

Psalm 52

In the context of our Torah readings, Doeg the Edomite (Edom = Adam) stands in for Pharaoh at his defeat at the Red Sea, as well as our old man, and the evil inclination working in our natural mind that plots against Christ in us.

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

Rashi - Why do you boast and brag of the evil that you do, you who are mighty in Torah?

"mighty man" - as sarcasm or ridicule.

"the goodness of God endureth continually" - despite the treachery of Doeg/Pharaoh/Satan, God's plan would win out - both for David and for Messiah.

Ancient Christian commentators like Athanasius and the Venerable Bede saw Doeg as the shadow of Judas, who betrayed Christ, as well as the Little Horn of **Daniel 7:20** who had a "mouth uttering great boasts."

(See "A Commentary on the Psalms from Primitive and Mediæval Writers"
- <https://buff.ly/2oT877t>)

Doeg also is reflected in King Herod (also an Edomite) who massacred the children in Bethlehem and about whom Jesus and his family were warned and escaped.

The Massacre

After parting from Jonathan, David fled from Saul's jealous anger and went to Nob. He went to Ahimelech, the High Priest, claiming to be on a clandestine royal mission. Ahimelech fed David and his men with the showbread, and gave David the sword of Goliath. Doeg was present and witnessed Ahimelech's service to David. (**1 Samuel 21 & 22**)

Doeg the Edomite, chief herdsman to Saul, said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub." (**1 Samuel 22:9**)

Saul summoned the High Priest and his entire company and, in a rage, ordered them all killed. His officials refused to raise their hands against the priests and Saul turned to Doeg, who carried out the executions. Saul followed that up with an attack on the city of Nob, the city of the priests, and the families of the priests – men, women, and children – were put to the sword. Only Abiathar escaped, and fled to join David.

The death of Ahimelech, as the great-grandson of Eli, is seen as fulfilling part of the

curse on the House of Eli that none of his male descendants would live to old age
(1 Samuel 2:31-33)

David later showed remorse for his part in the incident:

“And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, 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.” (1 Samuel 22:22)

Doeg in Rabbinical Literature (from wikipedia)

Though he died at the early age of 34 years, he is regarded by the rabbis as the greatest scholar of his time, a strong description being supposedly applied to him because he made every one with whom he disputed "blush." Rashi calls him a "mighty man of Torah." He could bring forward 300 different questions with reference to one single ritual case. But he was lacking in inward piety, so that God was "anxious" concerning his end, and "mourned" for him.

His most unfortunate qualities, however, were his malice, jealousy, and calumnious tongue. He sounded the praise of David before Saul only in order to provoke his jealousy, ascribing to David qualities that Saul lacked. He cherished a grudge against David, whose opinion prevailed over his own in determining the site for the Temple at Jerusalem, and he had well-nigh succeeded in proving by his arguments that David, as a descendant of Ruth the Moabite, could not, according to the Law, belong to the congregation of Israel, when the prophet Samuel interposed in David's favor. He also declared David's marriage with Michal to be invalid, and induced Saul to marry her to another.

Doeg not only disregarded the sanctity of marriage, but he also slew with his own hands the priests of Nob, after Abner and Amasa, Saul's lieutenants, had refused to do so. As it often happens with those who strive for something to which they are not entitled, he lost that which he possessed. God sent the three "angels of destruction" to Doeg; the first caused him to forget his learning, the second burned his soul, and the third scattered the ashes. According to some he was slain by his own pupils when they found that he had forgotten his learning; others maintain that he was slain by David when he (Doeg) informed him of the death of Saul and of Jonathan.

According to another Midrash, Doeg tried to preserve the life of Agag, the king of the Amalekites-Edomites, by interpreting Lev. 22:28 into a prohibition against the destruction of both the old and the young in war. Doeg is among those who have forfeited their portion in the future world by their wickedness. Doeg is an instance of the evil consequences of calumny, because by slandering the priests of Nob he lost his own life, and caused the death of Saul, Ahimelech, and Abner.

Later, Jehoash (Joash) was the only one of Jehoram's male descendants to escape extermination at the hand of Athaliah. The slaughter was considered a divine retribution for David's role in causing the death of the priests at Nob,[19] but Jehoash escaped

death because on that earlier occasion one priest, Abiathar, had survived.

It seems probable that Doeg, after he had massacred the priests, boasted of his loyalty to Saul, and of having prevented the treasonable schemes which, he artfully insinuated, had been concerted by David and the priests; and that he had been liberally rewarded by Saul on account of it.

Psalm 52:2-3 - "Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah."

The Targum renders the word "Selah" here as "for ever"

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

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."

The Targum again renders the word "Selah" here "for ever"

"Destroy" = nathats - break down - the word is used of breaking down the house in which the leprosy was (**Leviticus 14:45**); and denotes the utter extinction of Doeg's family, and the irrecoverable ruin of antichrist in **Revelation 18:21**. - Gills Exposition

Psalm 52:6-7 - "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: 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."

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."

forever and ever = *olam* - eternity, the vanishing point, never-ending, the days of Messiah

Rashi - But I who am now being pursued by you, will be like an olive tree, fresh with children and grandchildren, in the house of the Holy One, blessed be He.

The Olive Tree and Olive Oil

Job compared human beings to the olive tree and noted that the olive tree did not die when cut down but sprang again to life, unlike people, who die and are gone (Job 14:7-9). The children of God's people are compared to the many small shoots that spring continually from the root system of the tree, ensuring the continued existence of the fruitful family (Ps. 128:3). Gad says He planted Israel as a farmer would plant a beautiful olive tree (Jer. 11:16-17)

Many prophecies also described the Messiah as a branch or a shoot, probably drawing on the image of the olive tree (Jer. 23:5, 33:15; Zech. 3:8, 6:12, Matt. 2:21-23). Jesus is

the shoot from a stump in the olive grove of Israel.

Olive oil was fuel for the Temple lampstand, and for anointing the priests and king. The Hebrew word for "anointed" is *mashiach*, from which we get our English word Messiah.

Oil was poured on the leper's head as final element of cleansing, making "atonement for him before the Lord" (Lev. 14:15-18). Jewish tradition indicates that the oil was a symbol of the leper coming back to life because he or she had been considered dead.

God's Spirit bestows the "oil of gladness" on those who mourn (Isa. 61:1-6)

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."