

Psalm 12

We've come to a point in Psalm 12 where David has been crying out to God to uphold the godly and upright, the foundations of salvation, and God has responded. And God's response to the words of the wicked, who think that they can bring their own salvation by using the same wicked speech as their oppressors, is to give them his own pure words to use instead.

And last time we pointed out how that's a pretty good offer for the oppressed. They can choose to use man's words, or the LORD's words. And the LORD's are much more likely to prevail, because they are far more powerful.

But we also realized that there is much more to it than that. The thing that is needed before salvation can come is for all of the oppressed to cry out to God in faithfulness and with a perfect heart, asking him for deliverance. And what better words to use to do that than the pure and faithful words of the LORD himself?

But not only that, we observed how what is really needed here is a change of heart, and how God's words can bring that. The reason that the oppressed are speaking with flattering lips and a proud tongue is because they are proud and double-hearted. And so what really needs to happen before they can truly cry out to God, and really mean it and it not be just flattery, before they can leave off their proud speech, their hearts need to change. And what needs to happen is for their hearts to be purified.

And we realized that God's words could do that. God's words aren't just pure, but they are a purifier, just like the water of purifying that was used under the law for ceremonial cleansing. And just like the Levites who had been purified and sanctified, and were then given a ministry of purification and sanctification, so the pure words of the LORD are pure and sanctified, and they too have a ministry of purification and sanctification.

And we realized, that it was in fact partly through the Levites that purification by the words of the LORD was administered. God gave Israel many of the Psalms under David, and through him also ordained the ministry praise in the temple, which was performed by the Levites as they sang those psalms. And so to the other ministries of purification and sanctification that the Levites had under the law, was added that entirely new ministry, through David.

And in fact, that is only the start of what God did in response to David's cry for intervention. God not only gave them the psalms, but he also continued to dispense the words of the LORD to Israel by his prophets for hundreds of years. And thus the faithful were maintained in the earth until the coming of the faithful Prophet and Savior.

And so God's words, his pure words, are the means that God uses to purify his people, and maintain the faithful and godly in the earth.

And we noted that purification was closely tied to sanctification. And that's important, because to be godly, the people also have to be sanctified and set apart, because in Psalm 4 David said that the LORD has set apart the godly, for himself. And here in Psalm 12 God did indeed say that he was going to set them in safety. And so we've gotten some hints that the words of the LORD have a ministry of sanctification in addition to purification.

Today we're going to continue to look at the purity of the words of the LORD and the implications of that, and the ministry of purification that the words of God have.

Verse 6

PURE

Let's start with a couple of passages that will remind us exactly what is at stake here in Psalm 12. First, 2 Samuel 22, which is actually itself a psalm that David sang when he was delivered from his enemies:

2 Samuel 22:26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

27 With the **pure** thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.

This is a perfect picture of what David is dealing with in Psalm 12. David knows that God will save the afflicted. But he will bring down the haughty. And David knows that God is ready to save the oppressed of Israel, he's just waiting for them to ask him. But if the oppressed become proud and haughty, and try to deliver themselves, God will bring them down. If they become froward, God will show himself unsavory. Instead of delivering them, he'll cut off their flattering lips.

And so David knows that if the afflicted want to receive salvation, they're going to have to be pure and upright. And they aren't, instead they're becoming froward and haughty.

But now God has ordained a new ministry of purification of the people through his word, so that he can save the afflicted. So that they might be pure, that God might one day show himself pure in bringing their salvation.

And so that's why this ministry of purification is so important. Salvation can only come to the afflicted and oppressed when they are pure in heart and cry out to God in faithfulness for salvation. It is only then that he will hear and deliver them.

And this is really a theme throughout scripture, as we've started to see as we go through Psalms.

Now we talked last time about the purity of God's words, and how they have a ministry of purification. And the Psalms and prophets, specifically, have a ministry of purifying the heart (as opposed to the law, which could only purify the flesh).

But we haven't really considered what a pure heart is, and why exactly it is a ministry of purification that God has chosen for the hearts of the people. Why not a ministry of preparation, why not a ministry of faith, why not a ministry of righteousness and uprightness? Why purity, specifically?

We actually did hint at this last time, when we were talking about the unclean people who were taking part in the passover feast, and how some of them must have killed the passover even though they were ceremonially unclean, and hadn't purified themselves when the temple was purified. But God counted those people clean anyway, and didn't slay them with sickness, because king Hezekiah prayed for them, saying how that they had prepared their hearts to seek God.

And so we said that it seemed that a pure heart and a prepared heart must be the same thing, since God counted them pure when their hearts were prepared but they were ceremonially unclean. So he must have been looking not at their outward purity, but at the purity of their hearts.

And so the fact that they had prepared hearts seemed to imply that they had pure hearts. Which means that to be prepared, one's heart must also be purified. You can't have a prepared heart without your heart being pure.

But why exactly is that?

Well think about the other synonyms for the prepared in heart: the upright in heart, the godly, the faithful.

We said being prepared in heart requires faith, it requires faithfulness, because what their heart must be prepared to do is to cry out to God and him alone for deliverance. And so they must be faithful in crying out to God, and not seek to other gods for salvation.

And so their heart needed to be prepared to seek the LORD alone for salvation. They needed a faithful heart, a single heart.

But right now they aren't faithful, they're double-hearted and inconsistent.

Their hearts aren't set on God alone as their deliverer.

And so what they need, is for their hearts to be purified. Instead of their heart being partly silver and partly dross, partly seeking God for deliverance and partly seeking it by their own devices, they need to have a pure and single heart.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and **purify** your hearts, ye double minded.

And so in his epistle to the twelve tribes James was warning the Jews that they weren't having faith. And he told them that they needed to draw nigh to God, and stop being double minded. And he told them that in order to do that, to stop being double minded, to be single minded, they needed to purify their hearts.

And this is the same thing that David is seeking for Israel here. They need their hearts to be purified, and all of the impurities, all of the unfaithfulness, all of the inconsistency removed. Until their hearts are pure in regard to their salvation, set on one thing alone, being perfectly faithful to one Savior, and crying out to him alone for salvation.

And so purity, is really just another way of describing faith. Because faith is being perfectly conformed to God's truth. And purity is being perfectly conformed to one thing as well, being all of one substance.

And so last time we read from 1 Timothy 1:5 where it talked about having charity out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. And so there Paul put purity and faith together.

What Paul was saying that he wanted for them there was for their good works, their charity, to flow out of a pure heart. He didn't want it just to be the outward righteousness of the law. He called that feigned faith. It looked like faith, it looked like their lives matched with what they believed, but it wasn't the truth of God working in their heart that would produce that, it was just the fear of the law. And so because it wasn't from the heart Paul called it feigned faith.

But what Paul wanted was for their faith, their good works that testified to God's truth, to flow out of their hearts. He wanted that charity to come indeed out of the work of the Spirit in their heart, and so it would be true faith, and not feigned faith.

And the kind of heart that would produce that true faith, that would produce charity, was a pure heart.

Their hearts would be pure, and wholly conformed to God's truth, and so their lives would be pure, and wholly faithful to God's truth. And that's faith.

And so a pure heart, a heart set only on God, is a faithful heart. It is a heart that has faith, because faith is total conformity to God's truth.

And so faith and purity are very similar, they are like two different ways of stating the same thing.

And so we can see why the purification of the hearts of the people is important, because that is what makes them faithful, and godly, and upright, and prepared for salvation. All of those are just different ways of describing the same thing, from a little bit different angles. And we're going to see more and more how they all come back to this ministry of purification by the word of God.

Because remember, that's what's happening here in Psalm 12. God is going to purify the hearts of the people through a new ministry of his pure words.

And in 1 Timothy, where Paul was talking about unfeigned faith out of a pure heart, the commandment he was giving them, you will recall, was that they only teach the truth of the gospel as he had delivered it to them, and he forbade them to teach the law. He wanted to make sure they were teaching not from the law, but from the other words of the LORD, because psalms and prophets and the words of the apostles would have that ministry of purifying the heart, and give them that unfeigned faith.

And so it was the words of the LORD that would purify their hearts.

Now we say that this is a new ministry or dispensation of the words of the LORD. And that's true. We looked at that last time.

But I also want you to see how this has also been here all along. The importance of the ministry of the words of the LORD ties in with the earlier psalms and some other key passages that we've looked at.

The importance of God's word has been a part of Psalms right from Psalm 1. So we're going to look at that.

First I want you to think back about how David told his enemies:

Psalms 4:4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

And as we've looked back on that from Psalm 12 we've thought that what David was saying to them was to stop being double-hearted. To, in essence, purify their heart. To commune with their own heart, decide what they believed, and then give themselves wholly to it, rather than being inconsistent. He was telling them to commune with their own heart and see if their was unfaithfulness in it. To see that if they really want to serve the LORD, then they must not fight against the LORD's anointed. If they were going to stand on the LORD's side, then they needed to stand with David; and if they were going to stand against David, they needed to accept that they were basically joining in with the heathen, and rejecting the LORD. So they needed to commune with their own heart, decide whom they would serve, and serve him faithfully, not with a double heart, but with their whole heart.

Now that sets us up for going into Psalm 1. Because when he says "commune with your own heart upon your bed," that naturally reminds us of Psalm 1 where he talks about meditating in the law of the LORD day and night, doesn't it?

So with that thought let's look at Psalm 1:

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

So right from the very first verses of Psalms, we had this contrast between the counsel of God and the counsel of man, the words of the God and the words of man.

The only difference was that there he was talking about the law, but now God is adding a new dispensation of his words.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

And so even from Psalm 1, we have seen that the words of the LORD have a ministry of preservation. Those that reject them will perish, but those that keep them will be blessed and preserved.

And remember, that there he was talking specifically about the law. So the law does have a ministry of preservation. We pointed that out last time, that the all of the words of the LORD have that ministry of preservation, not just the psalms and prophets, but even the law and the promises.

But each of them administers preservation differently.

The law administers preservation only at the time of judgement. Those who have kept it are preserved, those who haven't are destroyed.

“The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Now the law can encourage men to be just because of a fear of wrath, a fear of condemnation.

And if a man fears the wrath enough that he keeps the law, he will be preserved by that, and not come under condemnation and be destroyed.

And so that's how the law preserves men.

The problem with the law is that the day of God's wrath is far off, and in the mean time the justice of the law has to be administered by men. Until then it is man's responsibility to administer justice, not God's.

We've talked about that several times already, in regard to the slaying of the murderer, and the covenant that God made with Noah.

But the duty of man to administer justice was by the covenant of the law explicitly extended to encompass all judgment, not just the revenging of blood.

And so when God gave them the law, he also gave them the responsibility of keeping it, and administering it. They had to set up judges to judge between man and man and see that the guilty were punished.

And if they didn't do that, the guilty wouldn't be punished. God wouldn't punish every person that broke the law, that was Israel's responsibility.

Now there were certain consequences naturally built into the law, judgements that would come upon them as a nation if they forsook God and served idols. But those were longer term national consequences, not immediate personal judgements from the LORD.

And so because it was man's responsibility to administer the law, there was the danger that the nation of Israel would forsake the law, and not enforce it. And we talked about how many times that happened in the book of Judges.

And now the concern of David is, that that will happen again, and that in the injustice and oppression that results his seed will be destroyed, before the day of reckoning will come.

The seed would be destroyed before God's wrath was poured out, either in the day of final judgement, or in the national consequences for disobedience, because neither of those are immediate responses that God would take, both of those are far off.

God wasn't taking immediate action to judge the wicked and slay the oppressors, that wasn't his responsibility. It was Israel's. And they'd receive certain consequences, as a nation, for refusal to carry out that duty, but again, not personal judgement of the wicked.

You see, Israel rebelled and was judged by God, and then was delivered when they turned back to him, many times over in the book of Judges.

So it might not seem like such an alarming thing for that to happen again, since it's already happened so many times before, and Israel is still around, the nation is still preserved.

So hasn't the law preserved them, haven't the national judgments caused them to repent and cry out to God for deliverance when his wrath was upon them?

Yes. But now it is different, see, because God has chosen a particular seed through which the Savior must come.

And so if in their time of rebellion, before they return to God, if that seed is slain, the messiah will have been cut off. And then perfect salvation from every oppressor will never be able to come.

And so Israel must not be allowed to rebel against the house of David and appoint another king on his throne, because if they do that, they'll slay all of his children, and cut off the seed through which salvation must come.

That's what a new king would do when he came to the throne. It happened over and over to the northern kingdom. They'd destroy all of the prior monarch's children.

But never could the seed of David be destroyed, or else the Savior would be cut off.

And so Israel couldn't be allowed to rebel against the LORD and his anointed and slay the seed.

And Israel couldn't be allowed to rebel, and have God's wrath poured out upon them, and their captors come in and destroy the seed.

Neither of those things could be allowed to happen.

That sort of thing had happened before, but it cannot be allowed to happen again because there is now a chosen seed which must be preserved in order for perfect salvation to come.

And so that's why God has promised to David that he will not allow the seed to be destroyed.

But David sees that conditions are becoming ripe for rebellion in Israel, or for his seed to depart from the right ways of God. And he doesn't see what God is going to do about it.

Now we already know what God's response to David was. But I want us to understand also why God responded the way he did.

Because its easy to say, "Well, why wouldn't God just slay the wicked and deliver the seed when that happened then? Why can't God just miraculously intervene when the time comes? Couldn't he do that? Isn't that what he did back then?"

Because it's true isn't it, that God miraculously delivered Israel many times when they cried out to him. He's miraculously delivered David, and said that he would deliver him from every adversary, because David sought him.

But you see, that's the key. God wouldn't just come down and deliver a bunch of wicked people that aren't even asking him for salvation. Their hearts have to be prepared, and they have to be crying out to him for it with one accord.

And David knows that his seed is just as much in danger of becoming vain and oppressive and as disregarding of God as any of the people are. So if something doesn't happen, there won't even be anyone left among his seed to ask God to deliver them.

But even assuming that there was, if all Israel is coming against the seed of David, what do you want God to do? He can't just destroy Israel. That's not what he wants to do. They're the ones that the seed is ultimately supposed to save, after all.

And so that's why God isn't going to wage a ministry of condemnation here. The goal isn't condemnation, but preservation.

And so in the law, God set aside that ministry of condemnation, putting it in the hands of man. So that's no longer God's job, that's not his responsibility. He's given the responsibility for keeping the law, and administering justice, to Israel. And if they ignore that responsibility, there will be national consequences—eventually—but not immediate wrath poured out upon the rebels.

It isn't God's responsibility to do that, himself personally. He gave them a law, that would preserve them if they would keep it, and their job is to keep it, and to punish those who don't.

That's not his job. If it was they'd all be dead. He'd have had to destroy them all by now.

And so God is not going to but in, if Israel decides to forsake the law and slay the children of the LORD's anointed, God's not going to but in and defend them with fire and start killing people.

If he started doing that, he'd have to kill the seed too for their injustices. He'd be taking back upon himself the ministry of condemnation, that he had given man in order to preserve him.

Taking it back wouldn't preserve the seed, it would destroy it. It would be breaking the covenant of the law, of condemnation administered by man, that he made for their preservation.

And so God has given man the responsibility to administer justice, in order to preserve us, because he couldn't do it himself without destroying us all.

There are consequences for man's failure to do that, like after a generation or two they might be taken captive by their enemies, but not immediate fire and brimstone.

And so God is not going to take the job of administering all justice back unto himself, until the Savior comes. And if the seed through which the Savior must come gets cut off in the mean time, that's Israel's fault. Too bad.

But how wonderful is his mercy, and how great is his grace!

For what God has done here through David, is provide a means of ensuring that man carries out that responsibility that has been given him, insofar as that Israel shall not destroy the chosen seed.

They will be preserved, not by the condemnation of the wicked, but by the multiplication of the righteous, that the people, and the seed, might be faithful and just, and free from condemnation.

And so in fulfilling his promise to preserve David's seed, God's not going to undo the law. But instead he's going to add a new ministry of preservation to it, another ministry of his words.

We talked about this last time. And remember why the law couldn't preserve them? The law couldn't purify their hearts, because it couldn't reach through the veil and touch their hearts.

And this is on display here in Psalms.

You see, in Psalm 1 David had told about how those that meditated in the law of the LORD day and night would be blessed, and preserved in the day of wrath.

And so he warned his enemies in Psalm 4 to do that, to commune with their own heart and put their trust wholly in the LORD.

But his enemies didn't prepare their hearts. They continued to rebel and didn't see that their rebellion was against God. And so they were destroyed.

That might seem like a good thing, that God delivered David from the rebels there, and had them destroyed. But now for David it is actually a bad thing. Because it means that the law couldn't purify their hearts. It means that the law couldn't preserve them.

And now all of the people, like those rebels, are becoming double-hearted. And what needs to happen is not for Israel and David's seed to be destroyed, but for it to be preserved. And in order for that to happen their hearts are going to have to be made pure and faithful.

David is not seeking the destruction of the poor and needy, he's seeking their salvation. But now they've become double-hearted, and the law cannot transform their hearts that they might be saved.

And David knows that. He knows that because his enemies had this same problem, and the law couldn't change their hearts either.

But now God has responded by opening up a new ministry of his word, that does reach the heart. The pure words of the LORD will purify their hearts, and preserve them unto the day of salvation.

I know this overlaps a lot with what we talked about last time, but it's very important foundational stuff so it's good to have it reinforced. And also, I wanted us to see why God chose to do this through his word, and not through miraculous intervention.

Not that the word itself isn't miraculous intervention, but it's not what we might expect.

But you see, what God is doing here is bigger than just David. What he is doing here is setting a precedent, that carries through all the rest of the OT.

God is setting a new precedent that he will no longer deliver them through miraculous intervention of his own intuition, nor by sending them saviors as in the time of the judges.

Now he has chosen just one seed through which he will bring them deliverance.

And so from the time of David on, when Israel is in trouble, God doesn't send them a judge or savior. That's not how he's going to deliver them.

No, but he will now deliver them through his words, and when they are in trouble, now he will send them not a judge, but a prophet.

Instead of Samuel he'll send Isaiah, for Samson Hosea, for Gideon Jeremiah. And thus shall they be saved.

And so again what has happened here is not just about the Psalms, but has opened up a dispensation of prophecy that will continue until the Savior comes.

Before we move on I just want to note one more thing here, and that is how over time God ceded more and more responsibility and power and authority to man.

Now when God created man he gave him authority over this earth.

But remember back when we were going through Psalm 8, and we were talking about the name of the LORD, and how there came a certain time when men began to call upon the name of the LORD.

And how usually we might think of that as a good thing, but in that case it really meant that people had to call upon God's name, had to pray to him, and ask him to accept their sacrifice, instead of offering it directly before him, because God was no longer walking with man on a daily basis.

And so it seems that throughout the OT there is a progression as God is slowly becoming more and more distant.

And last time we talked about that some, how at first God administered his word to man directly, in the promises, and then through angels he gave the law. But then the final parts of the scripture were administered through men.

And so it might seem like a bad thing, like man is getting farther and farther from God. And that's true.

But what has happened, is that at the same time, God has been placing more and more responsibility, more and more power, on man's shoulders.

Men have actually become more and more vital to God's ministry on this earth.

First, way back with Noah, God ceded to man the responsibility for slaying the murderer. And so from that time the avenging of the blood of the innocent was administered through man.

Then with the law, God gave man the duty of performing all judgement between man and man.

And so from that time all justice was to be administered through man.

When they came into the promised land and rebelled, God would forsake them, but then he raised up judges to deliver them. And so from that time salvation was administered through man.

Through Samuel, from the time he was a child, God chose his anointed leaders of his people.

And so from that time strength was ordained through man.

And in the kingdom, God crowned his anointed with glory and honor. And dominion was given to man.

And then finally, when perfect salvation was threatened, and David cried out to God, God upheld the foundations through a new dispensation of his words—administered through prophets, through men.

And so although at the beginning God administered many of these things to man directly, over time, as he began to retreat from this earth, he chose not to cut off his ministry of these things entirely, but instead to ultimately vest them all in man. So that he continued these ministries on this earth, but his ministers were mainly men.

And so by the time Christ came, all of these things had been committed unto man. So that when he arrived he could take up that mantle. And it is then through Christ that not only our relationship with God is restored, so that we no longer have to be separated from him, but that all of these ministries which he has performed through man are recommitted to him, through his Son, who is a man.

And so Christ became heir of the world, and of all judgement and power and dominion and authority, not just by being the Son of God. For all these things God had, at least as a foreshadowing of that, committed unto man.

And so though he separated himself from us, yet in the process he glorified man to have these ministries, so that the seed, the heir, when he came, might be made excellent in all the earth, and be heir of all things.

So that it says in Hebrews:

Hebrews 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

And so Christ has a more excellent name than the angels, not because he is God the Son, but because when he was born as the only begotten Son of God, he became the heir of all of the promises and covenants, which God had made with men.

And so the more that God committed unto men to be his ministers as his glory departed from this earth, the more glory he was providing for the Son to inherit when he came to administer the NT.

The dimmer the glory of the LORD appeared, the brighter shone the Son. The further the Father withdrew, the more vital became the Savior, the Son of God, the Son of man.

Now we've looking at that particular ministry, of the words of the LORD, that God chose to perform through his prophets. And we've been talking about how the word purifies the heart. And we've been looking back on the earlier Psalms and seeing how this is not an entirely new concept. Even from the very first Psalm it was talking about the words of the LORD and how they would bless and preserve those who kept them.

The only thing was that there it was talking about the law, and David has discovered that the law has a shortcoming. When a man's heart becomes impure and unfaithful, he won't apply the law correctly. When a man becomes double-hearted he may think he's serving God while doing evil to the LORD's anointed savior.

And so though David warned his enemies that they were being inconsistent, and that they should commune with their own heart upon their bed, as he said that they should meditate on the law of the LORD day and night. He was telling his enemies to commune with their own heart and see the impurities, the unfaithfulness in it, to see that they can't serve God but persecute his servant.

And David found out that that didn't work out. His enemies' hearts weren't purified, they continued to persecute him, and in the end were destroyed.

And now all of the hearts of the people are becoming the same way, and David doesn't see any way to change that. He realized that it didn't seem like the law alone could touch and purify their hearts.

And so David had to cry out to God to step in and intervene in some way. And God did so by beginning a new ministry of his words, that do purify the hearts of men.

The law itself could not do that, but yet there actually were some parts of the book of Moses that were given by God specifically for that purpose.

Like I said, this ministry is completely new and different, but the basic concept is found in other passages that we've looked at.

One of the most prominent passages outside of Psalms that we keep coming back to as we go through this study is Deuteronomy 32.

As we went through Psalm 7 especially there were many parallels there. And we've also had it tie into later psalms as well.

And it ties in here, too.

But to really understand it we've got to first go back to Deuteronomy 31:

Deuteronomy 31:9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

So this is right after Moses has written the law.

Deuteronomy 31:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?

18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swore.

22 Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

And so God gave this song to them, so that when they were carried away captive, they would remember it, and consider their ways, and turn back to the LORD.

He knew that they would forget his law. But they liked songs, so he gave them a song, that they would teach to their children, though they would not teach them the law.

And then when they were carried captive, and had forgotten the words of the law that warned them what would befall them for their wickedness when they forsook the LORD, yet they would remember the words of this song, and when they asked themselves why all that evil had befallen them, the words of this song would witness against them.

And so it would remind them that the LORD had brought evil upon them for their iniquities. And also that he is gracious, and that if they would return to him, he would return to them.

And so though they'd forget and not keep the law, yet they would remember this song, and when evil befell them, it would witness against them, and turn their hearts back to the LORD.

That's a ministry very similar to the Psalms, isn't it? And so it is no wonder that we've found so many similarities between Deuteronomy 32 and these Psalms.

The only difference is that the Psalms were able to minister to them so that their hearts might be purified that they might not rebel against God at all, not just bring them back to the LORD after they were carried into captivity.

And so we will continue to look at Deuteronomy 32 some more, as we talk about preservation. Because as you can see, all of the words of the LORD have that ministry of preservation and purification, in one way or another.

The law purifies the flesh, and thus preserves in the day of wrath.

That song would purify their hearts in captivity, and thus restore and preserve their faith in God. And the Psalms and prophets purify the heart at all times, that the godly and upright might be preserved.