

Psalm 12:1-8  
Contrasting The Words of Man and the Word of God

**Introduction:**

This psalm is found in the first book of Psalms (1-41), which focuses on The Suffering of the Historical David.

The outline of this first book is as follows: (James Hamilton)

    Psalms 1–2, Introduction to the Blessed Man, Yahweh’s Messiah

    Psalms 3–9, Absalom’s Revolt

**Psalms 10–14, The Wicked**

            Psalms 15–24, The King

        Psalms 25–33, God’s Word and Glory

    Psalms 34–41, Saved through Judgment

Hamilton’s outline of this subsection (10-14) is as follows:

    Psalm 10, The Wicked Says in His Heart

        Psalm 11, Yahweh in His Temple

**Psalm 12, Yahweh’s Pure Word**

        Psalm 13, How Long?

    Psalm 14, The Fool Says in His Heart

**Superscription:** *For the choir director. According to the Sheminith* (lit. “the eighth”). *A Psalm of David.*

**1) David’s prayer for Yahweh to act on David’s behalf—12:1-4**

a) David desires God’s deliverance—12:1-2 **Positively**

i) <sup>1</sup> **Save** [*yasha*], *O Yahweh,*

ii) The near extinction of the godly in a collapsing culture

- This echoes Ps. 11:3

(1) The **absence** of Godward character (something is missing)

(a) Individual Godward loyalty: *for the holy man [*chaside*] ceases to be,*

(b) Collective Godward trustworthiness: *for the faithful (ones) disappear from among the sons of men (Adam).*

(i) People whose speech can be trusted.

(c) Like the prophets Elijah (1 Kings 18:22), Isaiah (Is. 57:1) and Micah (7:1-7) and also Paul (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:16)

(d) David does not explain their absence; he just notes it.

(2) The **presence** of Godless communication (something shouldn’t be here; a culture of deception)

- (a) Worthless speech: <sup>2</sup> *They speak worthlessness to one another;*
  - (b) Deceitful speech: ... *they speak.*
    - Smooth talk: *with a flattering lip*
    - Double talk: *and with a double heart.*
      - Outward speech that does not reflect their true motives.
  - (c) They may be attempting to take God's kingdom from God's appointed king. (Hamilton)
- b) David desires God's judgment—12:3-4 **Negatively**
- i) Punishment of selfward communication: <sup>3</sup> *May Yahweh cut off*
    - (1) Refers to complete destruction, even the memory of the wicked is removed. (Ps. 34:16)
      - (a) These people are a threat to David's society because no one is able to trust what others may say to them.
      - (2) Notice that David does not rethink his position and try to reach an agreement with the wicked. He does not retreat. He prays.
  - ii) Four kinds of selfward communication)
    - (1) Deceitful: *all flattering lips,*
    - (2) Boastful: *the tongue that speaks great things;*
    - (3) Self-confident: <sup>4</sup> *who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail;*
    - (4) Defiant: *our lips are our own; who is lord [adon] over us?"*
      - (a) They say what they want. They think they are accountable to no one. They think they are in control.
      - (b) The answer to their question is found in the next verse.
  - iii) We expect to be lied to in our society in advertising, media, politics, legal system, religion, and government. (D. R. Davis)

## 2) Yahweh's promise of assurance in response to his prayer—12:5

- This is the focal point of the psalm
- a) Two-fold reason for demonstrating His authority—12:5a
  - i) Suffering victims: <sup>5</sup> *"Because of the devastation of the afflicted,*
  - ii) Grieving victims: *because of the groaning of the needy,*
- b) Two-fold promise of demonstrating His authority—12:5b
  - i) *now I will arise," says Yahweh;*
  - ii) *"I will set him in the safety [yeshu] (cf. 12:1) for which he longs."*

## 3) David's confidence in the promises of Yahweh—12:6-8

- In strong contrast to the sinful speech of the wicked
- a) The purity of Yahweh's promises to protect the godly—12:6
  - i) <sup>6</sup> *The words of Yahweh are pure/flawless words;*
  - ii) *as silver tried in a furnace on the ground, refined seven times.*

- iii) The contrast should grab us: after wading through the slick double-speak and deliberate deception of a lie-infatuated world (vv. 1–4) we come to a seeing and hearing (see 5a) and truth-speaking God (5b–6) (D. R. Davis)
- iv) In a world where it is difficult to believe what anyone says, friends or enemies, it is a comfort to know God’s word is completely trustworthy, especially as it promises deliverance for the people of God. (Allen Ross)
- b) The interpretation of Yahweh’s promise to protect the godly—12:7
  - i) *7 You, O Yahweh, will keep them* (the godly who are suffering);
  - ii) *You will guard him from this generation* (of rebels) *forever*.
  - iii) BTW, this is NOT to be interpreted as the preservation of a particular translation of God’s Word.
- c) The current opposition to Yahweh’s promises to protect the godly—12:8
  - i) *8 The wicked strut about on every side when vileness/ worthlessness is exalted among the sons of men.* (cf. 12:1)
    - (1) God does not always change the outward circumstances, but He changes our heart to respond differently to those circumstances.
  - ii) The godly may be isolated from the wicked, but not from God.

#### 4) Things we need to remember:

- a) The importance of **contrast**
  - i) Alec Motyer points out: all around David heard falsehood, flattery and duplicity (2); but by contrast there is a word that is total in its purity (*flawless*, 6a), its value (*silver* 6b) and its freedom from any imperfection (*seven times* 6c). (NBC)
- b) The importance of **objectivity**
  - i) Allan Harmon writes: So many had turned away from obedience to the LORD that it seemed that the godly had disappeared altogether. (Mentor)
- c) The importance of **trust**
  - i) We will trust either the words of liars and flatterers or we will trust in God’s pure Word. (cf. John 8:44-47)
  - ii) George Zemek writes: David provides a model for passing a spiritual hearing test in that genuine disciples listen to and most properly respond to two radically different sources of speech.
  - iii) Warren Wiersbe writes: How paradoxical that society today sees the Scriptures as something relatively worthless and yet pays great sums of money to the people who manufacture deception and flattery. No matter how many lies this generation tells, God’s Word is safe.