

Atheists and God's Existence

Building a Christian Mind

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Well, we come this evening to the final installment of our series how to know that God exists, and we've established the conclusive nature of the way that God has imprinted himself in a way to be known in every aspect of life, be it external or internal, things written and things visible in creation in the Canon of Scripture, in the principle of human conscience, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the Christian in his own conversion, God has shed light into our souls and made himself known in a uniquely particular way to each one of us that are in Christ. And what we've said is, is that these things are not a probability case for the existence of God, they are conclusive, they are established, and there will be no excuse for any one before the throne of God who has rejected his revelation. But that leaves a question for us that we need to answer before we move on to other aspects of building a Christian mind. If all of these things are true, if God has made himself known, then why are there atheists? Why do there exist people who outspokenly deny the existence of God, write books and make millions in royalties off of the books that proclaim their atheistic philosophy of life? Isn't that a denial of everything that we've said? If it's so clear and so obvious, then how could it be that anyone would deny it? It's important for us to have a fundamental framework of understanding the answer to that question, you know, because we need to address squarely the accusation perhaps or to consider the question is God's self-revelation actually unclear? Is it actually disputable in a way that men are justified in rejecting it or justified in having an agnostic approach which agnostic saying, "I don't know if there's a God or not," atheists saying, "There is no such thing as a God or a God"? How are we to reconcile these things? How do we explain unbelief in light of creation and the Canon and conscience and Christ and conversion? Well, to deal with that question, I invite you to turn to Psalm 14, which we'll consider in a verse by verse manner here this evening. Psalm 14 helps us have perspective, especially as we interpret it with the benefit of other Scriptures that address this same theme. We do not need to be intimidated. We do not need to be troubled by the existence of atheists. Scripture makes it plain for us and helps us have a coherent worldview, a coherent view of life that accommodates everything that God has done to reveal himself, and also those who dissent from his revelation.

Psalm 14. I'll read it from beginning to end, and then we'll go back verse by verse. In Psalm 14:1 we read this, it is a Psalm of David and David, writing under the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit, giving us the word of God on the matter, which is all that matters is what God says about it, we read this beginning in verse 1,

1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. 4 Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? 5 There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous. 6 You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge. 7 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.

In a very broad general sense, what we have here in Psalm 14 is this: David examines the corruption, the spiritual corruption of the human race, and he longs for Yahweh to establish his kingdom on earth. He looks at what's happening in the world, he analyzes it, he mourns over it, and then he turns his attention to God who will restore his kingdom, restore his people, and vindicate them in their weakness and under the assault of the world, God will ultimately come to their rescue and prove that his truth was abiding all along. Now Psalm 14 is a biblically prominent text of Scripture. It is repeated with some minor variation in Psalm 53. You can read those side by side and see the very close parallels between those two Psalms at another time. As we'll see in a little while, Psalm 14 is quoted at length in Romans 3 where the Apostle Paul establishes the universality of human guilt, and right in the core of perhaps the most important book in the Bible, if you can say such a thing, I do not like to say such a thing, but there is a reason why the book of Romans is put first at the head of all of the epistles throughout the church, it's been recognized as having a unique singular importance because of the systematic way that it presents the foundational truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, with that little glimpse at Romans, what we need to understand to appreciate Psalm 14 is that the argument of Psalm 14 is central to the conviction and the condemnation that the Apostle Paul brings against the entire human race as he's building his case and explaining the gospel in a systematic way from beginning to end. And so Paul, as he's making this great foundational document, what some have called one of the, you know, some of the greatest literature in all of the history of man, Paul draws upon Psalm 14 and makes it a cornerstone of a central part of his argument. And so as you and I come tonight to Psalm 14 and we see how Scripture views Psalm 14, we come with humbled hearts, we come somewhat chastened, we come recognizing that we need its instruction, and we bow before the word of God and receive everything that it has to say and we receive the word of God, we receive Psalm 14, over against those who would mock it and deny and criticize and try to undermine everything that we've been teaching in this series.

It's so very important for you to know and to understand that to be a Christian is to take a decisive stand for the truth. We just sang the hymn, "More love to thee, O Christ, more love to thee." Well, one of the ways that we manifest our love for Christ is to stand for truth over against error no matter how strong the error may seem to be, no matter how persuasive, no matter how powerful, no matter how intimidating, no matter how historical the error may be. We align ourselves consciously in submission, devotion and loyalty to the truth of the word of God, and that's part of being a Christian. That's part of coming out of the world, standing apart from the world, standing apart from its thinking, rejecting this perverse generation to entrust ourselves to Christ and to be given over to him in the totality of our heart, soul, strength and mind, our body, soul and spirit, totally sanctified in the sense that we're totally set apart for the truth so that, you know, it would be the desire of our heart never to do anything against the truth but only for the truth. And if that means that we have to oppose people who are better educated than we are, more articulate than we are, more eloquent than we are because of the way that they frame their lives and frame their philosophies against the word of God, then so be it. Beloved, remember the broader thing we're doing here is we're building a Christian mind. We're building a Christian mind and part of that Christian mind says, "I will stand against the world. I will stand against the lies. I will stand against those who contradict the word of God with all of my heart, soul, strength and mind." And so Psalm 14 helps us because it explains so much of the worldly philosophies that we face as we uphold the existence of God before an unbelieving world.

The title of tonight's message, "Atheists and God's Existence." Let's look at our first point tonight. What can we say about atheists? Number 1, first point for this evening: the fool defies God. The fool defies God, and as we open this Psalm, David is weighed down by the environment in which he lives. He looks out on humanity, he assesses it rightly and realistically under the leading and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he says this in verse 1, he says,

1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

What do we say about an atheist, more accurately, what does Scripture say about those who deny the existence of God? It holds back nothing. It convicts them and says those who take that position are fools. The term "fool" is a negative moral term. This is not a statement about someone lacking human intelligence. It is a moral term indicating that there is culpability. The term "fool" marks someone who has made a moral decision, has made a volitional turn of his heart toward evil, toward rejecting God's testimony in order to pursue the wicked desires of his heart. He lives and speaks as if there is no God. James Montgomery Boice says this, he says, "The reason the person is a fool and not merely mistaken is that he knows there is a God and yet chooses to believe and act as if there is none." He's not simply mistaken as Scripture makes plain and we'll see in a moment, it's not merely a mistaken lack of information, a mistaken judgment, Scripture says that God has made it known to every man about the reality of his existence so that to reject that testimony is the most foolish, evil thing that a man could do to reject it and say something to the contrary. It is to look into creation, it is to look into the Canon of Scripture, it is to

look into the human conscience, it is to look at the person of Christ, it is to look at Christian conversion and say, "No, I deny it all. There is no God," despite everything that has been said in all of those realms. And so the fool, the atheist, rejects the testimony of God. He rejects the fear of the Lord that could have led him to wisdom. And as a result, he consigns himself to a path that leads to ever increasing darkness and ultimately leads to eternal perdition.

Beloved, what you and I have to understand as Christians, what you and I have to understand as we seek to build a biblical mind, is that those who oppose the testimony of God are guilty of a morally culpable corruption in their heart. These men are destructive. They have no redeemable trait. Look at verse 1 again with me as we emphasize what the word of God says and, look, it's ultimately our responsibility. You know, it's not our desire to accommodate false religion. It's not our desire to accommodate those who oppose the word of God. That's not our job. Our job is to be faithful to what the word of God says because ultimately our loyalty and our accountability, the source of our life both physically and spiritually come from the person of God, from the person of Christ. It is Christ who has redeemed our soul, and so the idea of trying to make amends and to make apologies to men to oppose the revelation that God has given and the work that God has done in our soul is just unthinkable.

David says they are corrupt. They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good. Think, for example, of college professors who try to rob sincere young people of their faith with mockery and intimidation in the classroom. This is corruption at its highest level and it is no less demonic when it is done in a calm, soothing voice than if it was done by a raging lunatic on a city sidewalk someplace. The devil clothes himself in all kinds of different philosophies, clothes himself in all kinds of different demeanors so long as the deception is worked out, so long as the intimidation is worked out, so long as others are corrupted by the corruption in the heart of the ones speaking, you know, the outward appearance of it is a matter of indifference to the devil. What you and I have to do is we have to look beyond the outward appearances and say, "Oh, but he's such a nice person. Oh, but she's so pleasant to deal with." Yet we have to look past all of that and let the word of God interpret what we see. Rather than relying on our human perceptions of the people who propagate such philosophies, rather than being intimidated by them or being sympathetic to their teaching because somehow we like them personally, that's an entirely wrong way to live. That is not operating according to a Christian mind. We must let the word of God tell us what the truth is and then interpret things accordingly rather than looking at the human outward manifestation of a kind of philosophy and then try to impose it on the word of God, distort the word of God, marginalize the word of God, make apologies for someone's condition. No. We start with Scripture and we start with Scripture alone and Scripture here tells us what God has to say about the atheist, about the one denying his existence. He looks at them all and says, "Fool." It's not that complicated.

Now the question is: why would they do that? Why would they look at all of this obvious testimony, why would they suppress and deny the very thing that God has placed in their own heart as a testimony to his own existence? Why would they do that? Well turn over

in the New Testament to the gospel of John 3. John 3. And side by side with the wonderful verse of hope found in John 3:16, the promise of eternal life to every sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, side by side with that we see both the invitation and we see the reason for the rejection. Let's remind ourselves as believers gathered here together tonight verse 16 of the wonderful grace of our marvelous Lord as found in the words of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." A statement of the grace and the goodness of God and the reason that he sent Christ into the world. God is a saving God. God delights in the salvation of sinners. He is a forgiving, gracious, loving God, and he delights in forgiveness. He delights when men repent. Angels in heaven rejoice over the repentance of a single sinner more than they do over 99 righteous men who need no repentance. This is the goodness of God, the kindness of God, the mercy, the love of God that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Verse 17, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe," okay, now we're getting the pivot point here. We've seen the promise to those who believe but there are those that won't believe and what are we to think of them? What does Scripture say about them? "Whoever does not believe is condemned already." He's living in a state of condemnation. It's not just that he will be condemned at the final day, he is condemned now for his unbelief, "because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

And so side by side, you know, John 3:16 is, you know, is probably rightly described as the most famous verse in the Bible. What you and I need to do as we build a Christian mind is to keep reading, not stop at verse 16, as if that's the only verse in John 3, let alone in the whole Bible. Keep reading and see where Scripture goes. What are the consequences of unbelief? What are the consequences of rejecting Christ? The consequences of rejecting the gospel? It is condemnation. The gospel should not be trifled with. It should not be taken for granted. The grace of God should not be abused or neglected simply for a failure of reading Scripture in its context.

It's a state of condemnation, verse 18, and why does this happen? Verse 19, "this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed." Our Lord points to the human heart and says that heart is the reason for the rejection. It's not because the testimony is inadequate. It's not that there is something defective in God's revelation. The revelation is perfect. It must be perfect, it comes from God himself. The corruption is found not in God, not in his revelation. The corruption is found in the human heart that refuses to bow the knee, refuses to receive the revelation that God has given. And why do they do that? Their works are evil. There is moral corruption. They hate the light. They don't want the light because they don't want their works to be exposed. In other words, they love their sin as it is. They love self. They love the world. They don't want to

surrender that. They would rather have sin than God, and therein lies the foolishness of it all, therein lies the moral corruption of it all.

Don't let their rhetoric bully you, beloved, they have a hidden agenda. Several years ago, there were a series of debates taking place between an atheist and someone who was at least theistic in his worldview, and in the course of one debate there was a news report out in California about it and they quoted one atheist saying this. One atheist said that religion is, and I quote, "Religion is a human invented delusion that is sexually repressive and a threat to human survival." Now think about what that's saying and think about it in light of the words that we find in John 3. Jesus says they don't come to the light because they don't want their works exposed. Their works are evil. This is a perfect interpretation of that statement. He rejects religion because it's sexually repressive to him.

Acknowledging the presence of God means that there is a judge and that would restrain sin. That would hinder his enjoyment of his lustful condition. And so what does he do? He denies God in a futile effort to liberate his flesh for a time so that he can pursue things contrary to what his own conscience tells him.

They hate the light. They don't come to the light lest perchance their works be exposed. Atheists, according to Scripture, this is not my interpretation of it, this is the teaching of the word of God, atheists are repressing, they are actively stifling what they know to be true. They stifle the truth. They silence their conscience as it speaks to them in order to deny God and that's why they are such a fool. That's why it is so morally culpable to do that. They are saying these things and teaching these things contrary to what they know themselves to be true inside, and as a result of that mental and moral oblivion, are the necessary result. Psalm 10:4 says, "In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'" That's Psalm 10:4.

And so, beloved, let me give you a simple illustration here. It's not that atheists don't get it. They get it. They don't want it. And an atheist and a professing, you know, a professing atheist is like a judge in a courtroom, a judge who has taken a bribe before hearing the case. What you have to understand as you look at a judge who has taken a bribe, that no amount of evidence will cause that judge to render a right verdict in the case. The judge has a vested interest in the outcome that overrides considerations of the truth. In a human courtroom, a bribed judge has a financial interest in the outcome so that it doesn't matter how much evidence is presented, it doesn't matter how persuasive the attorneys are, the outcome is decided in advance by things that are external to the actual evidence. In like manner, atheists have a vested interest in their self-autonomy and their sinful lives. If they acknowledged God, they would have to change. God is a threat to the way that they want to live so in vain they try to kill him.

That is why Scripture says, Scripture says this is why you see the phenomenon of atheists. It says nothing about the adequacy of God's self-revelation, and as we read on now in Psalm 14, the majesty, the holiness, the sobriety of what we're about to see here is quite staggering. After having said this in verse 1, David now calls God himself as a witness to the truthfulness of what he has just said. In verse 2, David says,

2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

You know, it's just really important for us to understand the fullness of this worldview that we're setting forth from Scripture, and so important to understanding Psalm 14 in its own context, is to realize that David is looking beyond the world, he's looking beyond man now and he's going to a transcendent source, he's going to God himself to vindicate what is being said, and he says that God himself looks down as a witness on the actions and the attitudes of man. He examines the entire human race. The comprehensive nature of what's being discussed here is breathtaking. To call upon an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God as the witness to what is being said, to realize that this omniscient God is looking on the entirety of humanity and reaching a conclusion, reaching a verdict on them all staggers us into abject humility.

Are there any exceptions to the conviction? Are there any wise people among the fools? Close examination yields no results, yields no fruit. It's a sweeping indictment. All have turned aside. No one does good. He states it emphatically, not even one. And if you'll turn to Romans 3 to help us understand the fullness as we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, we'll see that the Apostle Paul takes this statement and applies it to all of humanity, Jews and Greeks alike, so that in verse 9 of Romans 3, we read, "What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'" Paul is quoting from Psalm 14 and yields the indictment against all of humanity. They're corrupt like spoiled milk. There is no integrity to their hostility against God. There is no value to their arguments. There's no truth to their opposition. Scripture describes the entire human race as hopelessly perverted. They deny God not because he hasn't spoken, not because he's failed to reveal himself adequately, they deny God because they do not like God.

And we've turned here multiple times and this will probably be the last time that we turn here for, I don't know, at least a week or two, in Romans 1. It's just so very important for us to see this in Romans 1:18, and part of the reason that we repeatedly emphasize this is that it helps us understand the world in which we live, and just a one-time passing reference to it is not sufficient for it to come deeply rooted in our hearts. Romans 1:18, and remember, before I read this just let me remind you of something once again. As we gather together as the people of God in, you know, in this building, as we gather together around the word of God as redeemed people, as true born again Christians, we are on God's side in this matter. We are not on the side of the world. Acts 2:40 says be saved from this perverse generation. We're not trying to ingratiate ourselves with those who disagree with us. We just want to know what God says so that we can be on his side and we can think like God does and assess the world as God does. That's what we want. That's our heart desire to know the truth as it is found in Christ and found in the revealed

word of God. And so we start not with what men say, we start with what God has said in the holy 66 books of the Bible.

And what does God say about it all? Romans 1:18. Beloved, this isn't complicated. This is clear. It says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." What are atheist except by definition ungodly people, not godly, not having God. And the ungodliness, it starts there and then it works itself out in an unrighteous life. "Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." They hold it down. They push its head underwater trying to drown it. They grab it by the throat and strangle it in an effort to choke the air out of it, is the sense of suppressing the truth. Verse 19, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Scripture says it's clearly perceived. God has made it known to them. They are without excuse. They knew God but they responded to that knowledge by rejecting it, by refusing God the honor that is his due, by refusing the gratitude to him that is his due as the Maker and Sustainer of even their physical life. As a result of that moral choice in a John 3 way, in a John 3 way that we just looked at, there are consequences. There are moral and mental consequences to that choice. Their thinking becomes futile, their foolish hearts are darkened and they plunge into darkness and so Scripture describes them as hopelessly perverted.

Now, beloved, before you and I get too high on our horse, understand that we're speaking from the perspective, and Scripture reminds us repeatedly like in Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 and other places, you know, that we were once like them. Titus 3, we were once foolish ourselves. And if there is a distinction in us vis-a-vis them, it's only by the particular grace of God given to us by the Holy Spirit not by any superior wisdom of our own. But having said that, having acknowledged that, saying, "Yes, I was once guilty like they are. I was once a fool just like them." And I was. The fact that we were once like that does not compel us, does not give us liberty to explain it away in anything other than the terms that God himself uses. And so Scripture says, looks at the atheist and says, "There's a fool who denies God. There is a fool, morally corrupt and morally culpable for his condition."

Now let's go back to Psalm 14 and pick up our second point. We said, first of all, that the fool defies God. Secondly, what we find is that the fool defies God's people. The fool defies God's people, and we begin here in verse 4. Sinners try to eradicate God but they still encounter his people and that's a problem. You know, people like us are a problem to those who try to maintain an atheistic worldview and proclaim it. You know, all of a sudden they're meeting with opposition, they're meeting with resistance; however modest, however weak, however, you know, however inarticulate the opposition may be, it's still an opposition, it's a roadblock to the chosen manner in which they want to think and live. And there's a reaction that takes place, an abuse that takes place. Verse 4,

4 Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD?

As they as they persecute, as they make life difficult for the people of God, don't they know what they're doing? Don't they have any idea of the consequences of this? They should be afraid. Verse 5,

5 There they are in great terror, for [because] God is with the generation of the righteous.

Do these people who are hostile to the church of Christ, hostile to the people of God, do they think that they can abuse God's people without any consequence? Do they think that there will be no implications for what they have chosen to do? What the psalmist is saying here when he says in verse 5, "they are in great terror," he's saying a day of dread will come upon them. Their hostility against the people of God is doomed to fail because God is with his people in their distress. God is in the midst of his people. To attack the church of Christ, to malign the church of Christ is to attack Christ himself, so identified is he with his people. And so, what David says to the wicked is how can they be so complacent about their defiance? How can they be so complacent against their hostility against the church because there is a consequence coming, and when God displays his power, the wicked will go from great arrogance to great dread because God is going to reverse the entire situation in his time.

Verse 6, he addresses the wicked in the second person. He addresses them directly.

6 You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge.

God will reverse the entire situation because God is the shelter of his people. He protects them from danger. As you read in the book of Revelation, he will avenge the blood of the martyrs. Even as the martyrs cry out from under the throne of God, "How long, O God, will you let our blood go unacquitted? How long will you let this continue?" In the end, God will take care of it. And so the physical abuse that our brethren have suffered in other parts of the world today, certainly throughout the course of the history of the church, the political abuse, the verbal abuse, God will make all of that right in the end. He will provide and care for his people and shelter them and bless them, as we'll see in a moment, and the unrepentant wicked will face the consequences of their action.

Let me remind you in this regard of what Jesus said in Matthew 5. You don't need to turn there but in Matthew 5 there in the Beatitudes, Jesus says this in verses 10 to 12 and it builds on the spirit of what's being said in Psalm 14, how God will be the refuge of his people. And for those of you facing hostility in the workplace, difficulties of maintaining a Christian testimony when all around you is the opposition of the world, take heart from what your Lord says to you in his own word. Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on

my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The persecution will one day come to an end. Terror will overtake the unrepentant wicked. Abundant comfort will come upon the people of Christ. That leads us to our third and final point as we consider Psalm 14 here this evening. While the fool has been defying God and defying God's people, the Psalm ends on a note of triumph and says that God will defy the fool. That's the third and final point: God will defy the fool. With corruption all around, David now prays for divine intervention. He has assessed the spiritual condition of those who say there is no God. He's looked with sympathy on the people of God and reminded everyone that God is with the generation of the righteous, and warns the wicked against their attacks against the people of God, "This isn't going to come out well for you." And now having looked around at the situation horizontally, David, as it were, breathes a prayer vertically to the Lord and prays for divine intervention. You see it there in verse 7. He says,

7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!

Zion being a poetic name for Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God at that time. "Oh, that salvation, oh, that deliverance for the people of God would come out of Zion, would come forth from the presence of God!" His heart is longing for that, longing for the release of the deliverance of the people of God, a longing that is manifested in many different ways throughout the lives of the humble righteous. Falsely accused, longing for vindication, longing for the protection of God. In long pain and sorrow of body and bodily affliction, longing for the new body that will be ours one day at the resurrection. Under duress, longing for the comfort of God to come while it seems to tarry. Under the affliction of lying on a deathbed, waiting for the earthly pain to come to an end, longing for the faith to become sight. Waiting for the Lord, as it were, to send his angel to bring that one safely into his presence as he so faithfully promised to do. In all of those times, looking to the Lord, longing for the Lord's deliverance, longing for the Lord to act on behalf of his people, longing to see faith become sight, to restore us to that position of blessing that God saved us to one day know. David here in verse 7 is saying, "O God, won't you hasten the day when you reverse the situation? When you overturn the dominance of the wicked and put yourself on display? Won't you hasten the day when the glory of God fills the earth like the waters fill the sea?" Habakkuk 2:14. "Won't you hasten the day when you reign in Jerusalem?" Revelation 20. You see, what David is expressing in a very compact, concise way here, David is longing for God's righteous rule and judgment to be manifest. He's longing for God to resolve the conflict in favor of the righteous. He's longing for the principle and the implied vindication from Psalm 1:6, which in some ways is a verse that sets the course for the entire rest of the 150 Psalms. Psalm 1:6, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." "Lord, here I am in my affliction, my sorrow, my pain, the ebbing out of my earthly life. Lord, I know you know my way. I trust you for that. Vindicate your promises. Keep your promises to me. Help me, Father, in the difficult relationships. Help me walk this path that you've appointed and bring to me the blessing that you promise to

all who know Christ," It's a humble, tender prayer looking beyond human opposition to the ultimate deliverance that all who know the Lord will one day experience.

And so beloved, we do not fear well-spoken atheists. We don't fear their thick books or their philosophical arguments. We're not ashamed when they mock us. We know the truth about the way that God has made himself known. We know that our God exists and not only exists, our God reigns. We know that and so the intimidation of man loses its force against our hearts. But not only that, we know the truth about their inner corruption. We believe the word of God. We can understand how there are people like that in a world where God has so magnificently made himself known so that in the end the existence of a so-called atheist simply points us back to our hope. It throws us like a wave back onto the shore of the blessing and the promises of God. He is with us. He defends us. He will one day restore us. He will one day restore the situation. He will one day give us joy.

Let's pray together.

Gracious Father, we gladly wholeheartedly yield ourselves to the revelation that you have given to us. Father, we know beyond a doubt, we know conclusively not because we are wise but because you have spoken that you are there and that you are not silent. Yes, Lord, you have spoken in creation. We see, we hear and we believe. You have spoken in your word, the 66 and no more books of the Bible. We read. We hear. We believe. You have spoken in the principle of conscience. We recognize your imprint on humanity and on our own hearts in that way; though, it's not a perfect instrument, it speaks of a judge and of a standard of right and wrong. We see that. We see that you have spoken. We hear that you have spoken in conscience and we believe. Lord, supremely, we see that you have spoken in the Lord Jesus Christ. We see and we read about him and we see you, O Father, as we see Christ. We see Christ and we see God himself for all the fullness of deity dwells in him in bodily form. You have spoken in Christ. We hear. We believe. We affirm. And Father, how sweet in our conversion that you have spoken by your Spirit to our own hearts and you have taken away our blindness and shone the light of the knowledge of God deep into our heart and transformed us and made us into a new creation. Lord, we would rather deny our next breath than to deny that work of the Spirit in our hearts. We see it, we hear it, as it were, and we believe. We vindicate you against all of the opposition of man. We submit ourselves gladly to your revelation. We acknowledge its sufficiency. It is enough. Father, we need no more and we seek no more. Father, rather help us simply to absorb, appreciate, understand. Give us a greater measure of the illumination of the Spirit to understand the significance of creation, Canon, conscience, Christ and our conversion, that we might, Father, have that cornerstone of a biblical mind established and that we could build from there upon it that our lives might glorify you, that our testimony of you might be clear and resound in places yet to be found, and that as you look in our hearts, Father, you would see a responsive, receptive, compliant faith ready to believe, ready to speak on your behalf come what may in the world. Help us all to that great end, O God, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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