

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS
Psalm Fifty-Two: The False And True Means To SUSTAINED Personal Success
(Psalm 52:1-9)

I. Introduction

- A. We all seek to be successful in our businesses, family and marriage life and Christian service ventures. As Solomon points out, an endeavor that is worth doing **at all** is worth doing **well**, Eccles. 9:10a.
- B. However, we can "punch home" an endeavor to make it successful for the time being only to have it **overthrown** in **discipline** by God as opposed to **retaining** real success for the **long haul**.
- C. Psalm 52:1-9 addresses this wrong and right **contrasting** methods that similarly contrast how **sustained** the endeavors' **successes** will be:

II. Contrasting The False And True Means To SUSTAINED Personal Success, Psalm 52:1-9.

- A. The historical background to Psalm 52:1-9 is presented in the introductory notes in the English Bible that appear before Psalm 52:1. They reveal a crisis David faced which resulted in the murder of a high priest:
 - 1. David wrote this psalm after Doeg, an Edomite descending from Esau had witnessed David being helped by the high priest Ahimelech, intro. notes to Ps. 52 with 1 Sam. 21:1-22:19.
 - 2. Ahimelech was not aware that David was fleeing from Saul, so when David asked for his assistance, he let David have Goliath's sword that had been stored in the tabernacle together with the used shewbread normally reserved for the priests' diet, 1 Sam. 21:1-6,8-10 with 22:14-15.
 - 3. Doeg, the Edomite witnessed this event, and secretly told Saul about it in order to advance in rank with Saul at Ahimelech's expense, 1 Sam. 21:7 with 22:9-10 with Ps. 52:7b with intro. notes to Ps. 52.
 - 4. This event ended in Saul's murder of Ahimelech, the high priest, by Doeg, the Edomite who alone was brash enough to raise the sword against the priests of the Lord, 2 Sam. 22:16-18. He also killed a whole city of the priests' families and animals!
 - 5. Thus, David temporarily fled from Saul only later to become the established king where Doeg cast his lot with Saul to gain fame and fortune for the moment at the cost of innocent people.
- B. Accordingly, David contrasts his future successes with that of Doeg's in Psalm 52:1-9 as follows:
 - 1. David asks why Doeg (implied) boasts at the time of his success gained through the calamitous murder of the high priest, Ahimelech by avenging Saul, Ps. 52:1a. After all, God's loyal love to His covenant would outlast Doeg's temporary political machinations and murders of the innocent, 52:1b.
 - 2. David then described the viciousness of Doeg's manipulations for selfish concerns, Ps. 52:2-4.
 - a. Doeg's speech devised destruction for the priests like a treacherous, sharp razor, Ps. 52:2.
 - b. Because he loved evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what was right, Doeg was able to carry out his wicked schemes for selfish advancements, Ps. 52:3-4.
 - 3. However, since God endured longer than Doeg and his manipulations, Doeg would be disciplined to destruction by a vengeful God, Ps. 52:5.
 - 4. Consequently, godly witnesses to Doeg's coming demise would deride the whole scheme and value system of Doeg that rewarded him but for the moment, Ps. 52:6-7.
 - 5. However, in direct contrast to Doeg, David would yet gain success down the road that would **endure**:
 - a. In the Hebrew, an onomatopoeic relation exists between "stronghold" and the words "grew strong" in verse 7 with "olive tree" in verse 8. Thus, David connects these terms into a single thought unit.
 - b. That thought expresses a contrast between Doeg's and David's long-term fates: (a) Since Doeg did not make Elohim his "stronghold", but "grew strong" by destroying others (v. 7), he would be destroyed in **contrast to** (b) David who was like an "olive tree" before God. (c) Now, olive trees are known to grow heartily where no other trees can survive and yield plentifully with a "minimum of care and culture" (Z.P.E.B., vol. Four, p. 528): thus, though temporarily fleeing from Saul instead of taking vengeance by slaying the anointed of the Lord, David would outlast Doeg with even greater success than Doeg now enjoyed for succeeding to become Israel's king **God's WAY**.

Lesson: (1) Success gained at cost to others will not be long-lasting due to the vengeance of Almighty God. (2) Success gained the long way, by obeying God and not abusing others (as David exercised in fleeing from Saul rather than slaying him) until GOD elevated David to royalty, is a long-term success! Thus, gain success God's WAY for enduring blessing!