

Psalm 52:1–9 *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief* [Why do you brag about your evil ways], *O mighty man? **the goodness of God** endureth continually.* ²*Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs* [Your tongue plans to do evil]; *like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.* ³*Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather* [and you love lying more] *than to speak righteousness. Selah*¹.

⁴*Thou lovest all devouring words* [You enjoy hurting people with your words], *O thou deceitful tongue.* ⁵*God shall likewise destroy thee* [the tongue] *forever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.*

⁶*The righteous also shall see* [what God does], *and fear* [God], *and shall laugh at him* [the mighty man with the sharp tongue]: 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* [and trusted that his wicked schemes could protect him from any trouble].

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.* ⁹*I will praise thee forever, because thou hast done it* [protected the righteous and punished the wicked]: *and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.*

I. Introduction

A. King Saul's attempt to keep power: He tries to murder David

1. Saul is jealous of David's success in battle (1 Samuel 18:8)
2. Saul becomes afraid of David's popularity (1 Samuel 18:9)
3. Saul is feeling deserted by his own family (particularly his son Jonathan) & becomes David's enemy (1 Samuel 18:1, 28-29)
4. Saul instructs others to kill David (1 Samuel 19:1)
5. Saul tries to kill his own son Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:33)
 - i. Jonathan's friendship with David (1 Samuel 20:17)
 - ii. Saul knows Samuel the Chief Priest anointed David to be the next king

¹ The word "Selah" is a musical term indicating a pause in the flow of a song. The Psalms were memorized by the Jewish people by singing them. Even today hearing people set verses they want to memorize to music to help them remember the words. One example would be national anthems (like "The Star-Spangled Banner" or "Oh, Canada"). The word is not meant to be spoken during the reading, but was kept in the translation because it was in the original manuscript, see Matthew 5:18.

B. David flees for his life to town of Nob, city of the priests

1 Samuel 21: 1-7 *Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David [and when David arrived Ahimelech knew there was trouble], and said unto him, “Why art thou alone, and no man with thee [said, “Why don’t you have the King’s soldiers with you for protection]?”² And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, “The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee [I’m on a secret mission for the King and don’t want to attract attention to myself (this was a lie)]: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place [and I will rendezvous with Saul’s soldiers when I arrive at my destination].³ Now therefore what is under thine hand [what food do you have that I can take immediately]? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present [give me whatever food you have so I can be on my way].”⁴ And the priest answered David, and said, “There is no common bread under my hand, but there is hallowed bread [also called ‘shewbread’]; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women [if these few men with you haven’t laid with women].”⁵ And David answered the priest, and said unto him, “Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels [bodies] of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel [these men’s bodies are as sanctified as the shewbread].”⁶ So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away [that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced with fresh bread everyday].⁷ Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul [the highest-ranking herdsman who was loyal to Saul].*

1. Ahimelech the priest afraid & began asking questions
2. David makes a remark about the “king’s business”
3. Ahimelech gives David day-old showbread from the temple
4. Doeg the Edomite witnesses what happened in Nob (1 Samuel 22:7-10)
5. Jesus comments on David eating the shewbread (Matthew 12:3-7, Mark 2:26-27, Luke 6:3-4)

II. King Saul's Retaliation (1 Samuel 22)

A. Angry sovereign king (Saul)

1 Samuel 22:6, 10-13 *When Saul heard that David was discovered [found], and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah [the King's palace] under a tree in Ramah [a city], having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;) ... And he [Ahimelech the priest] enquired of the LORD for him [David], and gave him victuals [food], and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king [Saul] sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house [his extended family], the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, "Hear now, thou son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." And Saul said unto him, "Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse [you and David], in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me [he lead a rebellion], to lie in wait [to ambush me], as at this day?"*

1. Saul sends for the priests to come from Nob to Gibeah at Saul's home
2. Saul accuses the priests of conspiring with David against him

B. Apprehensive Subjects (Residents of Nob; 22:14-17)

1 Samuel 22:14-17 *Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, "And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding [and does everything you tell him to do], and is honorable in thine house? Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me [I would not betray my King in this way]: let not the king impute anything unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant [for I] knew nothing of all this, less or more." And the king said, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house." And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, "Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is [because they conspired] with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me." But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon [the King's servants would not harm] the priests of the LORD.*

1. People were talking about the friction between King Saul and his servant David & Ahimelech the priest knew he was being accused of taking David's side (1 Samuel 21:1)
2. Ahimelech answered that he had no knowledge of any plots against the king's life
3. King commands his servants to kill the priests but they refused

C. Appeasing Servant (Doeg; 22:9-10, 18-19)

1 Samuel 22:9-10, 18-19 *Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul [was appointed as commander of Saul's forces], and said, "I saw the son of Jesse [David] coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the LORD for him [Ahimelech asked the LORD what David should do in this situation], and gave him victuals [food], and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." ... And the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou, and fall upon the priests [kill the priests]." And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod [and killed 85 priests (the linen ephod was a sacred garment that only priests wore)]. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he [Doeg destroyed] with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings [nursing babies], and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.*

1. Doeg the Edomite tells Saul of seeing David in Nob
2. King commands Doeg to kill 85 priests
 - i. (Background) Esau (the other son of Isaac, twin brother of Jacob) father of nation of Edom
 - ii. Edomites (like Doeg) were considered foreigners to Israel
3. Doeg has no morals or scruples about killing the Jewish priests, their families, or destroying their whole city

III. David's Remorse (1 Samuel 22-23)

A. David feels responsible for priests' deaths (even though it wasn't his fault)

1 Samuel 22:21-22² *And Abiathar shewed [told] David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day [when a priest gave David food and Goliath's spear], when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: "I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house [I (Doeg) have killed everyone in the family of priests]".*

1. Abiathar (Ahimelech's son) escaped to David & tells of priests' murder
2. David knew of Doeg's presence in Nob
3. David also know that Doeg would tell King Saul
4. David felt that it was his fault that the priests were killed because they helped him escape
5. All this happened because David came openly into Nob & people recognized him

² Background on 1 Samuel 22: Saul (current King of Israel) has been told that God has rejected him as king because he won't obey God's commands. God has chosen David as the next King of Israel (rather than Saul's son Jonathan). Saul is trying to kill David in order to keep the power for himself. David is fleeing to save his life, and Abiathar (a priest faithful to David) is trying to help David by keeping him informed about Saul's activities. Doeg the Edomite was a shepherd acting as a spy and assassin for Saul. Doeg had just killed all the priests suspected of helping David.

B. David instructs Abiathar to stay with David's group

1 Samuel 22: 23, 23:6 *Abide thou with me [Flee with me], fear not: for he that seeketh my life [Saul] seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard [I will keep you safe].... And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.*

1. David will be the safeguard to Abiathar's life from King Saul
2. Abiathar brought priestly ephod when he came to David's group

IV. David's Rejoicing (Psalm 52) when he thought of God's goodness

A. Word: Goodness

1. Hebrew word טוֹב, translated here as 'goodness' can also be translated 'mercy', or 'lovingkindness'
2. God tells everyone of His goodness, mercy, long-suffering (patience)

i. God tells Moses on Mt Sinai

Exodus 34:6 *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness (טוֹב) and truth,*

ii. David sings of God's character when dedicating the new tabernacle in Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 16:34 *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy (טוֹב) endureth forever.*

B. Event that inspired David to write the psalm (52:1, 4-5, 7)

1. Doeg the Edomite tells King Saul of David's visiting Ahimelech
 - i. Doeg boasted of himself
 - ii. He had a deceiving tongue
 - iii. He trusted in his wealth
 - iv. He trusted in the large size of his servants (Saul's soldiers)
2. David gives Doeg's fate into God's hand rather than seek revenge

C. But David puts his trust in the goodness of God (52:1, 5-6, 8-9)

1. Why? Because the goodness of God endures continually (all the time)
2. David will not take revenge on Doeg, but put him into God's hands (verses 5 - 6)

3. God will repay the reward of everyone's deeds

Psalm 94:1 *O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, Shew thyself.*

Hebrews 10:30-31 *For we know him [God] that hath said, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense [justly repay]," saith the Lord. And again, "The Lord shall judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

4. But God shows mercy to all who love Him

i. God tells Moses of His mercy

Exodus 33:19 *And he [God] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee [Moses], and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy [My grace and mercy cannot be earned, I will determine who will receive them by my own choice].*

ii. God shows mercy to those who love Him

Deuteronomy 5:10 *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me [God] and keep my commandments.*

iii. Jeremiah hopes in God's mercies even during Jerusalem's destruction

Lamentations 3:21-23 *This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed [destroyed], because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

V. Reminders for Today

A. Man cannot be flawless

1. People deceive themselves

1 John 1:8 *If we say that we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.*

2. None are completely good & none look for God

Romans 3:10-11 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

B. God can only be faithful

1. God cannot tell lies

Hebrews 6:17-18 *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel [wanting His heirs to know that His decisions never change], confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable [constant forever] things, in which **it was impossible for God to lie**, we might have a strong consolation [we can know the certainty of His promises], who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us [who have found His promises enough to set our hope upon]:*

2. God cannot deny His faithfulness

2 Timothy 2:13 *If we believe not, yet he abideth [remains] faithful: **he cannot deny himself.***

3. Example of Peter. Peter denied Jesus before He died on the cross. But after His resurrection, Jesus calls Peter by name when He met him in Galilee

Mark 16:7 *But go your [disciples] way, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he [Jesus] goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*

4. Example of God's faithfulness in Joseph's life

Genesis 45:5 *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves [the 11 brothers of Joseph], that ye sold me [Joseph] hither [here, in Egypt]: for God did send me before you to preserve life [save our family from starvation].*

5. God continues His faithfulness in sending rain & continuing sunshine on the earth

Matthew 5:45 *That ye [believers] may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Hebrews 6:7 *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it [the earth is watered by frequent rains], and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed [and grows crops for the farmer], receiveth blessing from God:*

C. We must not be fearful

1. Jesus promises to stay with us to the end of the ages

Matthew 28:20 *Teaching them [the new disciples] to observe all things whatsoever I [Jesus] have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

2. Keep your mind on God

Isaiah 26:3 *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed [focused] on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

3. God has given us a sound mind

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out [expels] fear: because fear hath torment [punishment]. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

VI. Conclusion

David wrote Psalm 23 He wrote of God's goodness & mercy

Psalm 23:6 *Surely goodness and mercy (τὸν) shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*