

The Seeker and the Atheistⁱ

1. Foolishly the heart that says, "There is no God," acts out these words in deeds of crime and violence forsaking any good.
2. God sees it all from heaven's height, and looks to find the good in them, God hopes to find some seeker there.
3. But these have given up the search, to follow hard upon their evil ways, and none of them are doing good at all.
4. Where has their knowledge, their awareness gone, these folk who eat the people up like bread without a thought of prayer?
5. Behold, their time of fear shall come, for God has taken sides, not theirs, to care for all the lowly ones who seek the right and serve the good,
6. The very ones they've mocked for seeking hope and refuge in their God.
7. O deliver us, restore our many losses here on earth we pray. Come from your dwelling place, your holy mountain, your eternal city strong, Jerusalem. And make your people glad and filled, yes filled with joy.

ⁱ NOTES:

1. An interesting view of humanity is presented in this Psalm. As the psalmist sees it, human beings become lost in themselves and their little pursuits, and therefore estranged from God. The psalmist credits atheism as the cause. It is hard to imagine just what form of atheism this might have taken in the ancient world. Perhaps it was rejection of the Lord God of Israel (YHWH) in favor of other Gods that the psalmist calls "Atheism."
2. In our day there are certainly atheist, but they are in a minority. Most people say they do indeed believe in the existence of God. What is more true, however, is something we might call "practical atheism." Individuals formally believe in god, but in the way they live and in the practical decisions they make, they live "as if" there is no God. Whichever is true, formal or practical atheism, the results are the same.

This translation and these notes were taken from "***Ancient Songs Sung Anew: The Psalms as Poetry***" by Lynn C. Bauman