

Asking For A FRIEND? Hard Questions About Faith

(2) "Has Science Disproved Christianity?"

HIGHLIGHT: Psalm 14:1-7 NLT

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Psalm 14 (NLT)

vv.1-7

1

Only fools say in their hearts,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, and their actions are evil;
not one of them does good!

2

The Lord looks down from heaven
on the entire human race;
he looks to see if anyone is truly wise,
if anyone seeks God.

3

But no, all have turned away;
all have become corrupt.
No one does good,
not a single one!

4

Will those who do evil never learn?
They eat up my people like bread
and wouldn't think of praying to the Lord.

5

Terror will grip them,
for God is with those who obey him.

6

The wicked frustrate the plans of the
oppressed,
but the Lord will protect his people.

7

Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue
Israel?
When the Lord restores his people,
Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will
rejoice.

EXPLAIN

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

David Williams, in his commentary on Psalms, strikes a note of truth about world culture when he says that we have come to be in awe of ourselves. It's not a new phenomenon. The desire to be the master of our fate—to be like God (see Genesis 3:4-5) or to be our own god—is as old as mankind. David deals with this folly in Psalm 14:1-7.

vv.1-3 The desire to be our own god is rooted in the heart (the Hebrew word means "the middle of something"). We often use the phrase "the heart of the matter" to indicate the driving force behind some decision or action. That's why we are told to "guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Proverbs 4:23). It is the heart of a fool (one who is empty, contemptible) that says "there is no God." Adam Clarke says that a fool has "a muddy head and an unclean heart." And out of that mush comes all kinds of craziness. It's what Paul calls "foolish thinking" ("debased mind" ESV). See Romans 1:28-31. There are many who defiantly adhere to the doctrine of atheism. But there are many more who practice "practical atheism"—living as if there is no God. The results of that is a heart that grows more and more crusty (corrupt) and malignant, metastasizing until it fills our whole being. Evil people who do no good does not mean that real atheists or practical atheists cannot do some good things. They can, and do. But the natural bent of that heart is "living for self." Even good deeds can be prompted by selfish motives (see James 3:13-16). The foolish heart cannot do good because there is no divine influence in it. It turns away from God. It becomes corrupt (useless is an alternate reading)—like sour milk: rancid, becoming worthless). This is man without God.

vv.4-6 Here we see the downward spiral of evil. The corruption of the man without God oozes into all his relationships. Those who do evil never learn. And one day we realize that we eat up people like bread. We never intended that. It just happened. Compromise with the truth is like a slow leak in a car tire. Most tires don't go flat because of a blowout; they usually go flat a little at a time. And you don't notice it until it has become a problem. And we have pushed God so far away that we do not call on Him (ESV). We just don't have room for Him. Psalm 1:1 (ESV) shows how easily it happens. First there is a casual "walk" with wickedness. Then we stop and "stand" with it. We become more friendly with it. And finally we are so comfortable that we "sit in the seat of scoffers." We must "guard" our hearts. We cannot serve two masters, and it's our heart that makes that decision. There is an innate sense of God's presence in us all. Some people are gripped in terror knowing that they are shaking a fist in God's face. Others respond to that in repentance. That leads us to...

v.7 The Gospel is in this verse: the Lord restores His people. Jesus is the One who will come out of Mount Zion. He is the One who can deliver us from our foolishness and the corruption that makes us worthless and the people around us miserable. There is a God, and He alone can save. He can make the dry bones rattle. And He can bring us out of our deadness and into life because "He is so rich in mercy, and loves us so much" (see Ephesians 2:1-5). Those of us take this wonderful gift will shout with joy forever (see Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9-10; Philippians 2:8-11). This is man with God.

A**APPLY**

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Discuss Psalm 14:1. Why does David say that "only fools say in the hearts, 'there is no God'"?
3. In Romans 3:11, Paul quotes from Psalm 14:3: "No one does good, not a single one!" We can all think about *others* who aren't good, but Paul says this about *us* as well. Apart from Jesus Christ, we are not good (Jeremiah 17:9, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 3:23, etc). In what way(s) is it helpful for us to know that no one is good and all are in need of God's grace?
4. We don't have to know all of the answers in order to make disciples, but we do want to be able to "destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We want to be able to explain the truth of the Scriptures—speaking the truth in love. So far, how has this series helped you toward that end?

R**RESPOND**

The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.

1. Verse 3 says, "All have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!" How does this describe you? Be specific, not generic.

How has the good news of the Gospel changed you from corrupt to righteous? What passionate desires of the flesh have the Gospel freed you from? (See Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-8)

2. How does understanding even though all are corrupt, "the Lord will protect his people" (v.6) and "the Lord restores his people" (v.7), give us compassion towards those who need to hear the Gospel?

Who do you know who needs to hear the Gospel?

Let's share the truth of "Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue!"