

## The Deceitful Man

Jesus in the Psalms

*Psalm 52*

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### I. Paying Attention to Lies (1 Sam 21:1-9; 22:6-23)

*“If a ruler pays attention to \_\_\_\_\_, All his servants become wicked”* (Prov 29:12). Saul became such a ruler. His envy of David led him astray from the truth; he began *paying attention to those who told lies*. David said to Saul, *“Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm?’”* (1 Sam 24:9) Because Saul *paid attention to lies*, he drew to himself men like Doeg the Edomite, a wicked man who loved violence. Doeg was responsible for the death of the priestly family of Ahimelech. *“So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep – with the edge of the sword”* (1 Sam 22:18-19). Only Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech, escaped to tell David all that had happened. David was grieved and composed this song to assure Doeg that God would destroy him and his like while God would vindicate His Christ and His saints.

### II. The Deceitful Man

#### A. *The Character and Fate of the Deceitful Man* (1-5)

The first five verses describe the character and fate of the *deceitful* man. David speaks directly to the deceitful man who thinks that his political power will enable him to get away with deceit and evil. But this is not so. *“The goodness of God endures continually.”* Only God remains forever, and He sits as judge over all men.

So how does the boasting of this man reveal itself? In destruction and deceit. His actions reveal his loves, reveal what he cherishes most: evil, lies, wealth, power. So David gives Doeg a new name, *“O Deceitful Tongue!”* And David announces that God will destroy him.

#### B. *The Character and Fate of the Righteous Man* (6-9)

Verses 6-9 introduce the righteous. *The righteous*, knowing that *the goodness of God endures continually* (1b), *shall see* God’s judgment on the wicked *and fear* offending God (6a). They also *rejoice* in God’s justice, mocking the folly of men like Doeg. For though the wicked think to destroy God’s Anointed and His people through their lies and deceit, their efforts will come to naught. God is good and He does good to all those who trust in His mercy.

### III. Application

#### A. Recognizing Deceitful Men

First, our psalm reminds us that there are wicked men in the world who lie, deceive, and kill because they *love evil more than good and lying more than speaking righteousness*. People are not basically good. Apart from the grace and mercy of God, people practice incredible evil. Doeg's wickedness is but a sample of such wickedness. We must be willing to identify such evil as \_\_\_\_\_ and to condemn it unequivocally. The Scriptures frequently contain petitions from those who are seeking deliverance from deceitful men:

- Psalm 120:2 - *Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue.*
- Psalm 144:11 - *Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of [those w]hose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood—*

#### B. Confronting Deceitful Men (2 Thes 1:6-10; 2 Peter 2:4-11)

God hates deceitful men and will judge them. Jesus warns the wicked of the certainty of God's \_\_\_\_\_. "*God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, and uproot you from the land of the living*" (5). Wickedness is foolishness! Only a fool trusts in power, wealth, deceit, and destruction. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "*[It] is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.*" (2 Thes 1:6–10)

The \_\_\_\_\_ of God is our great confidence and delight. God will always vindicate the cause of His Christ and His saints. Hence, we may confidently confront deceitful men. Allen Ross summarizes the first portion of the psalm this way: "*The faithful people of God may confidently confront malicious and treacherous unbelievers to warn them that God will destroy them forever.*" As the Apostle Peter writes, "*the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...*" (2 Pet 2:9).

#### C. Rejoicing in God's Justice and Mercy (cf. 2 Chr 33:1-20)

Finally, our psalm teaches us to rejoice in both God's justice and God's mercy. While we evangelicals are good at the latter, we are often poor at the former. We find it easy to sing verses 8-9 of this psalm, but difficult to sing verses 6-7; however, both are in the psalm. Our psalm summons us to rejoice in God's \_\_\_\_\_. When God brings to justice those who use their power to oppress and tyrannize their fellow human beings, we are to rejoice. \_\_\_\_\_ is good and to fail to rejoice in its execution is to fail to honor our Lord.

### IV. Conclusion (Rom 3:26; Zech 6:9-13)