**Special Presentation**

Psalm 14:1-7

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**Jordan:** Okay. So you’ve been gracious to give me two weeks on Psalm 14, and I’m hoping we’ll get through it all today. There is so much here, and it’s one of the things that I really enjoy about preparing to lead a study; it’s the mountain of information that you come in contact with. And as crazy as it sounds with a short seven-verse chapter of the Bible, how large that mountain is from all the commentators over all the centuries. And you know, it’s been a real joy for me to try to climb some of that and to really wrestle with some of that. And it’s also been a challenge for me to try to find out how to condense all of that and share with you what I think is the most relevant.

And so here’s just a quick reminder of where we were last week. I did a better job formatting the outline from last week and filled in some of the things that we discussed. But you have the first page there which is some of what we talked about last week. The back page is where we hope to get to today.

But we talked about the Psalms in general having a purposeful arrangement, that there’s a flow to them. And that flow tells us the story of redemption. And I argued to you at that time that I think in Psalm 14 we see that entire flow of redemption as well in just these short seven verses.

I also suggested that we have what we can say is a brief one-sentence summary of what Psalm 14 tells us. And that is that mankind is universally depraved. And yet there are people who have been and will be delivered. And then an outline for these seven verses that I proposed is that we see a crisis in verses 1-3, a conundrum in verses 4-6, and certainty in verse 7.

And before we move to the conundrum, I know we spent some time last week talking about the crisis. I wanted to dwell on the crisis a little bit longer. And part of that is because I think it’s really important that we understand how big of a crisis this is. And so with that let’s just review these first three verses again.

*“The fool says in his heart,*

*‘There is no God.’*

*They are corrupt; they do abominable deeds;*

*There is none who does good.*

*The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,*

*To see if there are any who understand,*

*Who seek after God.*

*They have all turned aside;*

*Together they have become corrupt.*

*There is none who does good,*

*Not even one.”*

And I also shared last week a way that we can think about a summary of these first three verses visually with that diagram, where the fool is the subject. And what is it that we see the fool speak and seek? There is no God; they do not seek after God; they speak that there is no God. Here we see both denial and neglect. And then we also see that the fool does no good and is no good.

And going back, where we see this in particular is that word *corrupt* in verse 1. It says: *“They are corrupt.”* And the Hebrew meaning for this word *corrupt* gives the idea of something that is stinking, something that has become spoiled.

And if you think about that word *spoiled,* it means that at one point it was good, and it has now turned bad. And that’s the idea that I want us to think about. How should we think about that corruption, that what was once good has turned bad? And I’m going to take us to a few other places in Scripture to do this.

And you’re welcome to jot these down in the table that I’ve given you. I have a table where we’re going to look at the crisis, and we’re going to look at the conundrum explained. You’re welcome to write down these references and make notes here from each of these.

But before we do all of that I want to take us to *The Westminster Confession of Faith.* And it wouldn’t really be a study I’m leading if I don’t have some kind of reference to the Westminster Standards. *(Laughter)* And so this comes from chapter 6 of *The Westminster Confession of Faith.* The chapter itself is titled: *Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof.*

Now I’m going to pick up in the second paragraph. But there is context here, and the context of the first paragraph is that we had our first parents, Adam and Eve. And they sinned by eating the forbidden fruit. So that’s the context for what we’re going to read.

So picking up in paragraph 2: *“By this sin”—*eating the forbidden fruit—*“they”*—our first parents—*“fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all parts and faculties of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the death in sin and corrupted nature passed down to all their posterity, descending from ordinary generation. From this original corruption we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, from which proceed all actual transgressions.:*

This is the corruption that we’re talking about. Mankind was made in original righteousness. Because of Adam and Eve’s sin they are now totally depraved, unable to do any good, not inclined in any way in soul or body toward God. And we being the posterity of Adam and Eve, we receive that original unrighteousness to ourselves.

So when the Psalmist says that we are corrupt and that all have turned aside, and that there is no one who does good and no one who seeks God, this is what we’re talking about: total depravity.

**Ted Wood:** But that does not mean that everything we do is—help me out here,--

**Don Bishop:** We’re not as bad as—

**Jordan:** We’re not as bad as we could be.

**Don Maurer:** As John Gerstner said, “There is room for deprovement.” *(Laughter)*

**Jordan:** Sure. Okay, yes?

**Ted:** To say that is shocking to the global audience they say that most people do good things. They do things for charity; they do things for others.

**Jordan:** But here’s the interesting thing. I didn’t write this one down. But in the Westminster Standards they go on to talk about good works. And they say if the intention of your good work is not with Christ in mind, then it’s seen as filthy rags.

**Ted:** Very nice.

**Jordan:** And the fact that we’re not as depraved as we can yet be is a mercy of God.

**Ted:** Yes. I would say that even the good we do is self-motivated at some level.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**Don Maurer:** Even as believers.

**Ted:** Absolutely as believers.

**Jordan:** Is there another question? Yes?

**Don Bishop:** This is an object lesson that I’ve heard over the years. Take a pure glass of water and put one drop of poison in to. You can’t drink it, but it’s not as poisonous as it can be.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**Don:** If you put even more and more drops in it, then it becomes more and more poisonous.

**Jordan:** Yes.

**Gary Craig:** I was asked about this. And I was saying that the analogy I use sometimes is comparing it to dirty clothes. It's not that your clothes are as dirty as they can be. It’s that no spot on them is clean.

**Jordan:** Yeah. We’re going to get to a clothes analogy here real quick, but that’s right. Okay, so that’s the summary from *The Westminster Confession of Faith.* But *The Westminster Confession of Faith* is not Scripture.

**Ted:** Good. *(Laughter)*

**Jordan:** So where is it getting that information from? And so let’s turn to Scripture that is evidence for and support for that summary. And I’m just going to give you some quick hits here. So if you’re not able to join with me, feel free to just write down the references. You’re welcome to look these up afterwards if you like. But I’m going to read some of these.

The first one is Isaiah 64, verses 6 and 7. And here we have Isaiah saying:

*“We have all become like one who is unclean,*

*And all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.*

*We all fade like a leaf,*

*And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

*There is no one who calls upon Your name,*

*Who rouses himself to take hold of You.*

*For You have hidden Your face from us*

*And have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.”*

Now I don’t know about you, but that sounds a lot like Psalm 14.

**Ted:** Yes, it surely does.

**Jordan:** Okay. Let’s move ahead to the New Testament. I have a couple references here from Romans. But I’m just going to read one verse which I’m sure many of you all know by heart, which is Romans 3:23. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

And then in Ephesians—another very well-known book and chapter—2, verses 1-3: *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”*

So we have this idea in these verses, summarized for us nicely in the Westminster Standards, that we are dead, that we have turned from God; there is no one who does good. And that brings us to the conundrum we now see in Psalm 14, verses 4-6. So let’s read these verses.

*“Have they no knowledge,*

*All the evildoers who eat up My people as they eat bread,*

*And do not call upon the LORD?*

*There they are in great terror,*

*For God is with the generation of the righteous.*

*You would shame the plans of the poor,*

*But the LORD is his refuge.”*

Do any of you notice the conundrum we see in these three verses?: I’m going to highlight it for you on the screen. We’ve talked about a people who have turned from God, are dead, are corrupt. And yet in these three verses we see a people who are called righteous, who are called by God His people, and are afflicted and separate from those evildoers. We now have what seems to be two different groups of people.

In the first three verses everyone is all the same. And now in these three verses there seems to be a second status, a second class of people. How do we get there? How does David get there, to all of a sudden go from everyone to know where we seem to have some righteous, some people who are called of God, and who are set apart from these who do the affliction, the evildoers themselves? That’s a conundrum, right? How do we explain that?

And while Psalm 14 itself doesn’t explicitly explain this, it indicates the truth of this, that this is true. Psalm 14 itself doesn’t explain this. But thanks be to God He has given us the rest of Scripture to help us to better understand how we can say this. And that’s where now, if you look at the table, we’re going to see in those same passages that we just read—those same books, Isaiah, Romans and Ephesians—we’re going to see this conundrum explained to us. And so let’s turn back to each of those. And let’s see who these people are and how it is that their status has changed.

We’re going to start with Isaiah. I’m going to take us to the first chapter in Isaiah; this is verse 18. It says:

*“Though your sins are like scarlet,*

*They shall be white as snow;*

*Though they are red like crimson,*

*They shall be like wool.”*

Again we see this conundrum, right? There is this sin that is being taken away.

Now I’m going to pause here because I want to share something with you that was shared with me in this very Bible study easily two decades ago, when I was a young boy and my father was dragging me here on Friday mornings. We lived farther away, and I had to wake up a lot earlier than when I have to wake up now. Bruce Bickel was teaching. And he shared some imagery that I thought was so powerful to me that I haven’t forgotten it now—twenty-some years later—when I heard it as a young boy. And it’s how we should be thinking about these words *scarlet* and *crimson.*

Now as I remembered the anecdote he shared, I was like “Oh, that’s really nice. Is it true?” And so I did some research. And I found a book that was written in 1875 that I think helps speak to the truth of the anecdote that he shared.

And ultimately what it is, it’s this. How is it that you get a color that is scarlet or crimson? Those are bright red colors. How do you get a color that is bright red? How would the ancients have done it?

And so this 1875 book—it was a German book translated into English,--was a book with the title: *The Life of the Greeks and the Romans Described From Antique Monuments.* And here is how these authors describe how you get that color.

*“Particularly interesting are the brightly colored silk or woolen dresses of the Romans. The raw materials were subjected to the dying process.”* The authors then go on to describe the materials that were used to extract the pigments for that color that came from different types of snails.

**Ted:** Hmm!

**Jordan:** But then here is what they say. *“By means of these mixtures, and by dipping the cloth into the color more than once, the ancients could gain brightness and intensity of color.”*

He goes on. *“The dress was dyed twice: the double-dyed dress.”*

This is talking about our sins. And as Bruce pointed this out to us, we are double-dipped sinners. We talked already about total depravity that was passed down to us from our first parents: original sin. That’s our first dip. We’ve been dipped into the sin of our first parents. We’re twice dipped because we sin ourselves.

And you know, whether that’s what Isaiah intended through the Holy Spirit or not, I think that’s really something to think about. And I’ll tell you: Twenty years later I can’t hear this verse or read this verse without thinking to myself, I am a double-dipped sinner—once from Adam and Eve passed down to me, secondly because of myself. And you know, if that’s the case we’re still kind of in crisis. But we see those sins that are taken away from us, and we will be white as snow.

So how does Isaiah further explain this? Well if we go on into chapter 7, just a few chapters later, we start to get a glimpse. *“Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*

Who is it that is taking us from this crimson sin to white as snow? It is the Lord Himself through His son called Immanuel—God with us.

And then we certainly see toward the end of Isaiah chapter 53, which I imagine many of you know, we see Christ accomplishing this for us on the cross, accomplishing atonement for us. So that’s where we start to see this conundrum explained to us in Isaiah.

Where do we see this in Romans?

**John Gratner:** Can I say something?

**Jordan:** Yes.

**John:** I don’t want to derail things. But from the context, we ought to look at the context. Let’s go back to Isaiah 1 because I think we have to read that verse in its context. And I’m not sure that how it’s being used fits clearly into the context.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**John:** Let me read 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

*“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean.*

*Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.*

*Cease to do evil; learn to do what is good.*

*Seek justice, reprove the ruthless,*

*Defend the orphan, plead for the widow.*

*‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says Yahweh.*

*‘Though your sins are as scarlet,*

*They will be white as snow;*

*Though they are red like crimson,*

*They will be like wool.’*

*If you consent and obey,*

*You will eat the best of the land.*

*But if you refuse and rebel,*

*You will be devoured by the sword.*

*Truly the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

The context there is a little different than how Westminster is applying it here. Who is He speaking to and what is He saying? What He isn’t saying is that “you people are dead and you can’t do any of these things.” That’s not what He’s saying here. So I’m not sure that’s consistent there. And I’m not trying to derail your point.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**John:** I’m simply saying that as we look at these, we really have to read them the way that they would have understood them then, and not come back to it and import the meaning that frankly isn’t really consistent there in that text with what Isaiah was saying and what Isaiah’s readers would have been hearing.

**Jordan:** Yeah; I agree with you. I’ll make a comment on that and I’ll say that 1., this is my interpretation.

**John:** Understood.

**Jordan:** So don’t blame it on the Westminster divines. Secondly I think that context is incredibly important. And I think that if you actually go further back than just verse 16 for the second time, you’ll see that what Isaiah is saying here is that the people of Israel thought themselves better than they were.

**John:** I don’t doubt that.

**Jordan:** For instance in verse 12:

*“When you come to appear before Me,*

*Bring no more vain offerings.*

*Your incense is an abomination to Me.”*

They thought: Oh, as long as we traditionally and repetitionally do the things that You’ve commanded us to do, that’s all You care about. And I think what the Lord is saying here is, that’s not good enough. You need to wash yourselves. But the idea is, you can’t. You cannot wash yourselves. Someone has to wash you; you are a double-dipped sinner. Someone else has to make you clean. And I think that’s where we see it in the rest of Isaiah, and especially chapter 7.

The context for chapter 7, where the Lord says: *“The LORD Himself will give you a sign,”* is that Ahaz is king in Judah, and he is concerned about war that is coming. The Lord says: “I will deliver you. Ask of Me a sign and I’ll give you one.”

And Ahaz says, “Oh, who am I to test the hand of the LORD with a sign?” And God says, “Fine! If you won’t ask of Me a sign, I’ll give you a sign that you will be delivered.” And then we hear about the virgin birth: Immanuel, God with us.

I think it continues the idea that the Israelites thought they were better than they were. They thought that as long as they obeyed the law externally that that was all they needed to do for salvation. And what Isaiah is trying to tell us is, that’s not good enough. Your works are as filthy rags, right? We saw that earlier in chapter 63. And so they need Someone else to save them. Don, I saw your hand up.

**Don Maurer:** Not only that, Jordan, but we can’t assume that all of the people whom Isaiah is addressing are regenerate.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**Don:** Because it says in Romans 9 that “not all of Israel is Israel.”

**Jordan:** Right. Yes?

**Ted:** This is a really interesting discussion, and I think it’s important. You were saying that the Scriptures tell us that we’re not able to do it. I’m not too sure the Scripture says that, because it says: “If you are willing and obedient.”

**Jordan:** Sure.

**Ted:** It doesn’t say: “If you are willing and obedient, and you’re not willing and obedient.” I’m reading through Deuteronomy now. And the thing that strikes me is that it’s almost like God is setting us up.

**Jordan:** Well, I think it’s important to note—

**Ted:** Again, I think that the Sermon on the Mount is almost a setup.

**Jordan:** Sure. Yes, we are going down a sidetrack. We’re going to need three weeks if we keep going. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** I’m sorry.

**Jordan:** No, no, no! It’s good, right? If this is where the discussion needs to go, it’s good. But maybe I’ll try to just wrap it up by this. And here is what I’ll also say. You shouldn’t take anything I’m saying as fact just because I’m saying it, right? Who am I?

**Ted:** You’re young and you don’t know much.

**Jordan:** Exactly, *(Laughter)* Now we’ve seen good examples in the New Testament as the apostles were going town to town. There were certain towns in Berea where they examined the Scriptures to say, “Are these things true?”, right? We’ve all been encouraged here in this study before—I know Bruce used to do this!—to be Bereans, right? Take the things that you’re hearing here; examine them for yourselves to see if they are true.

So I’ll make one final comment on this. But then I’ll just say this. Don’t just take it at face value because you’re hearing it here, right? Examine for yourselves whether the Scriptures say these things are true. And obviously you’re doing that.

**Michael Rush:** Right.

**Jordan:** But I think that we cannot ignore the fact that Scripture tells us that *“There is no one who does good.”* There is no one who is good; we are corrupt.

**Ted:** Right.

**Jordan:** So—

**Mike Davis:** And that we’re dead.

**Jordan:** And dead. And if you start with that, then you have to say that I need to think about what it means when it tells me, *“If you are willing.”*

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** Because you’re unable. So it’s not a matter of well, you’re both dead and not dead. So you sort of can’t do anything, but this says that you sort of can.

There’s something else that has to explain that. And I think we’re going to get to that a little bit later. What explains that? How is it that we come to life so that we are willing and able to obey?

**Ted:** I think your teaching is absolutely superb. I’m not arguing with you; I’m raising a lot of really good questions and issues that most folks don’t wrestle with.

**Jordan:** Sure; okay.

**Ted:** No, I have no problem with your teaching at all.

**Jordan:** Okay. So we’re going to move ahead quickly. Oh man, time is flying! I’m just going to go through some of these quickly again. Feel free to write down these references and look these up yourselves.

In this same passage where we are told: *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”* in that same passage we also see how it is that we are redeemed: it’s through faith in Jesus—redemption in Jesus, propitiation by His blood. This conundrum is starting to be explained: how it is that we go from sinners to being white as snow. It’s accomplished by the Lord for us in Jesus.

And then lastly, in Ephesians—again the very same passage that starts out that we are dead in our sins goes on to say, *“But God.”* There are those two words that I know a lot of us love so much, that we weren’t left in that state. *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*

Verses 8 and 9 here: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no man may boast.”* And again, highlighting all of the parts of this passage that tell us and explain to us this conundrum, how is it that we go from “no one seeks God” to now there is a group of people who are called righteous? It is because of God and because of the work accomplished for us by Christ, and ultimately our union with Christ. That is how we get from the crisis we see in verses 1-3 to the explanation of the conundrum we then appear to see in verses 4-6.

There is nothing any of us have done on our own. God is the sole Person who has done that for us through the work accomplished on the cross by Christ.

Now there’s a fancy word for this kind of thinking that Reformed theologians use; it’s called *monergism.* Mono being the root of that word means one; one Person is doing this, and that one Person is God. There is another word that people use called *synergism,* which implies that no, there are multiple people that contribute to this. God does His part; man does his part; we all come together in this happy medium. Some people will see those passages that you were mentioning, Ted, and they will think: Oh, I have a role to play here. There is something I contribute to this process.

**Ted:** God is actually telling them that you have a role to play, if you do these things.

**Jordan:** But it’s God who determines who will and who will not, right?

**Ted:** I’m not even getting to that. I’m just getting into the dilemma.

**Jordan:** Sure.

**Ted:** And the natural man naturally says, “I can do it.” I mean, as little kids growing up we said, “I can do it; let me do it.”

**Jordan:** Yeah.

**Ted:** “I can drive a car at 16; no problem. *(Unclear)*

**Jordan:** Yes. So I want to wrap up with this slide. This is going to be one of those food-for-thought types of slides, so feel free to jot this down if you want to on your outlines. What I have here is a helpful diagram that explains what is also referred to as the *ordo salutis*—the order of the events that result in your salvation. And I can make sure to share this diagram afterwards if that would be helpful.

It’s not to say that these things have to happen particularly linearly or sequentially. Some things can happen at the same time. But this is the order in which we are saved.

And so just to review this quickly, it begins with God electing a certain people to be saved. For those whom God has elected to salvation their sin is atoned for on the cross through the work of Christ. They are then saved by the hearing of the gospel message. That’s the gospel call; you need to hear the gospel.

And then the work of the Holy Spirit regenerates your heart. It brings you to life; it opens your eyes; it unstops your ears. It takes your heart and stone and turns it to a heart of flesh. And you are regenerated, allowing you to respond to that gospel message with faith that is given to you by grace from God.

In that faith you then repent of your sins. We are willing to obey; that is our part here. It is my faith, it is my repentance that is given to me by God. So we repent of our sins and turn to Christ as our Savior whose atoning work justifies us from our sins and the wrath of God to come. And then for the rest of our time on this earth we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit until the last day, at which point we are glorified into eternal salvation and everlasting life.

Now I skipped something because I was in a rush. And I want to go back and make sure that I mention this.

**Ted:** Jordan, I guess I’m wondering. Do you have enough for a third lesson?

**Jordan:** I can get through it.

**Ted:** I just don’t want you to rush.

**Jordan:** No, that’s okay.

**Ted:** I think Michael is scheduled to teach next week. Does that sound right?

**Michael:** Rush! *(Laughter)*

**Jordan:** Rush!

**Ted:** Oh, I get it. *(Laughter)*

**Jordan:** No, I’ll be okay. I’m just rushing because I’m not looking at my notes, that’s all. I want to go back to Ephesians real quick. If you have your Bibles with you, turn to Ephesians 2, where we reviewed Paul explaining to us this gospel message. So he explains how this works, right? He’s starting to explain this to us.

Go down to chapter 3, right after he explains this. I don’t know if your Bibles have headings in them; mine does. The heading in my Bible for chapter 3 says: “The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed.” And if you look at verse 3, he calls it a mystery. If you look at verse 6 he calls it a mystery. And if you look at verse 9, again we see it called a mystery.

Now I did not plan this out ahead of time by the providence of God. But when you look at a thesaurus—and I went to an online thesaurus,--the synonyms of the word *mystery,* of the strongest matches listed, the first one listed alphabetically is the word *conundrum.* Like I said, I did not plan that out in week one when I proposed the outline for this Psalm. But isn’t that interesting, that in Psalm 14 we have a conundrum? As Paul explains to us the mystery of the gospel, this is a mystery.

And it is, right? It’s hard for us to say. And I don’t know if we’ll ever have an answer; certainly I don’t think we will in this lifetime. Why did God choose me? Why did He not choose someone else, maybe someone that I love? Why not, as it appears, my wife, my child, my friend, my parent? That is a mystery. But we shouldn’t let that mystery cause us to give up hope for our loved ones.

**Michael:** Right.

**Jordan:** Paul in 1 Corinthians tells wives and husbands that if they are married and united to unbelievers not to divorce them. He goes on to say, “How do you know if the Lord might use you to bring them to salvation?”

There is this mystery in life which we may not ever get the answer to as to why me? Why Jacob and not Esau? And we’re told in Romans that we are the clay and He’s the potter; it’s not for us to know.

Interestingly that same Isaiah 64 passage that we read in the beginning when we were in the crisis section also refers to God as the potter. It’s not our place to know why; it’s a mystery to us. But I think that what we need to make sure we’re doing is responding in thankfulness and gratitude and obedience and love, right? That is what is for us to do.

Okay. So we have the union with Christ. We talked very briefly—and I apologize for that—through the *ordo salutis.* Again I would encourage you to think about this and to research this on your own if there are parts of this that you want to learn more about.

What I was going to spend just a couple moments talking through some concluding thoughts on this conundrum, things that I picked up from commentators as I was reviewing this. And I’m not going to go through all of these. But I am going to go through the first one because, as I mentioned in week one, I was fascinated with the similarity between Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. This one fascinates me as well.

Look again at verse 4; that’s the first bullet here.

*“Have they no knowledge,*

*All the evildoers who eat up My people as they eat bread,*

*And do not call upon the LORD?”*

If you have Psalm 14 opened, scan down to verse 7. Notice how the people of God are referred to there. This is in the middle of the verse. *“When the LORD restores the fortunes of His people.”* Verse 4 doesn’t say “His people”; it says, *“My people.”*

You know, I’m kind of stuck on that. I don’t know that I have the answer with certainty as to why we seem to have a difference in the way the people are referred to. And the way one commentator put it—and I apologize; I don’t know who that was!—but the way one commentator put it is that the first three verses are this crisis. Verse 4 is the start of the crisis shifting. And we just talked about all this as the work of God Himself; it’s not the work of man.

And the way the commentator put it is, *“It is as if God Himself reached down into the Psalm at this point and said, ‘I am the One who does this. I have claimed you as My people. It is not you who look to Me as your God, but Me who has chosen you.”*

And I don’t know if that’s what’s going on here. But I’ll tell you what: that’s good enough for me. I like it; it seems to align with what we’ve been talking about. And I think that’s a good way to think about it, right? It is God who has claimed us as His own.

And here in verse 4, we talked about poetic pyramids last week, that pinnacle. This is the pinnacle of the Psalm: three verses, three verses. In the pinnacle of the Psalm God is reaching down to us saying, “You are My people.” I think we should take a lot of comfort from that.

**Jim Hamilton:** What is the definition of Zion?

**Jordan:** Well, I think it’s generally often thought of as the holy city. I know it’s referred to a lot in Revelation as the city where God’s people will ultimately come to live. It had an actual Old Testament reference to it. The city of David was referred to often as Zion.

**Ted:** It’s the narrow ridge that comes out of the southern part of that triangle that Jerusalem sits on. And there’s a narrow ridge, and that’s where the original Jerusalem was.

**Jordan:** Yes.

**Ted:** Zion was the name of the city. It’s been leveled over the centuries, so there’s hardly anything there anymore.

**Jordan:** Yeah. Okay. So let’s very briefly look at what we have in this Psalm related to certainty, and this is verse 7. This now is the prayer of the Psalmist, concluding the Psalm. And so David says:

*“Oh that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!*

*When the LORD restores the fortunes of His people,*

*Let Jacob rejoice; let Israel be glad!”*

So we certainly see rejoicing happening here. But the certainty we have is right in the middle of the verse: *“When the LORD restores the fortunes of His people.”* It’s not an if; it’s a when. This is a certainty that His people will be saved.

And we see in the verses leading up to this that there is affliction for God’s people, right? He says that “the evildoer will eat up My people like they eat bread.” They will shame the counsel of the poor. Another translation says, *“of the afflicted.”* And we can expect affliction in this life, right? The world hated Christ. He is our Master. Who are we as His servants not to expect the same? We should be expecting affliction in this life.

But after the affliction there will be mercy. And after the humiliation of this life there will be exaltation. And we can expect that with certainty. And we can place our hope in that certainty.

And so just to wrap up, I provided a diagram in week one of what we see that the fool is. I wanted to suggest to you how we can think about what the Lord does in this Psalm with another diagram. And so we also see that the Lord seeks. The fool sought not after God. But we saw in verse 2 that the Lord looks down. He is seeking; He is watching over all mankind.

And in verse 3 He judges. *“There is none who does good.”* We have that over all of mankind.

But from here we see a difference, right? The conundrum starts to separate all people into two groups. And for those that are His people, He calls them. He calls them “My people” in verse 4.

And in verses 5-7 we see that He saves His people. He rejects the wicked; we also see that in verse 4. And He punishes the wicked.

And here for that punishment what is particularly helpful is to look at Psalm 53, because if you remember we mentioned in the first week that Psalm 53 has a few extra words in that fifth verse that aren’t contained in Psalm 14. And in Psalm 53 the extra words are: *“He scatters the bones of the wicked.”* He is doling out that punishment.

And so we see this directly in Psalm 14. But as we discussed earlier, all of the other benefits that we have from God we can indirectly see in Psalm 14 as well: that *ordo salutis* that we looked at earlier. We can indirectly see that through this Psalm as well.

And so I mentioned last week that this isn’t one of the most well-known Psalms; it’s not one of the most popular. One of the commentators called it “a mongrel Psalm.” For those that do tend to know about this Psalm, many believers tend to associate it with atheism. And they may even use it as a point of pride. “Oh, the atheist! That foolish person! I’m better than they!” And pastors may also pick up on that atheism point, but use it for application in terms of practical atheism. You believers, are you practically acting as atheists?

And I would tell you that if we’d spent two weeks studying this Psalm, and at the end of those two weeks all you see is actual or practical atheism, then I feel like I would have failed in clearly presenting Christ to you through this Psalm. And my hope would be that whenever you read this Psalm in the future or hear this Psalm said, that your first inclination is not toward atheism; it’s toward Christ. And you can see what Christ has accomplished for us in this Psalm.

We mentioned that the flow of the Psalms is the story of redemption. I’ve suggested that this Psalm is a summary of the story of redemption. And if Christ is the One who has accomplished our redemption, then we should see Christ in this Psalm. And with that, that’s what I have for you in Psalm 14. Any final comments or questions?

**Ted:** I’m looking at the Hebrew on that last verse. You say that we should see Christ in this. Listen to this. *“Oh that out of Zion would come Jeshua!”* Do you get that, Jeshua? So it’s actually pointing to the name of Jesus.

**Jordan:** That’s great.

**Gary:** Is that in 14 or 15?

**Ted:** That’s in 14 verse 7. And even more interesting, the word here translated *fortunes* is almost universally or literally translated as *captivity.*

**Jordan:** Mm-hmm.

**Ted:** So it’s another word that actually reads into what you are trying to say.

**Jordan:** Yes. And really this is not just a Psalm 14 where we should see Christ. We should be looking for Christ in every Psalm. And when we read them, you know that I mentioned these diagrams, that they can help you to slow down, right? And if you’re slowing down, slow down to try to see where Christ is in this Psalm.

So why don’t I close us with prayer? I was going to pull another one from *The Valley of Vision.”* But I think that maybe what I’ll do instead is to just lead us in prayer, kind of flowing through Psalm 14 itself. Why don’t we just pray through Psalm 14 as we close?

O Lord, our God and Savior, we have been fools. We are corrupt, and apart from You we are unable to do any good. And we know, Lord, that You will judge at the end, on the last day, and that our sins and our sinfulness is deserving of death. But thank You, Lord, that You in Your goodness toward us, Your mercy and Your grace, You have turned us from our sins back to You. You have exchanged our garments that we have polluted for white, clean garments through the work of Christ on the cross, and You have called us Your people. We know, Lord, that we might expect affliction in this life. And we pray that You would help us to be bold against it, to stand firm in Christ when it comes. And Lord, we pray that You would help us to steadfastly look ahead to the hope that we have of salvation and everlasting life with You, and that for all the days, the rest of our lives, Lord, that this hope would give us reason to praise You, to live obedient lives, not because it’s the works themselves that earn any merit with You, but because of our love toward You and our desire to please You. And we pray all these things in Your Son’s name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*