, and urged His disciples to pray for laborers to go to reach those who need the Saviour.