

Tehillim / Psalms 52 | ספר תהילים נב

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David's Psalm, the Eye of the Needle, a Rabbinic Context

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 52:1-9*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ מִשְׁפִּיל לְדָוִד: *For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: "David has gone to the house of Ahimelek." (NASB) Who is Doeg? Why did David need to flee from Saul? Whose house is the house of Ahimelek? In the history of David's life we learn about the mercy of God to preserve his people, and more specifically, to preserve David's life. He continues saying, 52:1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long. (NASB) The Hebrew text ask "why do you give praise in evil." The unrighteous boast about their own wickedness and they do not recognize the lovingkindness of God who takes care of His people. David says, ד הוֹת תִּחְשַׁב לְשׁוֹנֵה, 52:2 Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit. 52:3 You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah. (NASB) The tongue is described as being a sharp razor working great evils. How does a razor work evil? He goes on to say, ה אֶהְבֶּתָּ רַע מְטוֹב שְׁקָר | מְדַבֵּר צֶדֶק סְלָה: ו אֶהְבֶּתָּ כָּל-דְּבָרֵי-בָלַע לְשׁוֹן מְרֵמָה: ז גַּם-אֵל יִתְצָה לְנֹצֵחַ יַחֲתֶה וְיִסְחָף 52:4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. 52:5 But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. (NASB) The devouring nature of words is a reference to words that destroy the soul, the heart, or the love of someone, and also words that command others to commit murder, to steal, and corrupt others. The mercy of God however results in the righteous not being afraid, 52:6 The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, 52:7 'Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire.' (NASB) The psalm speaks of those who trust in the Lord and in His abundant riches. What riches is he referring to? David concludes saying, ח וַיִּרְאוּ צְדִיקִים וַיִּירְאוּ וְעָלְיוּ יִשְׁחָקוּ: ט הִנֵּה הַגִּבּוֹר לֹא-יִשְׁמֵחַ אֱלֹהִים מְעוֹזוֹ וַיִּבְטַח בְּרַב עֲשָׂרוּ יַעֲזוּ בַּהֲתוֹ: י וַאֲנִי | כְּזֵית רֹעֵן בְּבַיִת אֱלֹהִים בְּחֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד: יא אֹרֶךְ לַעֲוֹלָם כִּי עֲשִׂיתָ וְאֶקְוֶה שְׁמָךְ כִּי-טוֹב נִגְדָה 52:8 But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. 52:9 I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones. (NASB)*

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p>ספר תהלים פרק נב</p> <p>א לְמַנְצֵחַ מִשְׁפִּיל לְדָוִד: ב כְּבוֹא דּוֹאֵג הָאֲדָמִי וַיֵּגַד לְשָׂאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כְּאֵל-בֵּית אַחִימֶלֶךְ: ג מֵהַ-תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּרָעָה הַגְּבוֹר חָסַד אֵל כָּל-הַיּוֹם: ד הוֹת תִּחְשַׁב לְשׁוֹנֵה כְּתַעַר מְלֻטֵשׁ עֲשִׂה רְמִיָּה: ה אֶהְבֶּתָּ רַע מְטוֹב שְׁקָר מְדַבֵּר צֶדֶק סְלָה:</p>	<p>ספר טוביה פרק נב</p> <p>א לשבחא על שכלא טבא על ידוי דדוד: ב כד אתי דואג אדומאה ותני לשאול ואמר ליה אתא דוד לבית אחימלך: ג מה תשתבח בליש-נא בישא גיבר למישדי אדם זכאה חסדא דאלהא כל יומא: ד אתרגוש-תא תחשב בליבך בלבך לישנך היך אזמל חריף עביד מילי מלשינותא:</p>	<p>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 52 52:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος συνέσεως τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐν τῷ ἔλθειν Δαυὶδ τὸν Ἰδουμαῖον καὶ ἀναγγεῖλαι τῷ Σαουλ καὶ εἰπεῖν αὐτῷ ἦλθεν Δαυὶδ εἰς τὸν οἶκον Ἀβιμελεχ τὴν ἐγκαυχᾶ ἐν κακίᾳ ὁ δυνατὸς ἀνομίαν ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν 52:2 ἀδικίαν ἐλογίσαστο ἢ γλώσσά σου ὡσεὶ ξυρὸν ἠκονημένον ἐποίησας δόλον 52:3 ἠγάπησας κακίαν ὑπὲρ ἀγαθωσύνην ἀδικίαν ὑπὲρ τὸ λαλῆσαι δικαιοσύνην διάψαλμα</p>

ו אָהַבְתָּ כָּל-דְּבָרֵי-כָלֶּע לְשׁוֹן מְרָמָה:
 ז גַּם-אֵל תִּצְצֶה לְנֹצֵחַ יַחְתָּה וַיִּסְתָּה
 מֵאֲהֵל וְשִׁרְשָׁה מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים סָלָה: ח
 וַיֵּרָאוּ צְדִיקִים וַיִּירָאוּ וְעָלְיוּ יִשְׁחָר־
 קוֹ: ט הִנֵּה הַגִּבּוֹר לֹא-יִשִּׁים אֱלֹהִים
 מְעוֹזוֹ וַיִּבְטַח בְּרַב עֲשָׂרוֹ יַעַז בְּהַתּוֹ:
 י וְאֲנִי | כְּזִית רַעַנָּן בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים
 בְּטַחְתִּי בַחֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד: יא
 אֲוֹדֶה לְעוֹלָם כִּי עָשִׂיתָ וְאֶקְוֶה שְׂמֶה
 כִּי-טוֹב נִגְדַת חֲסִידֶיךָ:

Tehillim / Psalms 52

For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: “David has gone to the house of Ahimelek.” 52:1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long. 52:2 Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit. 52:3 You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah. 52:4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. 52:5 But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. 52:6 The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, 52:7 ‘Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire.’ 52:8 But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. 52:9 I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones. (NASB)

ה רחמתא ביש מן טב שקרא מלמלא
 צדקתא זכותא לעלמין: ו רחמתא כל
 מלי סלעמי ותא לישנא דנכילו: ז
 לחוד אלהא יתרעינך לעלמין יתברניך
 ויטלטלינך מלמיתב במשכנא ויתלשינך
 מן ארע חייא לעלמין: ח ויחמו צדיקיא
 בפורענותא דרשיעיא וידחלון מן קדם
 יהוה ואמטולתיה יגחכון: ט ויימרון הא
 גברא דלא שוי מימרא דיהוה עושניה
 סבר בעותריה עשין יתעשן בממוניה: י
 ואנא היך אילן זיתא עבוף בבית מקדש
 אלהא סברית בחסדא דאלהא לעלמי
 עלמין: יא אודה קדמך לעלם ארום
 עבדת פורענות דיני ואמתין שמך ארום
 טב קבל חסידיך:

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 52

52:1 For praise; for good teaching; composed by David. 52:2 When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said to him, “David has come to the house of Ahimelech.” 52:3 How the mighty man will praise himself with a wicked tongue, to shed innocent blood; [but] the grace of God is all the day. 52:4 Your tongue will devise tumult in your heart, forming words of slander like a sharp knife. 52:5 You love evil more than good, lying more than speaking righteousness always. 52:6 You love all the words of destruction, the tongue of guile. 52:7 Also God will demolish you forever; he will shatter you and make you wander so that you cannot dwell in a tent; and he will uproot you from the land of the living forever. 52:8 And the righteous will see the punishment of the wicked, and they will be afraid in the presence of the Lord, and on his account they will laugh. 52:9 And they will say, “Behold, the man who did not make the word of the Lord his strength; he trusted in his riches; he was strong in his money.” 52:10 But I, like a luxuriant olive tree in the sanctuary of God, have trusted in the grace of God forever and ever. 52:11 I will give thanks in your presence forever, for you have accomplished the vindication of my case; and I will await your name, for it is good, before your pious ones. (EMC)

52:4 ἠγάπησας πάντα τὰ ῥήματα καταποντισμοῦ γλῶσσαν δολίαν 52:5 διὰ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς καθελεῖ σε εἰς τέλος ἐκτίλαι σε καὶ μεταναστεύσαι σε ἀπὸ σκηνώματος καὶ τὸ ῥίζωμά σου ἐκ γῆς ζώντων διάγαλμα 52:6 καὶ ὄψονται δίκαιοι καὶ φοβηθήσονται καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτὸν γελάσονται καὶ ἐροῦσιν 52:7 ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ὃς οὐκ ἔθετο τὸν θεὸν βοηθὸν αὐτοῦ ἀλλ’ ἐπήλπισεν ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ πλοῦτου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐδυναμώθη ἐπὶ τῇ ματαιότητι αὐτοῦ 52:8 ἐγὼ δὲ ὡσεὶ ἔλαια κατάκαρπος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ἤλπισα ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος 52:9 ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὅτι ἐποίησας καὶ ὑπομενῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου ὅτι χρηστὸν ἐναντίον τῶν ὁσίων σου

Psalmoi / Psalms 52

For the end, a Psalm of instruction by David, when Doeg the Idumean came and told Saul, and said to him, David is gone to the house of Abimelech. 52:1 Why dost thou, O mighty man, boast of iniquity in thy mischief? All the day 52:2 thy tongue has devised unrighteousness; like a sharpened razor thou hast wrought deceit. 52:3 Thou hast loved wickedness more than goodness; unrighteousness better than to speak righteousness. Pause. 52:4 Thou has loved all words of destruction, and a deceitful tongue. 52:5 Therefore may God destroy thee for ever, may he pluck thee up and utterly remove thee from thy dwelling, and thy root from the land of the living. Pause. 52:6 And the righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, and say, 52:7 Behold the man who made not God his help; but trusted in the abundance of his wealth, and strengthened himself in his vanity. 52:8 But I am as a fruitful olive in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God for ever, even for evermore. 52:9 I will give thanks to thee for ever, for thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before the saints. (LXX)

This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 52:1-9*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמִנְצֵחַ מְשִׁכִּיל לְדָוִד: ב, *For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: “David has gone to the house of Ahimelek.” (NASB)* Who is Doeg? Why did David need to flee from Saul? Whose house is the house of Ahimelek? Note that “Ahimelek” (אַחִי-מֶלֶךְ) is the juxtaposition of two words, “Akhi” (אַחִי) and “Melech” (מֶלֶךְ) meaning “my brother the king.” According to the Scriptures, *1 Samuel 21:7* tells us that Doeg was an Edomite, the chief herdsman to Saul, King of Israel. He is mentioned in the Scriptures as being responsible for the deaths of a

large number of priests because these priests helped David escape King Saul.

According to the narrative in *1 Samuel*, David was in fear of his life and did not want to go to a dinner invite from Saul and so asked Jonathan (King Saul's son) to seek the nature of the invite, whether Saul's heart was for or against him. Jonathan discovered that Saul wanted to kill David, and both Jonathan and David met in a field and spoke about what had happened during the dinner. Jonathan discovered that Saul's heart was against David to kill him. After parting from Jonathan, David fled from Saul's jealous anger and went to Nob. He visited Ahimelek, the High Priest, claiming to be on a mission from the king. Ahimelek fed David and his men with the bread of the presence, and gave David the sword of Goliath. Doeg was present and witnessed Ahimelek's service to David. (*1 Samuel 21*). Following these events, Saul asked about the whereabouts of David, and Doeg spoke up saying,

1 Samuel 22:9

22:9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing by the servants of Saul, said, 'I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. (NASB)

In the narrative, Doeg neglected to inform King Saul that David had pretended to be on a mission on behalf of the king. He did not inform the king that Ahimelek was deceived by David, and that Ahimelek provided support because he thought he was serving the king. King Saul had only half the story and then ordered the priests and the High Priest killed. Saul's officials refused to raise their hands against the anointed of God and so Saul turned to Doeg, who carried out the executions. Saul then proceeded to attack the city of Nob, the city of the priests, and the families of the priests. We learn that the men, women, and children were put to the sword. According to Scripture, only Abiathar escaped, and fled to join David. Note also on the death of Ahimelek, he was the great-grandson of Eli. Thus his death is seen as fulfilling part of the curse on the House of Eli that none of his male descendants would live to old age. (see *Jewish Encyclopedia article on "Ahimelech"*) David said to Abiathar,

1 Samuel 22:21-23

22:21 Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. 22:22 Then David said to Abiathar, 'I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have brought about the death of every person in your father's household. 22:23 'Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life, for you are safe with me.' (NASB)

Note how the opening verse to *Tehillim / Psalms 52* states that David wrote it after Doeg the Edomite betrayed Ahimelek to Saul. These are the events in the storyline that led David to write what he did concerning the evil man Doeg and the mercy of God.

The Hebrew text for the opening verse of the psalm is very interesting, saying the following, א לְמַנְצֵחַ | דָּוִד אֲזָדְמִי וַיִּגַּד לְשָׂאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כִּי דָוִד אָל-בַּיִת אַחִימֶלֶךְ: *For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: "David has gone to the house of Ahimelek."* (NASB) Notice how Doeg goes to Saul saying אָל-בַּיִת אַחִימֶלֶךְ "David has come to the house of Ahimelek" where Ahimelek (אַחִימֶלֶךְ) is translated from two words "Ahi" (אָחִי) "my brother," and "Melek" (מֶלֶךְ) "the king." Over and over again David we read he states that Saul is the anointed one of God. The name of the priest and the telling about David visiting Ahimelek (my brother the king) is almost prophetic in the sense that Saul should have recognized that David was not out to get him, in fact David would have considered him as a brother in the sense of being as close as a brother if Saul had let their relationship develop. Instead, Saul's heart was filled with hatred towards David.

In the rabbinic literature, the rabbis consider Doeg to have died at the age of 34 years (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 69b*). He is also regarded by the rabbis as being a great scholar in his time and that a strong deception was given to him because he made everyone who talked to him "blush" (*Midrash Tehillim 52, Part*

4). The rabbis say that He was capable of bringing forth 300 different questions with regard to one point in the Law (*Mishnah, Seder Moed, Chagigah 15b*). The rabbis say however that he lacked inward piety and so the Lord mourned for him due to his outward pious acts (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 106b*). The rabbis say that he sounded the praise of David before Saul (*1 Samuel 16:18*), telling him David come to Ahimelek, for the purpose of provoking Saul to jealousy (*see expositions in Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 93b and Midrash Samuel 19*). They also say that Doeg influenced Saul with regard to David's marriage to Michal and stated that his marriage with Michael was invalid and caused Saul to marry her to another man. Doeg not only disregarded the sanctity of marriage, he also slew with his own hands the priests of Nob, after Abner and Amasa, Saul's lieutenants, had refused to do so. (*Midrash Rabbah Genesis 32, and Midrash Tehillim 52, Part 4*) The rabbis say that the Lord God sent three "angels of destruction" to Doeg were the first caused him to forget his learning, the second burned his soul, and the third scattered the ashes. (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 106b*) According to *Midrash Tehillim 52, Part 4*, Doeg tried to preserve the life of Agag, the king of the Amalekites-Edomites, by interpreting *Vayikra / Leviticus 22:28* into a prohibition against the destruction of both the old and the young in war. Doeg is also among those who have forfeited their portion in the Olam haba (world to come) by their wickedness. (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 10*) In regard to all of these things taken from the rabbinic literature, we can conclude that in the history of David's life we learn about the mercy of God to preserve his people, and more specifically, to preserve David even being surrounded by evil people like Doeg and Saul.

David begins his exposition in the psalm saying, מַה-תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּרָעָה הַגְּבוּר חָסֵד אֵל כָּל-הַיּוֹם: *52:1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long. (NASB)* The Hebrew text ask "why do you give praise in evil." The Hebrew text states "why do you praise in evil" (מַה-תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּרָעָה). The sense of this word is "lehalal" להלל as a verb "to praise, glorify, laud, commend," which may also be expressed as "lehithalal" להתהלל meaning "to praise oneself, boast," which is the context in which we find David writing His Psalm. The Apostolic commentary on this topic is the following:

Colossians 3:15-17

3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)

1 Corinthians 10:30-11:1

10:30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 10:32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; 10:33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (NASB)

Revelation 7:10-12

7:10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' 7:11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 7:12 saying, 'Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.' (NASB)

The Apostle Paul gives commentary on who receives praises and glory and honor forever. In *Colossians 3:17*, Paul says in everything we do, in word or in deed, we are to do in the name of the Messiah Yeshua, and give thanks through Him to God our Father. Thankfulness is a prominent biblical theme. Paul says in

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in the Messiah Yeshua.*” He says give thanks in all circumstances. Thankfulness is a way of life for us, which is something that should naturally flow from our hearts and our mouths. Being thankful is a form of praise. Remember back a couple Psalms that the offering of thanksgiving is given in a way that brings glory to God in the way that we live our lives. In the Psalm David says that the unrighteous man praises himself in the evil that he does. The wicked man thinks about himself and not about others or the Lord in Heaven. Paul says in *1 Corinthians 10:31*, that “*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,*” and in the previous verse, he speaks of giving thanks for his food. The question is what foods did God create that we should be taking with thanksgiving that is related to the blessing and the praises of Yeshua and our Father in heaven? In Jewish tradition, there are blessings said during a wedding ceremony, and grace is given both before and after meals. In Jewish liturgy, the Berakhah is said before meals (see *Matthew 14:19*). The blessing before the meal is short, whereas, on a full stomach, one can really be thankful and give a longer blessing following the meal. For example, the Berakhah after the meal is the following:

“Blessed are You, Adonai our God, king of the universe, who feeds the whole world with Your goodness, grace, lovingkindness, and mercy. You give food to everything that lives, because your lovingkindness endures forever. In Your great goodness, we have never lacked food. For your great name’s sake, may we never lack it ever, since You nourish, sustain, and do good to all and provide food for all the creatures You created. Blessed are You, Adonai, giver of food to all.” (Sidur)

According to the Sidur, the following Berakhah includes thanks for the productivity of the land of Israel, the covenant, and the Torah, and quotes the Scriptural basis for the blessings saying from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:10* “*And you will eat and be satisfied, and you will bless Adonai your God for the good land which He has given you.*” (NASB) What we find here within the blessing, being thankful, and praising the name of the Lord for His provision, we are being drawn back into the Torah context of being thankful and blessing the Lord in His grace and mercy to save us and consequently provide for our needs. We are remembering the promises of God and His provision for our daily needs. Additional Berakhot drives forward this point, in the sidur we find prayers for the restoration of Jerusalem, the return of the Jewish people to Israel, and the coming of the Messiah. When the Scripture says that everything created by God is good, realize that this does not mean that everything God created was created for food. All things are created to bring glory to God, the evil thing, the unclean thing is created for the purpose of our choosing to do what is right and righteous before the Lord and thus bringing glory and praise to His name through obedience. There are no verses that abolishes the dietary laws. Obeying the dietary laws do not earn us the righteousness to enter heaven. Obeying the commandments is simply for the purpose of offering God a sacrifice of thanks, and bringing glory to His name through obedience to His word.

In *Revelation 7:10-12*, we read that all glory, blessings, and praises belong to the Lord and to His Messiah Yeshua. In the Psalm David says the unrighteous boast (give praise) about their own wickedness and they do not recognize the lovingkindness of God who takes care of His people. The Aramaic Targum states, :אָמַר כָּל יוֹמָא: מַה תִּשְׁתַּבַּח בְּלִישְׁנָא בִישָׂא גִיבַר לְמִישְׁדֵי אָדָם זְכָאָה חֲסָדָא דְאַלְהָא כָּל יוֹמָא: *52:3 How the mighty man will praise himself with a wicked tongue, to shed innocent blood; [but] the grace of God is all the day. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, 52:2 ἀδικίαν ἐλογίσατο ἡ γλῶσσά σου ὡσεὶ ξυρὸν ἠκονημένον ἐποίησας δόλον *52:1 Why dost thou, O mighty man, boast of iniquity in thy mischief? All the day. (LXX)* In both the Aramaic and Greek translations of the Psalms, the wicked man boasts (gives praise) to himself by reason of his own iniquity. They boast about their sin rather than being grieved because of their sins. The rabbis say that the wicked boast in their ability to shed innocent blood. It is interesting that in the first clause to this sentence, we find David speaking of the wicked who boast in their sin and of murder, and in the second clause we are told of the glory of God by His grace He gives all the day long. This may be drawing a context to David’s sin against BatSheva and Uriah, he had Uriah killed and the Lord God showed grace to David by not taking

his life by reason of his sin. For this reason David may be contrasting the evil desires to the grace of God. This is all the more reason why we should be thankful because God is worthy of our thanksgiving. It is only right to credit Him for “*every good and perfect gift*” that He gives (*James 1:17*). When we are thankful, our focus moves away from selfish desires and off the pain of current circumstances. Expressing thankfulness and praising His name helps us remember that the Lord is in control. Thankfulness, and praise is the only appropriate action on our part; it is both healthy and beneficial to us. It reminds us of the bigger picture, that we belong to the Lord God in heaven, and that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (*Ephesians 1:3*). Whether we have had a relatively easy life, or a very difficult life, we are to give glory to God for His great mercy because truly, if we take a cold hard look at our own lives, the mercy and grace that He has shown us, just like He showed David, we can say that we truly have an abundant life (*John 10:10*), and gratefulness, thankfulness, and praises is fitting.

David continues saying, הַיּוֹת תִּחְשַׁב לְשׁוֹנֶה כְּתֹעַר מְלַטֵּשׁ עֵשֶׂה רְמִיָּה׃ 52:2 *Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit.* 52:3 *You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah. (NASB)* The tongue is described as being a sharp razor working great evils. It is interesting here David says לְשׁוֹנֶה תִּחְשַׁב speaking of the tongue using the verb from the root word חוּשַׁב meaning “*to think.*” He says “*your tongue thinks.*” Does the tongue think for itself? *James 3:6* states that the tongue is a fire, a world of evil, it is a whole world of wickedness corrupting the entire body and is even set on fire from hell. Those are some very strong words to describe the depth of wickedness that is found in the tongue. The tongue has the power to kill, steal, and destroy by a command, by what is said in public or in private. The NASB translates this as the tongue “*devises destruction*” though the word destruction is not present. The Aramaic Targum states, ד אַתְּרַגְוִשְׁתָּא תַחֲשַׁב בְּלִיבְךָ בְּלִבְךָ לִישְׁנָךְ הֵיךְ אֲזַמְל חַרִּיף עֵבִיד מִלִּי, 52:4 *Your tongue will devise tumult in your heart, forming words of slander like a sharp knife. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, 52:2 ἀδικίαν ἐλογίσατο ἢ γλῶσσά σου ὡσεὶ ξυρὸν ἠκονημένον ἐποίησας δόλον 52:2 *thy tongue has devised unrighteousness; like a sharpened razor thou hast wrought deceit. (LXX)* The rabbis say that the tongue thinks or determines (תַּחֲשַׁב) tumult (אַתְּרַגְוִשְׁתָּא) where tumult means “*confusion or disorder.*” Confusion or disorder the tongue thinks within the heart. The confusion or disorder follows from the wickedness, evil, fire of hell, that the tongue is being driven and the text suggests that this is found at the very depth of man, in his heart. This follows in line with Yeshua’s words saying from the heart the mouth overflows (*Luke 6:45*). Based on this text, the heart brings forth either good or evil, and the tongue speaks evil when a man’s heart is evil.

The English translation of this combination of words is that the tongue devises mischiefs. The word “*mischiefs*” means (a) *desire, cupidity (Mishley / Proverbs 10:3)* and (b) *fall, ruin, destruction, wickedness (Tehillim / Psalm 5:9, 38:12)*. The meaning that is being drawn out here is that he (Doeg) has made his tongue to ruin others. Compare *Tehillim / Psalm 50:19* *You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit. (NIV)* The particular thing referred to here is the fact that Doeg sought the ruin of others by providing “*information.*” Doeg was not telling a lie about what David had done, visiting Ahimelek. He “*informed*” Saul of what Ahimelek had done; he informed him where David had been. Doeg was providing the information needed to apprehend David. All this was “*designed*” to bring ruin upon David and his followers, and this illustrates the importance of recognizing Lashon Hara in our own lives by the information we share with others. Note something from the Narrative in the storyline of David, Saul, and Doeg. The Lashon Hara that Doeg performed actually spilled over and brought ruin on Ahimelek and those associated with him, the priests (*1 Samuel 22:17-19*), Lashon Hara has the possibility of spilling over into other peoples life for destruction. The parallel to the tongue is a sharp razor that cuts. David says such a person loves evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking right. The prophet Isaiah says something similar in *Isaiah 7:20*, that slanders are like a sharp knife with which one stabs another. If one is speaking in secret, one could say that he or she is stabbing another in the dark. Working deceitfully means literally to make deceit. That is, it was by deceit that he (Doeg) accomplished his purpose. There was no open and fair dealing in what he did. Doeg took the power of the tongue, like a razor, and worked a great amount of evil that resulted in the death of the priests.

ה אָהַבְתָּ רַע מְטוֹב שָׁקַר | מְדַבֵּר צֶדֶק סֵלָה: ו אָהַבְתָּ כָּל-דְּבָרֵי-כָלֵע לְשׁוֹן מְרָמָה: ז גַּם-, David goes on to say, *52:4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. 52:5 But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. (NASB)* The devouring nature of words is a reference to words that destroy the soul, the heart, or the love of someone, and also words that command others to commit murder, to steal, and corrupt. David says that “*you love evil from good, a lie from words of righteousness*” (אָהַבְתָּ רַע מְטוֹב שָׁקַר | מְדַבֵּר צֶדֶק סֵלָה). Here the translators are adding in words that speak of words that devour. The Aramaic Targum states, ז לחוד אלהא יתר- ו רחימתא כל מלי סלעמי ותא לישנא דנכילו: ז עינך לעלמין יתברינך ויטלטלינך מלמיתב במשכנא ויתלשינך מן ארע חייא לעלמין: ח ויחמו צדיקיא בפורענותא *52:6 You love all the words of destruction, the tongue of guile. 52:7 Also God will demolish you forever; he will shatter you and make you wander so that you cannot dwell in a tent; and he will uproot you from the land of the living forever. 52:8 And the righteous will see the punishment of the wicked, and they will be afraid in the presence of the Lord, and on his account they will laugh. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, *52:4 ἡγάπησας πάντα τὰ ῥήματα καταποντισμοῦ γλῶσσαν δολίαν 52:5 διὰ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς καθελεῖ σε εἰς τέλος ἐκτίλει σε καὶ μεταναστεύσει σε ἀπὸ σκηνώματος καὶ τὸ ῥίζωμα σου ἐκ γῆς ζώντων διάψαλμα 52:6 καὶ ὄψονται δίκαιοι καὶ φοβηθήσονται καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτὸν γελάσονται καὶ ἐροῦσιν 52:4 Thou has loved all words of destruction, and a deceitful tongue. 52:5 Therefore may God destroy thee for ever, may he pluck thee up and utterly remove thee from thy dwelling, and thy root from the land of the living. Pause. 52:6 And the righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, and say, (LXX)* God’s righteousness, which, in accordance with the promise, takes the righteous under its protection. The righteous pray and seek the Lord to help him speak of God’s praises (*Tehillim / Psalms 51:5*). And based upon *Tehillim / Psalms 49 and 50*, we learned that God delights in the sacrifice of praise. This is paralleled to one who brings a burnt offering (זבחים) that is pleasing to Him, in comparison with which the flesh and the dead work of עולות (*wrong, injustice, evil*) The inward part of a man who commits dead works, is said to be broken and crushed because of his sinful nature, he is ungodly, he is hard, haughty, and glories in himself. It is interesting to note that the Talmud finds a significance in the plural זבחי “*sacrifice.*” Joshua ben Levi (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 43b*) says, “*At the time when the temple was standing, whoever brought a burnt-offering received the reward of it, and whoever brought a meat-offering, the reward of it; but the lowly was accounted by the Scriptures as one who offered every kind of sacrifice at once*” (כאילו הקריב כל). In this statement we see the understanding of the rabbis on the mercy of God towards the righteous. The wicked on the other hand the Lord will demolish forever and scatter and cause to wander so that such a person cannot dwell in a tent (*Tehillim / Psalms 52:5[7]*). This suggests that the one who uses his tongue to kill, will be unable to dwell in a tent with anyone else. This makes a lot of sense since anyone who is arguing and bickering constantly there is no way to live in unity (husband/wife) or as a family (brother/sister).

ח וַיֵּרְאוּ צְדִיקִים וַיִּירְאוּ וַעֲלִיו וַיִּירְאוּ וַעֲלִיו, David says that the mercy of God results in the righteous not being afraid, *52:6 The righteous will see and fear; And will laugh at him, saying, 52:7 ‘Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire.’ (NASB)* Here again we find David making comments about the one who trusts in his riches and parallels this to strong evil desires. Does this suggest that wealth is deceiving? What do the Scriptures have to say about the deceitfulness of wealth? The Scriptures say the following regarding wealth:

Survey of the Scriptures on Wealth

1. Wealth can bring many griefs – “*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*” (1 Timothy 6:10)

2. Wealth looks like a help or security, but in reality becomes a master – “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon.” (Matthew 6:24)
3. Wealth can lead one to hostility with God – “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)
4. Wealth can keep one from experiencing the fruit of God’s kingdom – “The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.” (Matthew 13:22)
5. Wealth can minimize one’s treasure in heaven – “Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’” (Mark 10:21)
6. Wealth can lead one to conceit – “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.” (1 Timothy 6:17)
7. Wealth can entice one to be unfaithful to God – “If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, ‘You are my security,’ if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.” (Job 31:24-28)
8. Wealth can lead one to a life of ruin – “The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, ‘Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire.’” (Tehillim / Psalm 52:6-7)
9. Wealth can blind one to the cold hard realities of life – “The rich are wise in their own eyes; one who is poor and discerning sees how deluded they are.” (Mishley / Proverbs 28:11) “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” (Revelation 3:17)
10. Wealth can cause one to forget God’s provisions – “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud

and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:10-14)

11. Wealth can cause one to seek his or her own glory over God’s glory – “*These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’” Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways.” (Haggai 1:2-5)*
12. Wealth when handled inappropriately, it can lead one to unanswered prayers – “*They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’” (Isaiah 58)*

These few references taken only from the Apostolic Writings demonstrate adequately the danger of amassing wealth and the desire to do so. Wealth can bring grief, can become a master, can lead to hostility, keep from experiencing the fruit of God’s kingdom. What are the fruits of God’s kingdom? Wealth can remove a portion of one’s reward from heaven and can even prevent one from entering heaven (*Mark 10:25*), can lead to conceit, to unfaithfulness, to ruin like we find here in the Psalm, to blindness, to forgetting God’s promises and provision, to seek one’s own glory and lead to unanswered prayers. These are only a few things the gospels and epistles have to say concerning wealth and we have not looked at the Tanach. The point that we can take away from David’s words, ח וַיִּרְאוּ צְדִיקִים וַיִּירְאוּ וְעָלְיוּ יִשְׁחָקוּ: ט הִנֵּה הַגִּבּוֹר לֹא-יִשִּׁים, הַיְשׁוּבִים יִרְאוּ וְעָלְיוּ יִשְׁחָקוּ: 52:6 *The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, 52:7 ‘Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire.’ (NASB)* is that we are to seek the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah in everything. Now in the metaphor that Yeshua uses in *Mark 10:25*, he states that it is very difficult, it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven and it might be because of these things listed here. Thinking upon the eye of a needle, the “eye” is the section of a sewing needle formed into a loop for pulling thread, located at the end opposite the point. These loops are often shaped like an oval or an “eye,” hence the metaphor the “eye of the needle.” In Judaism, the Babylonian Talmud applies the aphorism to “*unthinkable thoughts.*” This application is used by the rabbis to explain that dreams reveal the thoughts of a man’s heart, which is the product of reason rather than the absence of it. The rabbis say, “*They do not show a man a palm tree of gold, nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle.*” (*Talmud Bavli Bera-khot 55b*) If we consider this interpretation on the eye of the needle, where does the treasure of your heart lay? Have you ever had a dream of reaching out to the lost for the gospel of Christ? How about dreams of the end of days? Or trying to defeat the dragon because of false doctrine that is being taught? What about witnessing people bowing down to an idol of their own making and praying (in the dream) for the salvation of their souls? Have you ever had dreams like that? What does that say about your heart from the rabbinic context given above?

In another commentary, Midrash Rabbah on the Song of Songs uses the phrase to speak of God’s willingness and ability beyond comparison, to accomplish the salvation of a sinner, the rabbis say, “*The Holy One blessed be He said, open for me a door as big as a needle’s eye and I will open for you a door through which may enter tents and [camels?].*” Rav Sheishet of Nehardea applies the same aphorism and reasoning for which the sages of Pumbedita were evidently famous according to the statement, “*Are you from Pumbedita, where they push an elephant through the eye of a needle?*” (*Talmud Bavli Nezikin, Baba Metzia, 38b*). The idea is that this eye of the needle and its connection to the rich or wealthy, and to the application of the heart and unthinkable thoughts, there is a fascinating web connecting all of these concepts together which is consistent with the Psalm of David and the Apostolic Writings on this topic.

Yeshua’s use of “*The eye of a needle*” in *Mark 10:24-27* and *Luke 18:24-27*, we definitely can see the rabbinic understanding come out of his teaching. The impossibility of the man to enter heaven who is

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes