

## PSALM 53

*Folly and Wickedness of Men.*

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. For the Chief Musician; set to Mahalath. Maschil of David.
- B. The title in the ASV is "The Folly and Wickedness of Men," and in Halley's Handbook of the Bible we have the one selected here.
- C. Set to Mahalath. "According to Dr. Kay, this is a musical term indicating that it is to be sung 'Maestoso.'" This is a musical instruction meaning, "'With Majesty,' 'Majestically,' or 'Stately.'"
- D. Maschil. This word means a "a meditative poem."<sup>[3]</sup>  
The most important fact about this psalm is that it is almost in its entirety a duplication of Psalms 14, except for two things:
  - 1. The word [Elohiym] (God) is substituted throughout in place of the word Jehovah (God) which is used in Psa. 14.
  - 2. There is a slight change of meaning in Psa. 53:5, but for what purpose is not known. Rawlinson thought it might be for the "purpose of adapting the Psalm to some special occasion."
- E. Reference is here made to our Commentary on Psalms 14 where we have adequately discussed the text which we find here, with the exception of Psalms 53:5.

### THE TEXT.

- 53:1** The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God,"  
They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice;  
There is no one who does good.
- 2** God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men  
To see if there is anyone who understands,  
Who seeks after God.
- 3** Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt;  
There is no one who does good, not even one.
- 4** Have the workers of wickedness no knowledge,  
Who eat up My people *as though* they ate bread  
And have not called upon God?
- 5** There they were in great fear *where* no fear had been;  
For God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you;  
You put *them* to shame, because God had rejected them.
- 6** Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!  
When God restores His captive people,  
Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

### COMMENTS.

- A. **[v5]** Nothing whatever is known about the event referred to here. The alternative use of the second person and the third person in references to God is not unusual in the Bible.
- B. We repeat here one factor stressed in our treatment of Psalms 14, namely, that "The Universal Sinfulness of Mankind" is almost certainly a reference to the Judicial Hardening of the Adamic race for the fourth and final time at a period of history just prior to the Final Judgment. Paul, of course, applied what is written here to the Judicial Hardening of both Jews and Gentiles upon the occasion of the First Advent of Christ.
- C. We find in such prophecies as Revelation 16 a prophecy of the ultimate and final hardening, to which these prophecies are equally applicable.