

## Day 333 - WEDNESDAY: January 3rd

### Psalms 14, 15 & 16

#### Psalms 14:1-7 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the LORD? There they are in great fear, For God is with the generation of the righteous. You shame the counsel of the poor, But the LORD is his refuge. Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

#### Psalms 15:1-5 NKJV

A Psalm of David. LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

#### Psalms 16:1-11 NKJV

A Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You." As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I

will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips. O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance. I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

Psalm 14:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 14, of which Psalm 53 is a somewhat revised duplicate, is a lament about the foolishness of "practical atheism." The fool (*nabal*, wicked, impious person) convinces himself, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1)—or at least no God who would deign to impact his life. Determining the concept of God to be essentially irrelevant, the fool "intentionally flouts his independence from God and his commandments" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 1).

*The Zondervan NIV Study Bible* comments on Psalm 14: "This psalm brings to closure the collection of prayers that began with Psalm 3.... Five psalms (and 64 Hebrew poetic lines) after Psalm 8's surprising evocation of humanity's 'glory and honor' (Psalm 8:5), this psalm highlights their disgrace.... In this it serves as a counterpoint to that earlier recollection of humanity's high dignity and thereby exposes more sharply the depth of their disgrace—

from which the petitioners in this and the preceding psalms have suffered."

While fools go about denying God's existence, He looks down on humanity, assessing its wickedness (Psalm 14:2). David says that God has found everyone corrupt (verses 1-3). The apostle Paul will quote this verdict in Romans 3:10-12. It is not clear if David intends to include in this indictment those he refers to as "the generation of the righteous" (verse 5). No doubt he realizes that they were not righteous to begin with but had needed to come to God in repentance. Paul's use of this passage is to show that all are guilty of sin and in need of God's grace. Yet those who respond in faith become the godly in contrast to the godless hosts of mankind.

Eventually the wicked of every age who refuse to repent will face the consequences of their foolishness. "There," at a specific time of judgment, they will greatly fear (verse 5). And at that time, God's people, those who repent of their wayward human nature, will be saved (verses 6-7)." [END]

Psalm 15:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 15, begins a new group of psalms (15-24). As the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* notes, "Psalm 15 and its distinctive counterpart, Psalm 24, frame a cluster of psalms that have been arranged in a concentric pattern with Psalm 19 serving as the hinge.... [There are] thematic links between Psalm 16 and 23, between Psalm 17 and 22, and between Psalm 18 and 20-21.... The framing psalms (15; 24) are thematically linked by their evocation of the high majesty of God and their insistence on moral purity 'without {which} no one will see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14). At the center, Psalm 19 uniquely combines a celebration of the divine majesty as displayed in the

creation and an exposition of how moral purity is attained through God's law, forgiveness and shepherding care. Together, these three psalms (15; 19; 24) provide instructive words concerning the petitioners heard in the enclosed psalms, offer a counterpoint to Psalm 14, and reinforce the instruction of Psalm 1."

Psalm 15 identifies some of the important requirements for someone coming into God's presence. The psalm brings to mind pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for the annual worship festivals. "As the pilgrims approached Jerusalem—the city of God, where His 'sanctuary' was located on the 'holy hill'—they had to examine themselves before entering the courts of God's sanctuary" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 1).

In a larger sense, the psalm presents a number of points of examination for anyone who wants to be in God's presence. Such an individual 1) follows what is right as a general way of life, 2) obeys God's commandments, 3) speaks truthfully, 4) doesn't make spiteful remarks about others, 5) doesn't intentionally hurt others, 6) doesn't spread false accusations against others; 7) shuns the wicked and their ways, 8) honors godly people, 9) keeps promises even when it hurts, 10) doesn't take advantage of those in need, 11) doesn't act against innocent people for gain. God's sanctuary today, His spiritual temple or house, is the Church. Yet the figure surely extends to the future temple of God in His Kingdom. Of course, just trying to follow these points will not gain us access to God through entrance into His Church and Kingdom—because no one is innocent and no one can succeed in this effort on his own. God imputes true righteousness to those "who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4: 24-25). For those who

are so justified, the points of Psalm 15 constitute one of many "lists" of right things to practice as part of building on a strong foundation (Matthew 7:24-25)—so that they "will never be shaken" (Psalm 15:5, NIV)." [END]

I'm going to include this whole chapter here from the New Living Translation as I believe it captures these verses well.

NLT "Who may worship in Your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter Your presence on Your holy hill?

Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.

Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.

Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.

Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Such people will stand firm forever." [END]

I would encourage you to take 15 to 30 seconds on each of these lines and think deeply about them.

Psalm 16:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 16 is referred to in its superscription as a *mikhtam*. "The term remains unexplained, though it always stands in the superscription of Davidic prayers occasioned by great danger (see Psalm 56-60)" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 16). The Septuagint renders the word as the Greek *steloprapha*, meaning "an inscription on a slab." *Mikhtam* is possibly related to the similar-sounding

word *mikhtav*, meaning "writing" in Isaiah 38:9. Perhaps these particular psalms were originally written not as songs but as poems.

David begins Psalm 16 with a petition for protection and deliverance to God in whom he has placed his trust (verse 1). David then reflects in verses 2-3 on the basis on which God hears him: 1) he has confessed God as the Lord of his life; 2) he recognizes that whatever good he has comes only from God and not from himself; and 3) he honors and takes joy in the "saints" or "holy ones"—the other followers of the true God.

David thinks next about the sorrows men bring on themselves when they chase after false gods (verse 4). Indeed, the religions of the cultures surrounding Israel in his day included some obvious examples of this. "If he had chosen the god Moloch of the Canaanites, for example, he would have had to sacrifice one of his babies to that god (Lev. 20:2). If he had gone to live in Carthage, and had adopted its religion, he would have had to participate in human sacrifice. Obviously he shrank in horror from the very idea of both practices" (Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 16:1-11). Of course, David likely meant much more than this. False religion has spawned *many* wrong concepts and practices that lead mankind away from true happiness.

David then addresses God again, saying, "*You* are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot" (verse 5). "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places" (verse 6). Several words here recall the apportioning of the Promised Land to Israel: "chosen portion," "inheritance," "lot," "boundary lines." *The Nelson Study Bible* comments that "David had an ancestral inheritance in the land. As king, he also had extensive

royal holdings. But he realized that no inheritance was greater than his relationship with Almighty God" (note on verses 5-8). In verse 10, where the NKJV has "You will not leave my soul in Sheol," the NIV has "You will not abandon me to the grave." This could be understood as meaning either that God will not allow David to go to the grave in his present circumstances or that, even if David dies, God will resurrect him from the grave. The latter seems to be intended by what follows: "Nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption" or, as the NIV translates it, "decay." Yet this reference to *the* Holy One was in fact a prophecy of the Messiah. "If this could be said of David—and of all those godly Israelites who made David's prayer their own—how much more of David's promised Son! So Peter quotes vv. 8-11 and declares that with these words David prophesied of Christ and his resurrection (Acts 2:25-28...)" (*Zondervan*, note on Psalm 16:9-11). Indeed, Jesus is more exactly meant by these verses because, unlike David, He was resurrected before His body started to decay. As the apostle Paul explained in Acts 13:35-36: "Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption."

David concludes this psalm by expressing confidence that God will show him the way to eternal life, the "path of life" in God's presence (verse 11), which he describes as full of joy and pleasure forever." [END]