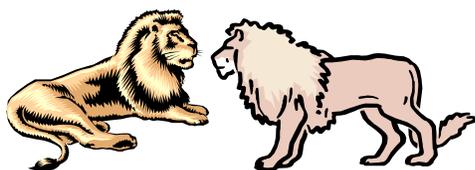


Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
2004

by
William D. Barrick, Th.D.
Professor of OT, The Master's Seminary



Psalm 34 — Tasting the Goodness of God

1.0 Introducing Psalm 34

- Fourteen psalms contain a heading that refers to incidents in David's life: Psalms 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142.
- The background for Psalm 34 is found in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. See Psalm 56, also.
- Psalm 34 is the third acrostic psalm in the Psalter (see Psalm 9 and 25). Its alphabetic pattern is identical to Psalm 25's pattern.
- New Testament writers cite Psalm 34 in John 19:36 (Ps 34:20) and 1 Peter 3:10-12 (Ps 34:12-16).
 - ▶ “A substantial quotation and some distinct further echoes of the psalm in 1 Peter 2 and 3 (and in other Epistles) illustrate the indebtedness of every generation to this psalm.”—Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 138.
 - ▶ See Hebrews 6:5 and 1 Peter 2:3.
- Psalm 34 was often associated with the Lord's Supper in the early church.

2.0 Reading Psalm 34 (NAU)

A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

- ⌘ 34:1 I will **ble**ss the LORD at all times;
His **pr**aise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ⌘ 34:2 My soul will make its **bo**ast in the LORD;
The humble will hear it and rejoice.
- ⌘ 34:3 O **ma**gnify the LORD with me,
And let us **ex**alt His name together.

- ⌌ 34:4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
- ⌌ 34:5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces will never be ashamed.
- ⌌ 34:6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
And saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⌌ 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them.
- ⌌ 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
- ⌌ 34:9 O **fear the LORD**, you His saints;
For to those who **fear Him** there is no want.
- ⌌ 34:10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;
But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.
- ⌌ 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the **fear of the LORD**.
- ⌌ 34:12 Who is the man who desires life
And loves *length of days* that he may see good?
- ⌌ 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking deceit.
- ⌌ 34:14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.
- ⌌ 34:15 The **eyes** of the LORD are toward the righteous
And His **ears** are *open* to their cry.
- ⌌ 34:16 The **face** of the LORD is against evildoers,
To cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- ⌌ 34:17 *The righteous* cry, and the LORD hears
And delivers them out of all their troubles.
- ⌌ 34:18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
And saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- ⌌ 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
- ⌌ 34:20 He keeps all his bones,
Not one of them is broken.
- ⌌ 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked,
And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- ⌌ 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,
And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 34

3.1 Outline

- I. Extolling God (vv. 1-3)
- II. Experiencing Deliverance (vv. 4-7)
- III. Exhorting Godliness (vv. 8-14)
- IV. Encouraging the Righteous (vv. 15-22)



3.2 Notes

- **Heading:** “Abimelech”
 - In 1 Samuel 21:10-15 the king’s name is Achish. Why the difference?
 - ✓ Many Old Testament men had more than one name (Jerubbaal = Gideon in Judg 6:32, Jedidiah = Solomon in 2 Sam 12:25, Mattaniah = Zedekiah in 2 Kgs 24:17), so two names would not be unusual.
 - ✓ Some names were dynastic names (e.g., Darius, Caesar, Pharaoh). Abimelech is also the name of the Philistine kings in Genesis 20:2 and 26:1. This is evidence that Abimelech (= “my father is king”) was a dynastic name. Achish would be the personal name of the king of Gath at the time of these events.

- **v. 4** “all my fears”
 - Fearfulness is an enemy of the believer. David’s fears came as a result of traumatic experiences in the court of King Saul, his life as a fugitive from Saul, and the unknown future that he faced.
 - The particular Hebrew word used for “fears” occurs only here, Isaiah 66:4 (“dread”) and Proverbs 10:24. However, a closely related term is used in Psalm 31:13 and five times in Jeremiah in the phrase “terror on every side” (Jer 6:25; 20:3 [“Magor-missabib”], 10; 46:5; 49:29).

- **v. 5** “They looked to Him and were radiant”
 - “In addition to his personal experience, he has witnessed how God’s saints radiate confidence and joy (v. 5; cf. Isa 60:5). They, too, looked for the light of his countenance and were blessed with the abundance of his goodness and blessing (27:1, 4). Fear, terror, gloom, and shame have no place as they give way to radiance!”—Willem A. VanGemenen, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:283.

- **v. 6** “This poor man cried”
 - The psalmist is most likely speaking of himself autobiographically.
 - This is David’s own testimony.

- v. 7 “The angel of the LORD”
 - This person is mentioned only here and 35:5-6 in Psalms.
 - The title most likely refers to the Second Person of the Godhead as in Genesis 16:7-14 and Judges 6:11-23.

- v. 8 “O taste and see that the LORD is good”
 - “Taste” = find out by experience.
 - This is not a casual sampling, which might be implied by the English translation.

- v. 10 “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger”
 - “Of all the beasts [in an Israelite’s general knowledge—WDB], the lion is the most powerful and least likely to lack prey and go hungry. And among the lions, though old lions may lack prey, young lions are active and successful as hunters (cf. Job 4:10-11). The young lions thus symbolize the essence of self-sufficiency in the provision of physical needs.”—Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 280.

- v. 11 “Come, you children, listen to me”
 - The address is typical of wisdom literature in the Old Testament.
 - Proverbs 4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32
 - The subject of instruction is “the fear of the LORD” (see Prov 1:7; 8:13).

- v. 20 “He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.”
 - Some interpreters understand this as a reference to the Lord’s care of His own people (e.g., VanGemeren), rather than a Messianic reference.
 - For the Messianic view, compare Exodus 12:46 and John 19:33-36.

- v. 22 “none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned”
 - Compare Romans 8:1, 33-34.

4.0 Singing Psalm 34

When I Look Into Your Holiness
(Psalm 34:5)

When I look into Your holiness,
When I gaze into Your loveliness,
When all things that surround become shadows in the light of You.
When I’ve found the joy of reaching Your heart,
When my will becomes enthroned in Your love,
When all things that surround become shadows in the light of You.



I worship You, I worship You;
The reason I live is to worship You.
I worship You, I worship You;
The reason I live is to worship You.

— Wayne and Cathy Perrin
© 1980 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Ye Children, Come, Give Ear to Me
(Psalm 34:11-22)

Ye children, come, give ear to me
And learn Jehovah's fear,
He who would long and happy live,
Let him my counsel hear.

Restrain thy lips from speaking guile,
From wicked speech depart,
From evil turn and do the good,
Seek peace with all thy heart.

Jehovah's eyes are on the just,
He hearkens to their cry;
Against the wicked sets His face;
Their very name shall die.

He hears the righteous when they cry,
From trouble sets them free;
He saves the broken hearted ones
And those who contrite be.

The Lord may suffer many griefs
Upon the just to fall,
But He will bring them safely through;
Delivering them from all.

By evil are the evil slain,
And they that hate the just;
But all His servants God redeems,
And safe in Him they trust.

— Words: *The Psalter* (1912)
Music: Henry W. Greatorex (1851)

5.0 Praying Psalm 34

- Lord, we exalt and glorify You. [v. 3]
- Thank You for saving me out of all my troubles this week. [v. 6]
- Teach me how to fear You the way You have commanded. [v. 11]
- Father, give me a clean mouth with pure and honest speech. [v. 13]
- Lord, help me to endure my afflictions and to trust You to do what is best for me. [vv. 19 and 8]
-
-



6.0 Applying Psalm 34

- Rather than relying on our own cunning, we need to trust God for our deliverance.
- To truly experience God's goodness we must have a corresponding godliness.
- Being a believer does not mean a trouble-free life.