

Psalm 12

Last time we began looking at verse 7. And we were considering how God keeps the godly seed through his word. God gives them his word, and then they keep it, and it keeps them in turn. And it is in that way that God keeps the godly and his word, thus preserving them both to all generations.

And so we said that the two really have a symbiotic relationship. They perpetuate one another. They are inseparable, so that one of them cannot continue without the other.

In fact, we found out that the seed could not even exist without the word. The word is absolutely necessary to perpetuate the godly seed throughout all generations, because it is only through the word that the seed can be propagated. It is through the word that the seed is conceived in men's hearts, and they are made the children of God. And it is that, being a child of God, not just in name, but by faithfulness to him, having his character reflected in you, that makes you the godly seed.

And so God gave a picture of that in Malachi, using the marriage covenant. A child that didn't have the features of one of his parents, was a bastard. And so one was only godly, if one had the features of God, as his child would. And that could only come through faithfulness to the word of his covenant, just as a true child could only be born by faithfulness to the covenant of marriage.

And so just as faithfulness to the marriage covenant is vital to produce a faithful seed, a true seed, that matches the nature of its parents, faithfulness to the words of the LORD is vital to produce a godly seed.

The marriage covenant is vital to producing true children, and not bastards. And so the word of God is vital to producing the next generation of the godly seed.

And so it is impossible for the godly seed to be preserved to all generations without the word.

Again, God gave us a picture of that in the sign of circumcision. The next generation could only come through those who were circumcised, those who were faithful to the words of the LORD's covenant. And all others were to be destroyed. Because God wanted them to understand that it was only the keeping of the words of the LORD that preserved the seed.

Ultimately, we understood that it is the word of God that reaches into our hearts, and conceives the seed within us, that we might be godly. And thus men are born again, and become the children of God.

And so it is only through the word of God that the upright can be preserved unto all generations, until the hearts of all the oppressed are prepared by it, and they cry out to God, and he perfects their salvation.

That's what David has been seeking here, and this is how God will do it. He'll uphold the faithful, the foundations of salvation, through his words.

Now, I didn't have time to get into this last time, although I did hint at it right at the end. And that is, that the law couldn't do that. The law couldn't preserve them. Remember that we talked about that?

Well, now we can look at that from a little bit different angle. And the key here is the covenant of circumcision, that symbolism.

Now, remember that the problem with the law, was not that it couldn't purify the people. It could, but it could only purify their flesh, it couldn't purify their hearts. And the reason for that was because of the vail. The light behind the law was concealed by the vail, and it couldn't penetrate their hearts.

The words of God by the apostles and prophets however, could penetrate the heart, and they could purify it and prepare it for salvation.

And ultimately it is that word which conceives within us and causes us to be born again as the children of God, making us the godly seed.

How does circumcision relate to that? Well, the law had a veil on it. But that veil was removed from the prophets. The words of the LORD by the prophets and apostles are like the circumcised vessel, from which the veil has been removed. And the seed that it conceives is preserved to all generations. Just as those who kept the covenant of circumcision would be blessed to all generations.

And so ironically, we would say that the law was uncircumcised, and so could not produce seed, just as the uncircumcised man child was to be cut off from his people. But the words of the apostles and prophets are circumcised, and the veil being removed, they are able to penetrate into our hearts, and born us again, that a godly seed might be preserved to all generations.

Verse 7

PRESERVE

So we began talking about preservation last time, talking about how God would keep the seed to all generations. But we didn't actually get to the verses that use the term "preserve". We'll look at those now.

The first time that the term preserve is used:

Genesis 19:32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may **preserve** seed of our father.

The daughters of Lot wanted to preserve their father's seed, so that the family line wouldn't become extinct.

The next time that the term is used is when Jacob wrestled with God. It says:

Genesis 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is **preserved**.

So Jacob was still alive after he had wrestled with the angel of the LORD.

And not only that but the angel had blessed him, and so Jacob and his family wouldn't perish by the hand of Esau as he had feared that they would.

So not only his life but his whole household was preserved.

Genesis 45:4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to **preserve** life.

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to **preserve** you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

And so God had Joseph sold into Egypt to preserve his brethren alive, and to preserve their posterity, the seed of promise, in the earth.

And so each of these first three passages where the term is used it is in that context, of preserving a man, preserving his life, and preserving his seed.

And in fact, almost every single time that the term preserve is used in the Bible, it is talking about some man, or his soul, or some life or seed being preserved.

The only real exception to that is just one verse:

Proverbs 22:12 The eyes of the LORD **preserve knowledge**, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

How appropriate. The only things that God preserves in the Bible is life, and his words of knowledge. That certainly fits with this verse in Psalm 12 where God is talking about preserving the godly to all generations, through his word.

You know, when I first looked up the term preserve I found that it was used 57 times in the Bible. That wasn't as many as I expected. But the real let down was that that was such an odd number. It's three times 19, but that didn't really seem to be significant. And yet it's right next to number 56, which is divisible by 7. And that seemed like that would have been a really good number, that it would have been significant. But it was one off, 57 and not 56.

Well, then I found out that one of these references was different. 56 times the Bible is talking about preserving life, but that one time in Proverbs 22 he's talking about preserving his words. And so after all it does talk about life being preserved 56 times, or 8 times 7.

And that fits right in with Psalm 12 verse 7, because it is perfect preservation. Seven is the number of perfection, and preservation is continuance to every generation, without fail. And that's perfection, nothing is lacking, it is there throughout all generations.

And 56 being 8 times 7 fits very well with that as well, because 8 is the number of new beginnings in scripture. And so preservation is a continuation across the ages, across each new beginning, to each new generation. There is a continuous renewal, and so the godly seed is preserved, generation after generation, and never fails.

And so that all fits together.

And then of course there is just one time that it talks about the preservation of God's words of knowledge, because it is through them that he preserves life.

The next passage that talks about preservation:

Deuteronomy 6:17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers,

19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:

22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:

23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.

24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might **preserve** us alive, as it is at this day.

25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

And so God would preserve them alive, by the keeping of his commandments, of his words. Just as he had brought them out of Egypt and preserved them alive, by his word.

And so they were to pass that down from generation to generation, to pass that down to their sons, that they might continue to be preserved.

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and **preserveth** the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

And so the LORD gives his words of wisdom and knowledge to preserve the way of his saints. He goes on to give some practical examples of that:

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall **preserve** thee, understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

A man like Absalom. Or Donald Trump.

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

Or a woman like Hillary Clinton.

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

And so the words of the LORD will preserve them by giving them wisdom to see who is wicked. And so they will be able to deliver themselves from the oppressors, and not be fooled by them.

Because if they join with the transgressors, they will not be preserved. Such people will eventually be rooted out of the earth, when God brings his perfect salvation. And then only the righteous will remain in the land.

And so to be preserved you need to have wisdom to know wickedness and folly, and the forward man when you see him. Because only then will you be delivered from his deception. And if you aren't, but follow him instead of the word of God, you will ultimately be destroyed. And so it is only through the word of God, only through the wisdom that it gives, that one can be preserved to inherit perfect salvation.

Hosea 12:1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

Remember that Ephraim was the kingdom that rebelled against the house of David. And now God is rebuking them for their lies and oppression.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;

5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

7 He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

So Ephraim left the kingdom of the LORD's anointed, and they became oppressors.

Isn't that what they said that they were fleeing? Isn't that why they said that they left? And yet just as David warned here in the Psalms, they actually got oppression instead of deliverance, because they forsook the words of the LORD.

8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

And yet the oppressors think that they've really done no wrong. They've become rich, so they're still better off than when the kingdom was united, right?

9 And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

So God's going to bring judgement on them. They're going to lose their rich palaces and dwell in tabernacles and tents, though they've refused to keep the solemn feasts of the LORD.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he **preserved**.

14 Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

So because of their oppression God was going to bring judgment on them. The only way for them to be preserved, was by a prophet. By the words of the LORD through his prophets. And so God sent prophets unto them, but they would not hear. And so Ephraim was not preserved. His name is blotted out of the book of Revelation. Because he loved oppression and did not take heed to the words of the LORD by the prophets, which could preserve him.

And so as we've seen, the ministry of the words of the LORD is a ministry of preservation. "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." The words of the LORD keep and preserve the godly seed in the earth. And the godly seed keeps the word, and thus both are preserved.

Matthew 9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are **preserved**.

The wine there is the word, and the bottles are men. And so God declares his message such that both the men and the word, the wine and the bottles, are preserved. "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

It says four times (in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles) that "the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."

So God preserved his anointed, and the seed of Israel. When they would go out to battle against their enemies, whithersoever they went, God preserved them.

And so now God is going to preserve the godly seed through his word, and deliver them from all of their enemies, so that they will never be destroyed. From this generation for ever.

GENERATION

Now, when it says "thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever," that phrasing is important.

It means that God isn't just going to preserving them so that down through the ages there is a little here, and then there is a break, and then there is a little here, and then there is a break, and then there is some there at the end.

This is continuous preservation. From this generation, to the next generation, to the next generation, to next generation, for ever.

I'm stressing this because some people might try to claim that they are still believing in the preservation of God's words while accepting the modern versions of the Bible.

They might say that they believe that the word of God was preserved, it was just preserved hidden away in a library or monastery somewhere. It never perished, it was preserved, and now we've found it again, and so God really did keep his promise to preserve his word.

Now, I've explained why that isn't actually a valid position anyway, that's a position which is really ignorant of how the text that the modern versions are translated from was really created. But even if we grant that the modern translations come from an ancient text, from manuscripts that have been preserved across the ages hidden away somewhere, that isn't the kind of preservation that the Bible is talking about here.

What this is talking about is preservation to every generation. From this generation, for ever. There is a plethora of passages in the OT that talk about how the word of God, the covenants of God, are to be passed down from generation to generation. And so that is what God is building on here, by using the word generation. That's a key word that automatically brings to the OT scholar's mind passages like these:

Genesis 9:12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual **generations**:

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their **generations** for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their **generations**.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your **generations**, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

Numbers 15:23 Even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your **generations**;

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand **generations**;

1 Chronicles 16:15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand **generations**;

And so that's just a very, very small sampling of verses that talk about how the word of God is a perpetual covenant with man, unto all generations.

There was a passage there from the giving of God's word of promise unto Noah.

And there are many passages from the giving of the law.

And so now as God opens up this new dispensation of his words by the prophets, they are once again unto all generations: "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

And so just as God preserves the seed to all generations, he preserves the word to all generations. Every generation has the words of the LORD. Has them in a form that they can see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand in their heart, and be converted, that God might heal them.

Because it is through the word that the seed is conceived in our hearts, and we become the children of God.

And so that word has been there in every generation. And the only text that that is true of, is the Received Text. It's even named for the fact that it has been received as it has been passed down from generation to generation.

And so that's the only one that can claim to truly be the words of the LORD.

The only one that has been preserved from the generation given, to each generation, to this generation, to the next generation, for ever.

FOR EVER

Now, I looked up the word "ever" in the previous psalms to see if there was anything interesting there that might tie in here. And I found this, that David asks at the end of Psalm 5:

Psalms 5:11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them **ever** shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

And so way back there in Psalm 5, David was already beginning to seek God's eternal keeping and blessing of the righteous. And he was confident that God would do that, that he would protect them.

And now he's received God's word that he will.

"Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

Verse 8

Kind of a strange ending to this Psalm. It seems like he just tacks this on the end here. Kind of like this thought sort of came out of nowhere.

Well, 8 is the number of new beginnings in the Bible, so it is fitting that verse 8 here seems to introduce a total change of thought.

"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

So what is David saying here?

Well, David has been opposed by some vile men. The people have exalted some vile men to challenge him to the throne.

First there was Absalom. Now Absalom was the king's son, he was in line for the throne, so in that sense he wasn't vile. He was a cultured and wealthy man, instructed in the business of the kingdom.

But Absalom murdered his own brother, fled to an enemy land as an exile, then after he returned he burnt up his neighbor's field so that he could get an audience with the king, and after his position was restored he practiced subversion against his own father, by hiring vain fellows to follow him, and telling everybody that came to the king for judgment that their matters were right, no matter what the truth was. He then publicly raped his father's concubines and sought to destroy his father, and those that still followed him, in battle.

That's a vile man.

And then after Absalom, a man named Sheba the son of Bichri stood up against David. And he was just some lowly Benjaminite, a man Belial, that hated the house of David.

And so David was opposed by these vile men who were able to gain a following among the people.

And I think that's how David came to the realization that Israel wasn't as pure in heart as he might have thought they were.

When David saw these vile men being exalted, he realized that there must be a lot of wicked people out there, or else these guys could never have gotten a following the way they did, by coming in and flattering the people.

This is so prescient, isn't it? This whole chapter just has 2016 written all over it.

And so, because these vile men were being exalted David understood that the wicked must be walking on every side, that he must be surrounded by wicked people.

And so here at the end of this chapter, he is explaining why he has come to the conclusion that there is such a crisis here. Why he's been so persistent, so urgent, in seeking God's intervention. Why he has characterized the people as being so wicked, and sought for their purification and trying of their hearts.

David saw these vile men being exalted against him, the LORD's anointed, by the people. And so he knows that there have to be a lot of wicked people out there for these guys to have any support.

He knows that there must be a lot of oppression going on, and there must be a lot of oppressed people who are despairing of the LORD's deliverance, and are seeking to bring their own salvation instead.

He knows that the godly and the faithful must be almost gone. And with them, the hope of true salvation.

And so it is through this experience that David has had, and these wicked men being exalted, that David realized that there was a problem.

And so David began to search what the problem was in Psalm 10, and to seek perfect salvation for his people.

And that's how David found out that God was waiting on the hearts of the people, that they had to be prepared for salvation. That they had to be made upright and faithful.

And so David sought that God would prepare their hearts, and God gave David his pure words of the Psalms, to purify the hearts of the people.

And so ultimately it was through this very bad time in David's life, and in the history of Israel, that God acted to reveal these truths unto David, and secure the seed of deliverance by purifying the hearts of the people.

It was out of that furnace that the word of God came forth, and the hearts of the people were tried, and made pure.

And so in one of Israel's darkest hours, as they were turning away from God, the upright came to understand the problem and seek God for the cure. And God responded with his words.

And so it happened that instead of David's death being an end of peace and salvation, as his sons fought over the throne, instead of that, the golden age of peace under Solomon was ushered in. And the children of David, and the godly seed, were made safe for hundreds of years.

That only happened because these vile men were being exalted, and David saw that, and understood the implications.

"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

WICKED

When it says that the wicked walk on every side, what does it mean by that? Who are the wicked?

Well, we have already been given a description of the wicked in earlier psalms. In Psalm 5, as David prayed, he talked about wickedness, and from that we can get some hints as to what he means by “the wicked”:

Psalms 5:1 Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.
2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.
3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

So David is crying out to God, much like in Psalm 12. Except in this case he’s seeking his own deliverance, and the destruction of the wicked.

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in **wickedness**: neither shall evil dwell with thee.
5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

So David describes wickedness as working iniquity, speaking leasing (falsehood), and being bloody and deceitful.

7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.
8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.
9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very **wickedness**; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

And he also describes wickedness as flattery, having an unfaithful mouth that speaks like an open grave with all kinds of filthiness pouring out of it.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

They have rebelled against God. They’re taking their own counsel instead of keeping God’s counsel.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.
12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

And so again David was already seeking that God would keep the righteous, just as he was here in Psalm 12.

And so David described the wickedness of his oppressors: they were bloody murderers, they were deceitful flatterers with unfaithful tongues that spoke leasing and falsehood against the king, their mouths poured out filth, and they rebelled against the counsel of the LORD, taking their own counsel instead.

Now, at that time David wasn’t describing the people generally. He was describing the wicked men of power, like Absalom and Ahithophel and the leaders that helped them.

He was talking about the high-ups, the counsellors and princes and rulers. But now David has considered that those guys wouldn't have been able to do what they did, they wouldn't have been able to exalt themselves against him, if there weren't a lot of wicked people to support them.

And so now David understands that it wasn't just these few guys that were working mischief against him, but that a lot of the people have the very same heart. They're double-hearted flatterers whose tongues speak proud things, too.

And so there aren't just a few wicked high-ups, but David now realizes that he is surrounded by wickedness.

"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

David described the wicked again in Psalm 10, as he prayed yet again for God's deliverance, this time not of himself but of the oppressed, as in Psalm 12:

Psalms 10:1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

2 The **wicked** in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the **wicked** boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

4 The **wicked**, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

13 Wherefore doth the **wicked** contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.

14 Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

15 Break thou the arm of the **wicked** and the evil man: seek out his **wickedness** till thou find none.

16 The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

So there David described their wickedness as persecution and oppression, boasting, blessing the covetous, refusing to seek after God, puffing at all his enemies, speaking cursing, deceit, fraud, mischief, and vanity, murdering the poor and innocent, and believing that God would never avenge the oppressed.

And David is lamenting in Psalm 12, that the hearts of the people are now become just like the hearts of their oppressors.

They too cannot be trusted, they boast against their oppressors, they bless one another in their own covetousness, seeking salvation by their own counsel instead of the LORD's deliverance, and speaking flattery and vanity.

And so David is surrounded by wickedness.

He spoke again in Psalm 11, about how the wicked wanted to destroy the foundations of salvation:

Psalms 11:2 For, lo, the **wicked** bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

And so the wicked were threatening the upright, in an attempt to prevent God's coming judgement.

And now all of the people are helping them along, though they don't realize it. They have the same heart as their oppressors. And by turning away from uprightness, by becoming unfaithful, they are diminishing the number of the upright in the earth, and in attempting to bring their own salvation they are endangering God's salvation from ever coming.

By exalting these vile men, they won't succeed in bringing salvation by their wickedness, but in bringing destruction instead.

WALK

So when David sees these vile men being exalted, he says that the wicked must be *walking* on every side.

Now why does he say it that way, why does he use the term "walk"? He could have just said "the wicked *are* on every side." But by saying that the wicked *walk* on every side, he's putting a picture in our mind of a man surrounded by crowds of people all going somewhere. They aren't complacent, they're active, walking.

So what is the significance of that? Well, David talked about people walking once before in Psalms, at the very start of 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.

So these people who are walking on every side are those who are walking in the counsel of the ungodly. They are following the counsel of these vile men who have been exalted.

And those that do that will not be blessed.

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

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.

Blessing will only come through the words of the LORD, that is the only thing that can prosper the man and the kingdom.

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 the ungodly, who walk in the counsel of the wicked, will be destroyed. They won't bring deliverance, or partake in it when it comes.

And as David looked around him here, he saw that that's what the people were like. On every side they were wicked, walking in the counsel of the ungodly.

But when he cried out to God, God gave him more of the same medicine prescribed in Psalm 1: the words of the LORD. And through them the godly seed would continue to be blessed and preserved, that perfect salvation might one day come.

VILE

Now, David describes these men who are being exalted as "vile." "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted."

That's a word that we don't use a lot, so let's get a good definition of it from scripture.

Paralleled with: base, refuse, evil, abominable filth. A vile act is compared to folly, iniquity.

Contrasted with: best, good, precious. That which is goodly, glorious, honorable.

And so it is the base versus the best, the vile versus the honorable.

Something vile is something low, not of much value or worth.

It doesn't necessarily imply anything evil, although sometimes the Bible uses it that way. It just means that something is worthless. It's the bottom rung on the ladder, not the glorious high and exalted things.

A clod of dirt is vile. It doesn't really have any value, it isn't precious like a gold nugget would be. It's lowly and dirty and maybe unpleasant and unwanted. It's vile.

1 Samuel 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was **vile** and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

So they saved the king, the honorable man, and all of the best of the cattle, and just destroyed the common people and the cattle that weren't very good, the vile things.

2 Samuel 1:21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is **vilely** cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

So the shield of Saul was cast away like he had been just another man slain in battle, and not the anointed of the LORD, the most honorable in Israel.

2 Samuel 6:22 And I will yet be more **vile** than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

So when David was dancing and Michal Saul's daughter mocked him for it, he told her that he'd would be base when he played before the LORD, he wouldn't exalt himself with pomp and ceremony and formality. He'd jump all around and not care if he was exposing himself a little bit. But he'd be had in honor of the people anyhow, because it was God that gave him his honor, and it was before God that he played.

So that gives you a flavor of how something vile is just base and low and of little value. It doesn't have much honor or respect. It doesn't necessarily imply anything evil.

Now, there are also some times where the term is used in reference to particular wicked acts, I suppose because they are below the name of man, that someone would do such things. They are low and base and dishonoring to the person's very humanity. They're vile. It is used this way in reference to homosexual acts and adultery:

Judges 19:24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so **vile** a thing.

Romans 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto **vile** affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

The Bible also speaks of a few other sins that accompany the vile:

Isaiah 32:5 The **vile** person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. 6 For the **vile** person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

So the vile person will speak error against God and practice hypocrisy to oppress the poor and needy, while claiming to be liberal and bountiful.

Now, when it says that they'll speak villainy, it is talking again about base and vile sins, like adultery. That word is used one other place in the Bible:

Jeremiah 29:23 Because they have committed **villany** in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.

So these things go together. Men who debase themselves in adultery also practice hypocrisy and speak lying words to deceive the needy.

Daniel 11:21 And in his estate shall stand up a **vile** person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

And so vile men don't have or deserve any honor, but they get power anyway, by flattery.

Any resemblance between the people described here and actual persons living or dead is entirely coincidental.

So, when it says that vile men were being exalted, that means that these men were base. They weren't honorable or in positions of honor. And yet they were being exalted as if they were worthy of honor.

Absalom, again, was the son of the king, but he was very low because he'd murdered his brother and been exiled. And yet by flattery he was able to come in and take the kingdom.

And he made himself yet more vile by publicly raping 10 of his father's concubines.

And then there were other base and vile men who exalted themselves against David.

And when David saw this he knew that for such base men to be exalted against the honorable, and those that God had given a position of honor, the wicked must be walking on every side.

EXALT

Proverbs 11:11 By the blessing of the upright the city is **exalted**: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Exalting vile men with wicked mouths will not cause the kingdom to be exalted. The kingdom will instead be debased to the level of those men.

But it is by the upright that the kingdom is exalted.

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

And so it is wisdom, the wisdom of God revealed in his word, that should be exalted. Not the words of the basest of men.

And when the word of the LORD is exalted, its wisdom will promote those that exalt it.

And so though the wicked walk on every side, and they are exalting vile men, yet there is hope for the kingdom.

Because God has given his servants, the upright, the wisdom of his words. And as those words are exalted by David in the gates of Jerusalem, and by the Levites in the temple, the hearts of the people will be purified, the kingdom will be secured, the foundations of salvation will be upheld, and seed of the Savior and the godly seed will be preserved.