Psalm 53

"The Eventual Triumph of Israel Over Depraved, Antagonistic Humanity"

For the choir director; according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David.


A1 THE UNIVERSAL DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND 53:1-3

B1 The Condemnation of Atheists 53:1

C1 The Foolish Conclusion of the Atheist: \(1\) The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God,"

C2 The Indictment Against Atheists

D1 They are corrupt,

D2 and have committed abominable injustice;

C3 The Damning Verdict: There is no one who does good.

B2 The Condemnation of All Mankind 53:2-3

C1 Elohim’s Universal Search for Spiritual Men 53:2

D1 Elohim’s perspective: \(2\) God has looked down from heaven

D2 The object of His scrutiny: upon the sons of men

D3 The purpose of His scrutiny

E1 To see if there is anyone who understands,

E2 Who seeks after God.

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1 Author's Title: "The psalm reports that the entire human race is evil and that God will overthrow sinners. Therefore the psalmist longs for the establishment of God’s kingdom." (Allen P. Ross, The Bible Knowledge Commentary [TBKC])

2 Superscription - Mahalath: The psalm is David’s, set to Mahalath, possibly a well-known tune. (Allen P. Ross, TBKC)
C2 The Indictment Against All Mankind 53:3a

D1 Individual departure: {3} Every one of them has turned aside;

D2 Corporate corruption: together they have become corrupt;

C3 The Damning Verdict 53:3b

D1 There is no one who does good,

D2 not even one.

A2 THE VICTORY ³ OF ELOHIM'S PEOPLE OVER THE WICKED 53:4-5

B1 The Ignorance of the Wicked Who Presently Devour God's People 53:4

C1 Their Ignorance of the Wicked: {4} Have the workers of wickedness no knowledge,

C2 Their Devouring of God's People: Who eat up My people ⁴ as though they ate bread

C3 Their Apathy toward Elohim: And have not called upon God?

B2 The Past Victory of Israel over His Enemies 53:5

C1 The Sudden Fear of the Enemies: {5} There they were in great fear where no fear had been;

C2 Elohim's Scattering of the Besieger's Bones: For God scattered the bones of him who encamped ⁵ against you;⁶

C3 Israel's Victory Attributed to Elohim's Rejection of the Wicked: You put them to shame, because God had rejected them.

³ 53:4-5, Author's Title - "Victory": "David expressed his amazement at the ignorance of those who persecute the righteous. He foresaw that the wicked will be in great terror and shame when God destroys them. This judgment is so certain that the psalmist envisioned it as already accomplished" (Allen P. Ross, TBKC). That may be true in the ultimate sense, but the present author believes there was some historical basis in fact for David's statements.

⁴ 53:4 - My people: I am inclined to believe that "my" refers to David, not God. Regardless, the effect is the same.

⁵ 53:5 - bones of him who encamped against you: Who is the him of 53:5: "God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you"? Presumably the enemies of Israel, but why then the switch from plural, they (53:5a), to singular, him (53:5b)? Possibly, since "encamped against you" is a participle, the participle reflects a general truth that did not happen to every last enemy -- most of them would have been buried, but perhaps here and there a corpse lay outside unburied in a more remote or hidden venue, and wild animals scavenged the body and the bones were dispersed. Whatever happened, then, to a few of them, was symbolic of the fate of all.

⁶ 53:5 you: You is singular, but it must refer to Israel. The verbs linked to Jacob and Israel in 53:6 are second person singular.
A3 DAVID'S LONGING FOR THE ULTIMATE SALVATION OF ISRAEL FROM HER ENEMIES 53:6

B1 David's Longing for Elohim to Rise Up from Zion and Provide Ultimate and Final Salvation for Israel: 6 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

B2 David's Anticipation of Joy when Elohim Restores ALL the Captives! When God restores His captive people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.