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The
Songs

34

PSALMS - The SONGS

Thirty-four

The LORD is So Good! Taste and See!

READ AND OBSERVE

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every reference to the LORD, including pronouns and synonyms, with a red triangle.

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every reference to the psalmist or the righteous, including all pronouns and synonyms (i.e. those who fear the LORD), with a blue capital "R+". (If the person, or persons, involves someone other than David circle it in blue, as well. I.e. the humble, us, they, etc.)

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every reference to the wicked, along with all pronouns and synonyms (i.e. evildoers, etc.) with an orange capital "W".

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every reference to fearing the LORD with a jagged yellow circle filled in with light purple.

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every reference to time with a blue box.

Read through **Psalm 34** and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line.

Read through **Psalm 34** and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. Magnify the LORD
2. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them
3. Fear the LORD
4. The LORD hears the Righteous
5. The LORD rescues the Righteous

READ AND ANSWER

Psalm 34:1-3

The traditional title for **Psalm 34** is quite interesting. What is the title?



Since the title of Psalm 34 is
“A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech,
who drove him away and he departed”,
it seems like it would be a good idea
to go back and read the account of David and Abimelech
before observing this Psalm.

However...
if you try to find an account of David feigning madness before Abimelech,
you won't find it.
Instead, you will find the account of David and Achish.

What's the answer to this seeming difficulty?

First of all, remember that the titles are the tradition of men,
not the inspiration of God.

Secondly, Abimelech simply means “my father is king”
so it is possible that Abimelech is no more than a surname of the kings of Gath.

Other than the account of David and Achish, found in 1 Samuel 21:10-15,
we have no other record of David behaving in this way.
Quite interestingly, David's crazy behavior doesn't even come up in Psalm 34—
only the LORD's deliverance.

As we begin this Psalm,
let's make sure and ask God to open our eyes
so that we may behold wonderful things from His Word.

It is important, also, to keep in mind that we are observing the Word of God,
Psalm 34. We are not observing and studying the traditional title.
It is not incumbent upon us to reconcile the *title* to the *Psalm*.
And more importantly, we must never try to reconcile the *Psalm* to the *title*.



**The letters of the Hebrew alphabet begin each line of Psalm 34.
This is the second alphabetical Psalm, the first being Psalm 25.**

What does David, the psalmist, say he will do at all times?



**The Hebrew word for “bless” is *barak*
and is a primitive root which means to kneel.
It has the idea of blessing God as an act of adoration.**

What will David continually speak out loud?



**The Hebrew word for “praise” is *thillah*
and means to laud, specifically as in a hymn.
The phrase “sing the praises of” literally portrays the meaning of this word.**

Whose praise?

What will David’s soul do?



**The Hebrew word for “boast” is *halal*
and is a primitive root that means to be clear or to shine.
It has the idea of making a show or boasting.**

Who will hear?



The Hebrew word for “humble” is *anav* and means meek, gentle, needy, poor, or afflicted.

What will the humble hear?

What will the humble do when they hear praise and blessing for the LORD?



The Hebrew word for “rejoice” is *samach* and is a primitive root that means to brighten up, to be blithe or gleesome.

What does David call others to do with him?

1.

2.

Who does David call to magnify the LORD with him?

Do you hear the call?

Do *you magnify* the LORD?



The Hebrew word for “magnify” is *gadal* and means to grow up or become great.

Who does David call to exalt the LORD’S Name together with him?

Do you hear the call?

Do *you exalt* the *Name* of the *LORD*?



The Hebrew word for “exalt” is *ruwm* and is a primitive root that means to be high (actively), to rise or raise.

The Hebrew word for “name” is *shem* and is a primitive word that means an appellation or a mark or memorial of individuality. By implication it means honor, authority, or character.

The Hebrew word for “LORD” is *YHWH* and means the Self-Existent One or the Eternal One.

Psalm 34:4-7

While the first segment of **Psalm 34 (verses 1-3)** is a call to magnify the LORD and exalt His Name, this second segment introduces reason for which David is so thankful. He is full of fears so he seeks the LORD to deliver him from his troubles—and the LORD does just that!

What did David do?

What did the LORD do?

1.

2.



The Hebrew word for “fears” is *megorah* and means fear or terror.

What did others do?

When others looked to the LORD, what reaction did they have?



The Hebrew word for “radiant” is *nahar* and means to sparkle or shine. It has the idea of being cheerful or exuberant.

Their faces were cheerful, pleasant, exuberant, and untroubled because they were looking to the LORD. What expression would their faces never hold (as long as they continued to look to the LORD)?

Why would their faces never be ashamed?

Who are these “others”? Who are the “they”?

David now returns to himself and his own situation. How does he describe himself in the middle of his situation?

What does he say he did because of his situation?

If this is a reference to the time when he was afraid of Achish, king of Gath, what more can we know about the event that **1 Samuel** does not tell us?

And *if this is* a reference to the time when he was afraid of Achish, king of Gath, what does David not mention in **Psalms 34**?

What does David say the LORD did when he cried out to him?

1.

2.

What does David say the “others” can expect if they fear the LORD?

1.

2.



The Hebrew word for “encamps” is *chanah* and is a primitive root that means to pitch a tent for abode or siege.

The Hebrew word for “fear” is *yare* and is a primitive root that means to fear. It has the idea of revere (morally) and frighten (causatively).

It is an extraordinary delight to experience the comfort of knowing that the angel of the LORD encamps around me and rescues me out of my troubles...



It is important to note that the word used for David’s “fears” is a different word than the one used when referring to the “fear” of the LORD.

David’s fears were things that brought him terror while the fear of the LORD is an awesome, reverential respect for Him.

The interesting connection is that the LORD, Himself, could easily cause terror or fright because of His immense power. However, He is also merciful and gracious and long-suffering and... so much more!

Therefore, those who fear Him can praise Him for His great goodness.

And, the fact will always remain that God’s wrath (which rightfully *should* cause terror and fright) will always be on its way to those who are ungodly and unrighteous.

Those who run to God for refuge from His wrath will find an amazing Savior and Lord!

Psalm 34:8-14

Who is David talking to in **verse 8**?



David has experienced the marvelous grace of God in delivering him from his fears and troubles. Now he is compassionately eager to share his insights with others who fear the LORD.

David's love for others is compelling...

What does David urge others who fear the LORD to do?

- 1.
- 2.



The Hebrew word for “taste” is *tawam* and is a primitive root that means to taste, or figuratively, to perceive.

What does he want them to taste and see?

How can someone “taste and see” that the LORD is good?

Have you?

Who does David say is blessed and happy?



The Hebrew word for “take refuge in” is *chaccha* and is a primitive root that means to flee for protection.

It has the idea of trust and confidence.



Was David taking refuge in the LORD when he pretended to be a lunatic in front of the king of Gath?

What was David taking refuge in?

Was David blessed and happy when he was behaving like a madman in order to save himself?

What exhortation does David give to the LORD'S saints?

What is the benefit to those who fear the LORD?

Is this saying that those who fear the LORD will have anything and everything they want?

What *is* it saying?



This Hebrew word for “fear” is *yare* (verse 7), not *megorah* (verse 4).

The Hebrew word for “want” is *machsor* and means deficiency or impoverishment.

What example does David give to prove his point?

What do young lions experience?

1.

2.

In contrast to the fate of young lions, what will those who seek the LORD never lack?

In case you might be confused about what the good things are, remember that context rules and go back and examine **verse 8**. What does it tell us about the LORD?

How does the fact that the LORD is “good” interpret the “good things” in **verse 10** for us? (Hint: Both are from the same Hebrew word *tov*.)

How does David refer to his audience?

What does he ask them to do?

1.

2.

What does he say he will do if they will come and listen to him?

That’s a pretty good offer consider what David has just told them about those who fear the LORD, don’t you think? What has David already told them (in **verses 7** and **9**) about those who fear the LORD?

1.

2.

3.

David asks a rhetorical question as he begins his lesson. What is it?

What is David's response? If a person desires life and loves length of days (because they want to experience the goodness of the LORD), what does he prescribe?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The list can be broken down into two divisions, an evil and a righteous. What are the three evil things to not do?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the three righteous things to do?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Psalm 34:15-18

What is true about the eyes of the LORD?

What is true about the ears of the LORD?

What is true about the face of the LORD?

What will the LORD do to evildoers?

When the righteous cry to the LORD, what does He do?

When the LORD hears the cry of the righteous, what does He do?

Is David speaking in general or is he specifically remembering the troubles out of which the LORD has saved him (**verse 6**)?

How does the LORD respond to the brokenhearted?

How does the LORD respond to those who are crushed in spirit?

Psalm 34:19-22

What is true about the righteous?

Since this cannot contradict **verse 10** in any way, what is it saying?

What will the LORD do for the righteous in his afflictions?

How are **verses 10** and **19** connected? (Hint: While it is true that the righteous will experience many afflictions, what goodness from the LORD can they count on?)

Whose “bones” does the LORD “keep”?



The Hebrew word for “keep” is *shaman* and is a primitive root that means to hedge about as with thorns. It has the idea of guarding and protecting.

The Hebrew word for “bones” is *etsem* and means a bone. It has the idea of the body or the physical substance of a person.

How many bones of the righteous are broken?



Are we looking at a prophetic reference to Jesus Christ on the cross in verse 20?

**Pay special attention to the rest of the verses in Psalm 34—
could any of them be referring to the Christ?**

What will happen to the wicked?

What will happen to those who hate the righteous?

What does the LORD redeem?

Will any of those who take refuge in the LORD be condemned?

READ AND REASON

About that title... here is a thought... or two...

Has it ever bothered you to think that David acted like a lunatic in order to feel safe? Have you ever thought that his dubious behavior was unrighteous, especially since it showed such a lack of trust in His God?

What does David say (in **Psalm 34**, which is the actual Word of God) that he did to procure his deliverance? Did he say he acted like a madman or does it say he went to the LORD?

Was he going to the LORD when he was acting like a madman? No. He was full of fears when he was pretending to be deranged (**verse 4**).

What actually caused Achish to send David away? Was it really David's behavior, or was it the LORD turning the heart of the king? **Proverbs 21:1** *The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

Obviously, even if **1 Samuel 21** contains the incident that the title of **Psalm 34** refers to, it doesn't tell us everything there is to know about the event. By letting the Word speak for itself (using **Psalm 34** and other passages), we can interpret **1 Samuel 21:10-15** more accurately.

We do not have to accept an event in the Bible as righteous simply because it was done by one of our Bible "heroes". We must always let Scripture interpret Scripture through doctrine or teaching—never through unexplained events.

 Segment by Segment

Try titling these segments yourself.
Ask God to help you.

Verses 1-3

Verses 4-7

Verses 8-14

Verses 15-18

~ Purpose of Psalm 34

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 34.
The purpose simply states “why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm”.**

~ Theme of Psalm 34

**Try giving Psalm 34 a title by identifying its theme.
The theme simply states “what the Psalm is about”.**
