

## “The Folly of Unbelief”

### Psalm 14

– Based on the commentary on Psalm 14 in a sermon by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones with this same title ...

**John MacArthur** said this of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “Martyn Lloyd-Jones was without question the finest biblical expositor of the twentieth century. ... one of the greatest preachers of all time. ... ‘Logic on fire’ was his famous description of preaching, and he had an amazing gift for blending passion and precision ... **Lloyd-Jones still desperately needs to be heard today.**”

The **central message** of Psalm 14 is succinctly expressed in verse 1 ...

***“The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God’ ...” - Psalm 14:1***

**Intro.** The first thing we need to concern ourselves with is the weightiness, ... the seriousness, ... and the relative importance of the question the psalmist is dealing with in Psalm 14. **There are many questions we may need to be concerned with in this life at the present time:** the political situation, the many social and cultural issues that constantly arise [lawlessness, illegal immigration, crime, the economy, unemployment, The Critical Race Theory and the “Woke” mentality, ethical and moral issues (abortion & homosexuality): ... the rising acceptance of the transgender agenda and the homosexual agenda, the outbreak of wars around the world [Ukraine/Russia; China/Taiwan] and the possibility of WW III and a nuclear conflagration, concerns about our families and raising children in this present time; etc.] However, the question the psalmist is dealing with here is far greater in importance than any of these issues, ... in fact it is more important than all of them combined! [The psalmist is addressing **the question of the existence and reality of God!** ... and the extraordinary implications of this question]

And **why** is this so? It is because we are dealing with **something that is absolutely certain**, and something that will continue on long after all these other issues cease to be. This issue will remain the most important question regardless of what happens with all these other questions! ... In other words, **if God exists, nothing else really matters. Everyone, without exception, will one day have to face Him and give an account of themselves [John 5:28-29; II Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:11-13].** At that time, nothing else will matter. Everything will depend upon what each of us has done with regard to this question of the existence and reality of God in this life.

There are many attitudes toward this question of the existence and reality of God. First, **there are those we call “atheists” who make a conscious and deliberate choice to believe there is no God.** They structure their lives according to this false presupposition. Their atheistic worldview causes them to evaluate everything and make decisions on the basis of this false presupposition. The psalmist makes a very blunt assertion about all people who are in this position, he simply says they are fools: ***“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”*** And ... It is important to emphasize that this is a universal statement! He does not say that ‘some’ people who say there is no God are fools. He says, ‘every one of them is a fool.’ It is a universal statement, without any qualifications or exceptions.

So, we must ask the question: **What is a fool?** The biblical meaning of this term is revealed in verse 2, where the psalmist says: *“The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand ...”* Therefore, the biblical meaning of the word is that a ‘fool’ is anyone who lacks understanding, ... anyone who doesn’t think, and think right. It refers to anyone who ignores and denies the ultimate reality of

God and, therefore, reasons from a false worldview and the false presupposition that God does not exist. Such a person, according to the Bible, lacks true understanding. Because of this, such individuals act in an impetuous and idiotic manner [D,M,L-J], ... they live lives that ignore and trample upon the fundamental precepts and principles the Creator *God has given us* in His Word. Most importantly, they do not acknowledge, honor or seek to obey the Supreme Being behind the visible creation. **Therefore, there is nothing so tragic as that people should be fools and that they should say: "There is no God."**

The business of **preaching** is to enlighten such people; to show them their error, to expose them to the utter foolishness of the position they have taken up. The preacher, like the psalmist, seeks to do this through reasoning. This is done, not out of a delight in argument or disputation, nor to put this question in an abstract intellectual or theoretical category. Rather, the intent is to put this matter [to people who are willing to listen] as simply and plainly and as directly as possible so they can see through the lie and deception of atheism. This is urgent business because this is the most vital matter of all matters.

I. Note **several "biblical" reasons why such people are "fools" ...**

- 1) Because they listen too much to their heart
- 2) Because they go against the voice of their conscience
- 3) Because they do not listen to their understanding

### **A. Because they listen too much to their heart ...**

*"The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God' ..."* (Psa. 14:1)

1. The psalmist is saying they are governed by their desire; what they want and what they like.

[A dictionary definition of the heart: "... the center of a person's thoughts and emotions, especially love, compassion, or loyalty.] ...Therefore, the heart is the innermost part of man that is the greatest source of motivation in determining one's thoughts and decisions.

2. The Bible teaches that there is a fundamental problem with the heart of man ... Jer. 17:9 & Matt. 15:19

3. The greatest problem with listening to the heart is that the deceitfulness of man's heart causes him to not listen to **the fundamental 'sense of God,' that is in all men** [Rom. 1:18-21 – see!]

### **B. Because they go against the voice of their consciences**

1. We all have a conscience within us [Rom. 2:15].
2. When we do something that is wrong our conscience tells us so, and it condemns us. It makes us feel miserable.
3. That which is 'wrong' is something that is against God [and we all have a **sense of God** within us as well – Rom. 1:18-22].
4. The **fool** is a person who does not listen to or pay attention to his **conscience**. He is not governed by it.

## C. Because they do not listen to their understanding ...

*“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand.” [verse 2]*

This is the final charge against these people, and [as Lloyd-Jones says], this is where we see most clearly the fact that they are fools.

1. The average person today would say that this sort of person doesn't believe in God **because** of their understanding [i.e., these people do not believe in God because of their knowledge and because of their great brains.]

2. the argument goes further to say that the only people who do still believe in God are **primitive types** who refuse to look at modern scientific information. i.e., they refuse to look at the evidence and they will not face the facts.

3. But **the psalmist's contention** is that **these people** are fools! And that they are fools because they do not act according to their understanding, but according to their lusts and passions and desires. [i.e. They want to throw off the chains of God's control and live as they please, without any accountability – cf. **Psa. 2- SEE!**.]

## II. A common misconception [Satanic misinformation – I Cor.4:4] ...

i.e., **The false idea that** those who 'refuse to believe' in God tend to be the **more intelligent and well-educated** people; while 'those who hold on to a belief in God' are the primitive, ignorant, less educated, less knowledgeable people who are lacking in intelligence.

The problem with this thinking is that there are many highly intelligent, educated people who are believers in God! - And there are many ignorant, uneducated people who do not believe in God.

### Examples of intelligent, educated people who are/were believers:

**Isaac Newton** was one of the great towering geniuses of all time in the scientific realm. Yet, what most people do not know about him is that he was a strong believer in God who spent most of his time studying the Scriptures and writing books about prophecy. And he regarded his religious work as being more important than his other work.

Also, **Blaise Pascal**, the brilliant mathematician, who lived in the same century, was also a strong believer in God.

### **Sir Francis Bacon** (1561 - 1626)

Known as the founder of the scientific method, **Sir Francis Bacon** believed that gathering and analyzing data in an organized way was essential to scientific progress. An **Anglican**, Bacon believed in the existence of God.

### **Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)**

The brilliant mathematician and one of the greatest astronomers could not deny God or his power.

## **Rene Descartes (1596-1650)**

Recognized as 'the father of modern philosophy', was also a French mathematician and scientist

### **Some modern examples:**

**Francis S. Collins**, director of the Human Genome Project, the world's largest collaborative biological project, **is a scientist and believer** and finds no conflict between those worlds.

When President [Barack Obama](#) nominated the **Christian** geneticist **Francis Collins** to head the National Institutes of Health in 2009, some American scientists [questioned](#) whether someone who professed a strong belief in God was qualified to lead the [largest biomedical research agency in the world](#)

**Alister McGrath**, A well-known ... intellectual historian, scientist, Christian apologist, and public intellectual. ... Before his conversion he was a staunch atheist and science was his only passion. After his conversion to Christianity, he became an Anglican priest. He even taught historical theology at Oxford University. He has since become critical of [the famous atheist] **Richard Dawkins** and has even debated him several times.

**David Russel Humphreys** - has a Ph.D. in physics and has come up with a new theory regarding the universe's origin. After finding God, he stated that it was God who made the planets with spinning automatic nuclei, thus explaining their orientation.

**Emil Silvestru** - earned a PhD in geology in Romania, after which he published over 40 books on the subject.

**Josh McDowell** – **Set out to prove there is no God ... Now lectures to prove His existence**

**Lee Strobel** – **"A Case for Christ" "What Will be Your Verdict"** – Former Legal editor of Chicago Tribune & N. Y. Times bestselling author

**J. Warner Wallace** – Detective - **"Person of Interest"** – (?) –

## **II. Four specific ways these people fail to exercise their understanding:**

### **A. They arrive at momentous conclusions on insufficient evidence ...**

[i.e., They do not reason things through. They jump to conclusions. They are governed by their prejudices; or, their passions, lusts and desires.]

1. a multitude of people in the world do not believe in God, and when asked "Why not?" They say ...

a. If there is a God, **why** are there wars? **Why** are there disabled children? **Why** is there pain and suffering in the world? **Why** are there earthquakes, pestilence and disease, and other natural disasters?

b. In general, such people have been living for themselves. Rarely have they ever really given a thought to God. They never attended a place of worship and have been living an entirely godless life. Yet, because of pain and suffering and disasters, 'there is no God'!

i. It has never occurred to them that perhaps God has 'allowed' pain and suffering into their lives in order to make them think more seriously about God; ... to bring them to their senses; or that there may be some other good reason why God has allowed such things.

ii. Psa. 119:71, 67 – There are many who have come to their senses and realized that the existence of such tragedy's may be because God has allowed them to accomplish his own purposes. The Psalmist said: : ***"It is good for me that I have been, afflicted", because 'before I was afflicted I went astray.'"***

iii. If you and I do not understand ourselves and other people and the working of their minds, how can we think we can so easily understand God and say, "Because he does not do this or that, there is no God"?

Such people need to come to see that they are arriving at their conclusions on flimsy evidence!

**B.** [The second reason they are fools] **They do not face the other evidence ... [Lloyd-Jones calls it "the vast, tremendous evidence on the other side."]**

For those who ask, "What do you mean?" ... **Lloyd-Jones says:**

1. "... first of all, I mean the evidence of creation. I mean the world and the cosmos in which we live. I confess I am baffled that anybody should believe that this amazing universe in which we find ourselves is merely the result of accident and chance." ... i.e. As we consider the vastness of the universe and the astounding intricacy and complexity of our own world; the beauty and variety of its inhabitants ... "And I am asked to believe that all this 'just happened,' that there is no mind at the back of it all," ... no intelligent designer? "Is all this ordered universe, this amazing cosmos, the mere accidental, fortuitous result of collisions of gases suddenly condensing? That idea, I say, is unthinkable! As a man who was privileged to learn a little science and who still has an interest in it, I must say that my mind cannot accept such statements. It is madness – it is folly!" – The psalmist says that those who set forth such proposals, or agree with them, are "fools."

2. Secondly, there is the matter of **man** himself! Can you really be satisfied with the idea "that man is an accident? That he has just come into existence? ... There is only one explanation for man, and that is God! Man is too big to be explained in human terms. He is more marvelous than the cosmos itself, this little microcosm that we call man."

3. Third, there is **the evidence of history.**

i. Read secular history and then read Old Testament history – see how the biblical accounts are repeatedly confirmed by archeology; ... see how there are hundreds of fulfilled prophecies 800 years or so after the prophecies were written.

ii. **Consider also, the Jews**, where did they come from and how have they persisted for so long? The whole story of the Jews in the O.T. is extraordinary and unexplainable, except for the fact that they are a people chosen by God, through whom the Messiah, the Savior of the world was born into this world.

iii. And **then, consider the person of Jesus Christ himself!** He is a real person, who belongs to history [secular history recognizes him]. The days and years of our calendar are numbered by him [according to his entrance into the life of this world]. ... How can He be explained apart from God? He is still the most influential person in the history of the world [BC & AD]; ... yet, he was born in the small village of Bethlehem, in Israel, and grew up in Nazareth, an obscure village in Northern Israel, in Galilee; ... born of a poor Jewish maiden of no reputation or position. **How did he come to influence all of history in the way he has?**

The O. T. teaching about him as the promised Messiah, who would come into the world, born of a virgin, and become the substitutionary sacrifice [on the cross] for the sins of the world. ... God's plan to provide covering for our sins, the redemption of mankind, through the principle of substitutionary sacrifice begins to be revealed in Genesis 3 [especially in **Gen. 3:15**], and by God's providing a covering for the nakedness of Adam and Eve [replacing the leaves they used as a covering of their nakedness with the skins of animals – thus requiring the shedding of blood]. ... Then in Genesis 3:15 there is the extraordinary prophecy of how Christ, "*the seed of the woman*" – a prophecy of the virgin birth – would conquer and destroy "*the seed of the serpent*"; a prophecy of the entire redemptive history of the world, that is foretold and illustrated throughout all the O.T. [a period of more than 4,000 years] and fulfilled in the life and death of Christ.

The existence and life of Jesus cannot be explained apart from the existence of a God who is sovereign over history [omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent].

iv. Next, there is the existence of **the Church!** How did this originally obscure, small band of Jewish peasants grow into the official religion of the Roman empire in just three centuries? ... How can we explain that the Church has continued its existence for all these centuries and; what accounts for its spread around the world? ... Also, we need to consider where this world would be today, were it not for the world's greatest **benefactors**, ... who came out of the Christian church? ... The existence of hospitals, for example, is due to the influence of Christianity. The origin of most ancient hospitals can be traced to Christians. Hospitals come from godly people who believe in god! ... **Christians** are the greatest benefactors the world has ever known!

**C. [The third reason they are called "fools"] ... They do not hesitate to "risk" their whole eternal life and their whole eternal future.**

**These people say: “I don’t believe there is anything after death.”**

Of course, even though they may not believe it, **the real question is: “Can you prove it?”**

And when you consider the evidence we have already been considering, anyone who is willing to **risk** it all on their own flimsy evidence is a fool! Any person who does anything on inadequate and flimsy evidence is a fool!

And **that is the argument here. You cannot prove there is not a life after death. You do not know what is going to happen when you die, ... and yet you are willing to say: “I’m prepared to ‘risk’ it.”**

Here we see the foolishness of such thinking! **What if the Bible is right** and after death men and women who do not believe in God go on to an eternity of misery and torment, with endless misery and remorse? **Then** their eyes will be opened to the truth! They will have seen Christ [as their judge – John 5:\_\_\_ Acts 17:31 & II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20]. They will have seen God!

At that time, they will realize that they have thrown it all away, and said, “There is no God,” all because of some things they wanted to do at a moment during their lifetime on earth. Like Esau in the O.T., they sold their birthright for a mess of pottage [Gen. 25:33]. They **‘risked’** their whole eternal life on flimsy evidence, and **they lost their bet!**

**D.** [The fourth reason such persons are utter fools] is **because of what they have refused and rejected**

...

1. Such persons are addicted to the world! The worldly enticements seem so strong and glamorous. These people want to have their fill of it.

a. They do not stop to consider that when they are middle aged, they will grow tired of it, and it will no longer satisfy.

b. And then, when they are old, they will be laying on a bed somewhere feeling the effects of a meaningless and empty life. ... They will not consider this nor the eternity of torment and suffering that awaits them [Rev. 14:11]

2. And the saddest fact is that **they have forfeited and thrown away** a rich and utterly fulfilling life, not only in this lifetime, but for all eternity!

a. I Jn. 5:13 – **the Christian** lives this life without the fear of death! His life has eternal significance, and he finds constant fulfillment because of the hope in God that is in him.

b. I Peter 1:4 says **every Christian is looking forward to “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.”**

c. Even if this world should suddenly be consumed in the flames of a nuclear holocaust [and at the present time there are many dangerous conditions in the world that could set off such a disaster] ... But even then, nothing can harm the Christian! Why not? Because **our life is hidden with God in Christ [Col. 3:15].**

d. **Deut. 33:27** ... *“The sovereign God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”*

### **Conclusion:**

Therefore, the advice and counsel of the psalmist in Psalm 14 is **“BE WISE!”** Accept the reality of the overwhelming evidence!

**Become a seeker of God;** *“He that comes to God **must** believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him”* [Heb. 11:6].

**John 6:37** – God has promised that He will never reject and turn away those who come to him!

**This** is the path of wisdom! *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* – Prov. 9:10.

**The End!**