

Reverse Punitive Action: Review, Lessons 1–3; David’s Revelation of Doeg’s Demise: the Indictment, Ps 52:1-4; the Imposition of Reverse Punitive Action, vv. 5–7; David’s Faith-Rest, vv. 8–9

Doctrine of Reverse Punitive Action in Matthew 7:1-2

Matthew 7:1 - “Stop judging, so that you will not be judged.”

- A. There are three categories of Reverse Punitive Action for sins of the tongue:
- The mental attitudes that motivate verbal sins.
 - The verbal sin itself.
 - The sin or sins assigned to the other person.

This is a statement of reverse punitive action toward those who malign and judge others:

- In the presence of others, you assign specific sin to another person or persons. This sin can be real or imagined.
- As is the case with all sins, the one you assign has a penalty clause attached to it.
- Because you judge the person for this sin, his discipline is removed even though he may be guilty of it. All judgment is assigned to the Supreme Court of Heaven and Jesus Christ as Chief Justice.

Romans 4:10 - But you, why do you judge your fellow believer? Or you again, why do you regard your fellow believer with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

John 5:22 - “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”

- Execution of the penalty clause is transferred away from the perpetrator to you because you gossiped about his sin.
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- The justice of God now judges you for the sin you assigned as if you were the one that committed it.
- This is an expression of the integrity of God managing violations of His divine mandates not to judge, a reminder for you to mind your own business.

Matthew 7:2, “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And by what measure [μέτρον (*métron*): capacity or degree you judge will be the level of divine discipline put upon the attacker] you measure, it will be measured against you.”

- B. The Lord’s first comment alerts you to the danger of verbal sins and, if committed, what the penalty clause will include.

When you are maligned by others, you must remain separated from the attack. You are required to activate pertinent problem-solving device on your soul’s FLOT Line to deal with the issue.

The basic problem-solving device is the three stages of the faith-rest drill, the second stage being the application of doctrinal rationales:

By remaining inside the bubble you allow the Supreme Court to manage the maligner with the same punishment that was scheduled to be imposed on you.

The Lord with His omniscience knows all the facts: who gossiped, who else was told, what they thought, and whether or not all the facts presented were real or imagined.

Grace orientation enables the believer to rely on God’s policy to fairly prosecute the case. Your personal sense of destiny knows that you are in the plan of God and through grace you are allowed to overcome your failures.

You must continue to trust in God through personal love while maintaining unconditional love for the antagonist. This results in maintaining the copacetic spiritual life.

The honorable way to deal with verbal assaults is to allow the biblical system of justice to play out. Allowing God to deal with the antagonist keeps you out of the fray and permits God to deal with His children appropriately.

The second sentence in Matthew 7:2 expands on the Law of Reverse Punitive Action mentioned in verse 1:

Matthew 7:1 - "Stop judging, so that you will not be judged."

Matthew 7:2b - "... by what measure you measure, it will be measured against you."

2. You will always receive the discipline associated with the other person's sins – that which you name and the mental attitude sin that inspired it.
3. Justice holds all believers liable for their sins in the divine decree. Their sins are forgiven by means of confession alone to Him. But their commission often involves others and justice must manage the resultant circumstances.
5. Therefore, the sins you assign to another person makes you the object of Reverse Punitive Action.
6. First of all, the one you judge is no longer under punitive liability from God. The liability is instead transferred to you and it includes the punishment associated with the sin you assigned to another.
7. The one you chose to slander will not be punished for the sin. Instead, God removes it from him and assigned it to you.
8. This means that you are punished for a sin you did not commit. You through gossip assigned it to another. It could have been true or, worse, it became a public lie.
9. So there are two categories that can be cited by a teller of tales: (1) a sin the victim did not commit and (2) a sin he did commit.
10. If your victim did commit the sin you cite, then its punishment is immediately removed from him.
11. If your victim did not commit the sin, then he will enjoy blessings to a degree equivalent to the level of punishment assigned to you.
12. These circumstances add up to triple, compound Reverse Punitive Action:
 - (1) Punitive discipline for the mental attitude sin that inspired the verbal sin.
 - (2) Punitive discipline for committing a sin of the tongue.
 - (3) Punitive discipline for the specific sin assigned to your victim.
- C. David reveals to us that the believer who avoids slandering others will receive blessings from God:

Psalm 34:12 - "Who is the person who desires long life and loves length of days that he may see prosperity?"

v. 13 - Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking slander."

- D. King Saul was driven by murder lust to eliminate David as a possible threat to the throne of Israel. David, while avoiding the king's pursuit, stopped at the city of Nób where he met with Ahimelech the priest who provided him with food and a sword.

Doeg (Dó-ëg), one of Saul's herdsman who was in Nob at the time, observed the transaction and reported it to Saul.

1 Samuel 22:9 - Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub \a-hī'-tub\ at Nob.

v. 10 - Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

We need to get some background for this, where Doeg is informing Saul of what he observed at Nob between David and Ahimelech the priest. This takes us to:

1 Samuel 21:1 - David went to Ahimelech the priest in Nob. Ahimelech was shaking with fear when he met David, and said to him, "Why are you by yourself with no one accompanying you?"

v. 2 - David replied to Ahimelech the priest, "The king instructed me to do something, but he said to me, 'Don't let anyone know the reason I am sending you or the instructions I have given you. I have told my soldiers to wait at a certain place.'

v. 3 - "Now what do you have at your disposal? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found."

1 Samuel 21:6 - So the priest gave him holy bread, for there was no bread there other than the bread of the Presence. It had been removed from before the Lord in order to replace it with hot bread on the day it had been taken away.

v. 7 - (One of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the Lord. His name was Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul's shepherds.)

v. 8 - David said to Ahimelech, "Is there no sword or spear here at your disposal? I don't have my own sword or equipment in hand due to the urgency of the king's instructions."

v. 9 - The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the valley of Elah, is wrapped in a garment behind the ephod. If you wish, take it for yourself. Other than that, there's nothing here." David said, "There's nothing like it! Give it to me!" (NET)

The second passage reveals what Doeg reported to Saul after having left Nob:

1 Samuel 22:7 - Saul said to his servants who were stationed around him, "Listen up, you Benjamites! Is Jesse's son giving fields and vineyards to all of you? Or is he making all of your commanders and officers?"

v. 8 - For all of you have conspired against me! No one informs me when my own son makes an agreement with this son of Jesse! Not one of you feels sorry for me or informs me that my own son has commissioned my own servant to hide in ambush against me, as is the case today!"

v. 9 - But Doeg the Edomite, who had stationed himself with the servants of Saul, replied, "I saw this son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob.

v. 10 - He [Ahimelech] inquired of the Lord for him [David; this is the public lie] and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

v. 11 - Then the king arranged for a meeting with the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and all the priests of his father's house who were at Nob. They all came to the king.

v. 12 - Then Saul said, "Listen, son of Ahitub." He replied, "Here I am, my lord."

v. 13 - Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and this son of Jesse? [**The public lie is now enlarged to include the charge of conspiracy.**] You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God on his behalf [the public lie repeated], so that he opposes me and waits in ambush, as is the case today [**an assumption based on the public lie]!**"

1 Samuel 22:14 - Ahimelech replied to the king, “Who among all your servants is faithful like David? He is the king’s son-in-law, the leader of your bodyguard, and honored in your house!

v. 15 - Was it just today that I began to inquire of God on his behalf? Far be it from me! The king should not accuse his servant or any of my father’s house. For your servant is not aware of all this – not in whole or in part [**Ahimelech denies the public lie**]!”

v. 16 - But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father’s house!

In cross examination, Ahimelech defended David, stressing that the son of Jesse had no ill intent toward the king. Considering Ahimelech a traitor, Saul ordered Doeg to execute all the priests of Nob:

1 Samuel 22:18 - The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod.

v. 19 - He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys, and sheep.

It is important to remember at this point the definition of the divine decree:

The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity.

There is a phrase in the definition of the decree that may be applied to the ramifications of a verbal sin: “causes, conditions, successions, and relations.”

Let’s see how that plays out in this story:

Causes: Thoughts, decisions and actions. Here the cause was the public lie by Doeg to Saul. Saul already believes there is a conspiracy against him and now Doeg pours fuel on that flame.

Conditions: Refer to its category, i.e., positive or negative, right or wrong, divine good or human good. Here Saul acted on the erroneous information.

Successions: Refer to subsequent causes and effects. Here Saul blamed Ahimelech, who was innocent, and had him executed by Doeg.

Relations: Refer to the cumulative impact of the first cause. Here we have the death of the 84 priests, the sacking of Nob, and the killing of its population and its animals.

1 Samuel 22:20 - But Abiathar \a-bī'-a-thār\, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David.

v. 21 - Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord.

v. 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.”

Ahimelech’s son Abiathar became a close friend of David’s. Once David did ascend the throne of Israel, he appointed Abiathar his personal priest in Jerusalem.

We do not know the details of Doeg’s Reverse Punitive Action, but David indicates that it was inflicted in Psalm 52.

According to the traditional title, Psalm 52 contains David's tirade against Doeg on this occasion. In the first stanza (52:1-4) David appears to accuse Doeg of falsehood, while in the second (vv.5-7) he foretells divine judgment on him [i.e., reverse punitive action].¹

Psalm 52: Superscription² - For the choir director. A Maskil of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul and said to him, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech."

[END REVIEW]

Psalm 52:1 - Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long.

v. 2 - Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit [**Doeg lied to Saul**].

v. 3 - You love evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah [**Musical interlude**].

v. 4 - You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

v. 5 - But God will break you down [**נָתַח**] (**nathas**); **gruesome loss of health**] forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent [**loss of his home**], and uproot you from the land of the living [**the sin unto death**]. Selah.

v. 6 - The righteous will see and fear [**have respect for divine justice**], and will laugh at him, saying,

v. 7 - "Behold the man who would not make God his refuge [**positive volition**], but trusted in the abundance of his riches [**perquisites from Saul**] and was strong in his evil desire [**power lust**]."

Note in 1 Samuel 22:22 that David did not assign blame for the priests' slaughter to Doeg taking the blame himself, thus leaving it in the hands of the Lord.

But in Psalm 52, David reveals that Doeg would be the recipient of Reverse Punitive Action from God.

Franz Delitzsch in his *Biblical Commentary on Psalms* gives Psalm 52 the title, "The Punishment that Awaits the Evil Tongue."

Doeg's use of his tongue to indict Ahimelech and the other priests of Nob for conspiracy against Saul resulted in the slaughter of 85 innocent men and the residents of Nob.

Psalm 52 is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is thus a part of divine revelation. Therefore, David is not judging Doeg. He is the human conduit that reveals what the divine decree holds for Doeg's future.

¹ Ronald F. Youngblood, "1, 2 Samuel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 3:601.

² "Value of the superscriptions. These titles are clearly very old, for the LXX, in the 2d century BC, did not understand many of them. As to many of the musical and liturgical titles, the best learning of Hebrew and Christian scholars is unable to recover the original meaning. These superscriptions all had a worthy meaning, when they were first placed beside individual psalms. Grant that not one of them came from the pen of the writers of the Psalms, but only from editors and compilers of exilic or post-exilic days, it would still be reasonable to give attention to the views of ancient Hebrew scholars. We almost certainly have in them the results of the labors of Hebrew scribes and compilers stretching over several centuries. *Maskil* (Psalm 52): The exact meaning of this common term is not clear" (John Richard Sampey, "Psalms," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 4:2487, 2488).

- (1) In verse 1, Doeg shows no remorse for his slaughter of innocent priests and civilians, but instead boasts about the evil.
- (2) This adds more verbal sins to his indictment so in verse 2 he is told that his “tongue devises destruction” and that he is a “worker of deceit.”
- (3) His mental attitudes have established cosmic-two behavior patterns so that he “loves evil more than good,” and “falsehood more than speaking the truth.” (v. 3)
- (4) His corruption extends to an obsession to “use words that devour” by means of a “deceitful tongue.” (v. 4)
- (5) In the second stanza, David switches away from the character analysis of Doeg, which forms the divine indictment against him, over to the Lord’s imposition of Reverse Punitive Action.
- (6) In verse 5, Doeg is told that the wrath of God “will break you down forever.” The verb here is “will break,” the Qal imperfect of **נָתַח** (*nathas*).
- (7) This verb means to tear down and destroy. The Qal imperfect indicates incomplete action therefore a process that will take place over time.
- (8) *Nathas* is the word used to describe the destruction of a building or an entire city – a slow, laborious process. Its use here indicates that Doeg’s health will deteriorate over time and he will suffer great pain and misery in the process.
- (9) Further, God will “snatch you up and tear you away from you tent” indicating the loss of his home. He will be rendered homeless while suffering from his illnesses and diseases.
- (10) Further, He will “uproot you from the land of the living.” His condition terminates with the sin unto death.
- (11) In verse 6, Doeg’s gruesome demise will cause the righteous to have respect for God’s justice as they observe how use of the tongue in an attempt to destroy others will receive divine discipline in the form of Reverse Punitive Action.
- (12) Reasons for Doeg’s demise are given in verse 7. He “would not make God his refuge” refers to his complete rejection of doctrine.”
- (13) His trust was not directed toward the Word of God but in the “abundance of his riches.” This speaks of the perquisites he received from Saul for doing his bidding.
- (14) The phrase, “strong in his evil desire” indicates that Doeg’s prime motivation was power lust.

In distinct contrast to this horror show, the last two verses of Psalm 52 reveal the faith-rest of David:

Psalm 52:8 - But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness [**חֶסֶד** (*cheseth*): unfailing love] of God forever and ever.

The “green olive tree” is a symbol of great prosperity in Jewish culture:

The olive tree may last for hundreds of years and is a symbol of longevity and usefulness. Olives are used for food and oil. A productive olive tree supplies about six gallons of oil per year.³

Whereas Doeg is characterized as an “uprooted” tree illustrating the sin unto death, David compares himself to a “green olive tree,” which prospers under the grace of God.

Whereas Doeg placed his trust in the things the mentally deranged King Saul provided, David has complete grace orientation as he places his trust in the unfailing love of God forever.

Psalm 52:9 - I have been caused to praise You forever, because you have done this. I have **trusted** [**קָנַח** (*qavah*): **to wait: the patience to be in sync with God’s perfect timing**] in Your name in the presence of Your faithful ones [**חַסִּיִּת** (*chasiyth*): **David retinue of spiritually mature friends**].

David has the ultimate attitude of gratitude. He does not assume any credit for anything in his life but lists his thanks to God for His grace and acknowledges the fact that it is His power that accomplishes prosperity for the righteous.

He then notes where his trust is directed. *Qavah* is one of the strongest words for faith in the Hebrew language. Mature believers have the patience to wait on the Lord. David’s trust is directed toward God and God alone.

Chasiyth refers to spiritually mature believers many of whom were included among the four-hundred men that accompanied him in his flight from Saul. They holed up with him in the cave of Adullam and submitted to his authority over them (1 Samuel 22:3).

We are certain that among them were those classified as David’s Mighty Men that are listed in 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Chronicles 11. These were warriors that made up the officer corps of David’s military.

14. These examples of Reverse Punitive Action in Matthew 7:1–2 and 1 Samuel 21–22 alert us to the terrible swift sword of the justice of God.
15. What these passages have revealed is the complete abandonment of the FLOT Line’s problem-solving devices. It betrays the ugly truth that is hidden by the external façade of pseudo spirituality.

³ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 5:387.