

Psalm 52

To the chief Musician, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

Psalm 52: The superscription reveals that this psalm is one of the eight written when David was fleeing from Saul. Specifically, it refers to the occasion when Doeg had accused Ahimelech the priest because the latter had assisted David at Nob (1 Sam. 21:1-9; 22:9-23). The description of Doeg is one of the most contemptuous in Scripture (verses 1-4). Because of his betrayal, Doeg will be destroyed (verse 5), the righteous will learn from it (verses 6-7), and David, a righteous man, will continue to flourish (verses 8-9).

Verses 1-9: This psalm is a poetic lesson about the futility of evil, the final triumph of righteousness, and the sovereign control of God over the moral events of history. The event in David's life which motivated him to write this psalm is recorded in (1 Sam. chapters 21 and 22).

- I. The Rashness of the Wicked (52:1-5).
- II. The Reaction of the Righteous (52:6-7).
- III. The Rejoicing of the Godly (52:8-9).

Psalm 52:1 "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God [endureth] continually."

"Mighty man": A reference to Doeg, the chief of Saul's shepherds, who reported to Saul that the priests of Nob had aided David when he was a fugitive (compare 1 Sam. 22:9, 18-19).

"The goodness of God" refers to His gracious and loyal love. The same word is translated "mercy" (in verse 8; 33:5; 136:25; 145:14-16).

David is saying that mischief should never be boasted about. We know that many in our day have called themselves great men, when in truth, all they know how to do is to tear down something someone else has built. I do not admire people who tear down. I admire the builders in our society. David is saying, you say you are this great man; show me the great things you have done. Goodness is in creation, not in destruction. The goodness of God lives on forever. We can look at the past and not learn anything. We must be able to apply these lessons David is teaching to our lifetime for it to be profitable to study this.

Psalm 52:2 "Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully."

Abundance of mischiefs, in a variety of ways, against many persons, even all good men. What properly belongs to the heart is here ascribed to the tongue. Because, as Aben Ezra observes, it is the interpreter and discoverer of the thoughts of the heart. Out of the abundance of that heart the tongue speaks and declares the mischief it has devised. Doeg intended mischief to David, when he spoke to Saul (1 Sam. 22:9). So antichrist devises mischiefs against the saints of the Most High, to wear them out, and thinks to change times and laws (Dan. 7:25).

"Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully": That is, his tongue was like a razor. The razor is but a small instrument, and the tongue is but a little member. The razor is a sharp and cutting one, and so is the tongue; and therefore compared to a sharp sword (Psalm 57:4; see Jer. 18:18). The razor takes off the beard cleanly and wholly. Doeg's tongue was the cause of the utter ruin of Ahimelech's family and the city of Nob. And as a razor may be said to "work deceitfully", when it turns aside in the hand of him that uses it. And with the hair takes off more than it should, even skin and flesh, or cuts the man's throat. So in a deceitful and insidious manner did Doeg work the destruction of Ahimelech and the priests of the Lord.

The untamed tongue is a deadly weapon. The comparison of the tongue to a razor is a good comparison. They can both cut you to pieces. Many a person has had their reputation destroyed by the lies of someone's tongue. Deceit indicates that the person whose tongue is doing all of this damage, is a liar as well. The truth is not in him.

Psalm 52:3 "Thou lovest evil more than good; [and] lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah."

Indeed, not good at all; such comparatives being strong negatives (see Psalm 118:8). A wicked man loves evil, and nothing else. His carnal mind being enmity to all that is good.

"And lying rather than to speak righteousness": As appears by his affirming that Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for David, when he did not (1 Sam. 22:10). And by suffering some things to pass for truths which were falsehoods, when it lay in his power to have disproved them. And such a lover of lies is antichrist (see 1 Tim. 4:2).

This is speaking of a person who is evil all the way through. He is of his father the devil. This is the person the Bible speaks of when it says, he loveth and maketh a lie. His heart is stayed upon evil all the time. He has chosen the devil as did the one third of the angels who followed Lucifer. Lucifer, Satan, the devil, or whatever you would like to call him, is evil and all of those who choose to follow him are evil also. They are not interested in being righteous, they have chosen evil. Selah means to pause and think on these things.

Psalm 52:4 "Thou lovest all devouring words, O [thou] deceitful tongue."

Or "words of swallowing up"; such as lies, slander, and detractions are. Which devour the characters and reputations of men, and are the cause sometimes of their utter ruin and destruction. Of the devouring and blasphemous words of antichrist (see Rev. 13:5).

"O thou deceitful tongue" (see notes on Psalm 52:2).

The root cause of a deceitful tongue is a deceitful heart operating the tongue. Out of the issue of the heart, the tongue speaketh. Devour means to destroy. These devouring words are intended to destroy the person who listens to them.

Psalm 52:5 "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of [thy] dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah."

As a just retaliation for the mischief done to others; or, "therefore God shall destroy", etc. Even body and soul in hell, with an everlasting destruction, which will be the case of every wicked man, and particularly of the antichristian party (Rev. 14:10). Ultimately, the wicked are in the hands of a Holy God (compare Heb. 9:27). The word is used of breaking down the house in which the leprosy was (Lev. 14:45). And denotes the utter extinction of Doeg's family, and the irrecoverable ruin of antichrist (Rev. 18:21).

"He shall take thee away": As fire from the hearth (Isa. 30:14). Or as burning coals from the altar. A word from the root here used signifies a censer. And the meaning is, that as his tongue was a fire, and set on fire of hell, and he was as a burning coal, he was fit for nothing but to be cast into everlasting burnings.

"And pluck thee out of thy dwelling place": "Tent", or "tabernacle"; referring to the tents of shepherds. He being the chief of Saul's shepherds, or to some stately palace he had built for himself to dwell in, upon his advancement at court. Or rather to the tabernacle of the Lord, where he had been a hypocritical worshipper. But now should be cut off from the church of God, as a rotten member, and cast out of the tabernacle of Jacob (Mal. 2:12). While David flourished as an olive tree in the house of the Lord (Psalm 52:8).

"And root thee out of the land of the living": In retaliation for his rooting out Ahimelech's family, and the inhabitants of Nob. So in like manner he and his should be destroyed root and branch, and not see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Nor enjoy eternal life in the world to come.

The land of the living could be speaking of heaven where we will live forever. We know the parable of the fruit tree tells us that those who are not fruit bearers are to be plucked up by the root and burned. They are also, the chaff in the parable of the wheat. The chaff is gathered up and burned. It is fit for nothing, but destruction. There is no good future in store at all for those who hate goodness. This pause *Selah*, means again to stop and think about this.

Psalm 52:6 "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:"

"See, and fear": God's punishment of the wicked serves as a reinforcement to the righteous to obey God.

"Shall laugh at him": In the end, the wicked become a laughing stock in a universe controlled by God.

Those who laugh last, laugh best. Perhaps this does not mean hilarious laughter, but more a knowing that there would come a time of payment by this evil one. Those in right standing with God, looking at the punishment of those who hate God, would be a very sobering and fearful thing. When Moses came down the mountain and God destroyed some of the revilers, it was a frightening thing to those left. To fear God is the wisest thing you ever did, or can do.

Psalm 52:7 "Lo, [this is] the man [that] made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, [and] strengthened himself in his wickedness."

The Targum renders it, "that made not the Word of the Lord his strength". These are the words the righteous would say, when they should see the destruction of Doeg. See the man, the mighty man and his end. What all his ill-gotten honor and riches are come to; and what his wickedness, deceit, and cruelty, have brought upon him. The righteous make the Lord their strength, put their trust in him, in whom is everlasting strength. Do all they do in his strength. Fly to him as their "strong hold", as the word may be rendered. There they run, and are safe. But the rich man's wealth is his strong city (Prov. 18:10). There he thinks himself safe, and places his confidence in it, as follows.

"But trusted in the abundance of his riches" (see notes on Psalm 49:6); so the antichristian whore is represented as boasting of her riches and honor, and trusting in them. That they would always continue (Rev. 18:7); like the fool in (Luke 12:19).

"And strengthened himself in his wickedness": Encouraged and hardened himself in sin. Gave up himself to it; and, by obstinate continuance in it, strengthened the vicious habits contracted. Stretched out his hand against God, and strengthened himself against the Almighty. Went on in a daring manner, promising himself impunity. And as if his wickedness was his strength, his safeguard and protection. Or in his mammon, his wealth and substance, as the Targum interprets it; and so R. Saadiah Gaon, and with which the Syriac version agrees. And then the sense is the same with the other clause. But, alas! what are all such forces of strength, when wrath comes forth from the Lord of hosts? (Job 36:18).

Earthly riches and fame are soon gone, for death of the flesh comes to us all. The sad thing is, that wicked people have no future worth living for beyond the grave. Their eternal life is spent in continual torment. Riches may buy you a big car or a big house, and even fine clothes while you're on this earth, but someone else will benefit from them when you die. No amount of money or fame can purchase eternal life for you.

Psalm 52:8 "But I [am] like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever."

"Green olive tree": The psalmist exults (through this simile), that the one who trusts in the mercy of God is productive and secure.

The "olive tree" is one of the longest-living trees. The psalmist pictures himself as one in full sap, growing in a sacred courtyard in the "house of God", where no one will tamper with or uproot it (53:5).

I am told that olive trees live for thousands of years. To be a green tree, would show that the life was still in the tree. Possibly this tree was mentioned here to show that life with God is forever. His mercy endures for ever. I have placed my trust in God who will never fail me, and I shall live with Him forever.

Psalm 52:9 "I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done [it]: and I will wait on thy name; for [it is] good before thy saints."

Both in this world, as long as he lived, and had a being in it. And in the world to come, to all eternity. This is a resolution respecting what he would do, when he should be in the happy condition he was confident of.

"Because thou hast done it": The Targum interprets it, "the revenge of my judgment"; meaning the vengeance of God on Doeg. And to the same sense Aben Ezra and Kimchi: though it may refer to the comfortable and happy condition he should be in (Psalm 52:8). And which he wholly ascribes to the grace and goodness of God, and not to any merits of his own, and therefore determines to praise him for it.

"And I will wait on thy name": On the Lord himself, in his house and ordinances, for his presence and fresh supplies of grace and strength, when he should be restored. Or the sense is, that in the meantime while he waits patiently on the Lord, until he had accomplished what he had promised, and David believed.

"For it is good before thy saints": The sense is, either that it is good to wait upon the Lord and for him. Which appears to be so to all the saints, by the comfortable experience they have had of it (Isa. 40:31). Or the name of the Lord is good unto them, pleasant, delightful, and comfortable. As proclaimed (Exodus 34:6; see Song of Solomon 1 1:3; and also Rev. 15:4).

There is no other way the Christian can show God how pleased we are over what He has done for us. I will lift up the name of Jesus all the days of my life, for He has done mighty things on my behalf. Not the least of which is, He saved me by His grace.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Psalm 52

1. Is the man David is speaking of in verse 1 really a mighty man?
2. The author does not admire men that _____.
3. Goodness is in _____, not in _____.
4. How can it be profitable for us to study about David?
5. What is the tongue compared to in verse 2?
6. Why is the comparison a good one?
7. What are some of the names of the devil?
8. Why is Selah used after verse 3?

9. What is the root cause of a deceitful tongue?
10. What does devour mean?
11. What is “land of the living” speaking of?
12. What 3 things do the righteous do in verse 6?
13. Those who laugh last, _____ _____.
14. What is the wisest thing you could do?
15. What does the evil man trust in?
16. What is the meaning of the green olive tree?