

Psalm 34 (An Acrostic Psalm)

"Praise Because it Pays to Ask God for Help!"

A psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech,¹ who drove him away and he departed (cf. 1 Samuel 21:10-15; 22:1).

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A1 PROMISE OF PRAISE 34:1-3

B1 Of Blessing Yahweh 34:1

- C1 Resolve to praise: I will bless the LORD at all times
- C2 Constancy of praise: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

B2 Of Boasting in Yahweh 34:2

- C1 Divine focus: My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
- C2 Benefit for the Godly: The humble shall hear it and rejoice.

B3 Call for Corporate Praise 34:3²

- C1 O magnify the LORD with me,
- C2 And let us exalt His name together.

A2 TESTIMONIES OF DELIVERANCE 34:4-7

B1 David's Experience 34:4

- C1 Response: I sought the LORD, and He answered me,
- C2 Deliverance: And delivered me from all my fears.

B2 The Congregation's Experience 34:5

- C1 Encouragement: They looked to Him and were radiant,
- C2 Confidence: And their faces will never be ashamed.

¹ Actually Achish, King of Gath, 1 Sam. 21:10-15, "who is referred to here under the dynastic title *Abimelech*" (*Ryrie Study Bible* note). Ps 34 is one of the eight Psalms which are assigned, by their inscriptions, to the time of David's persecution by Saul, and were composed upon that weary way of suffering extending from Gibeath of Saul to Ziklag. (The following is an approximation to their chronological order: 7, 59, 56, 34, 52, 57, 142, 54.) (Keil & Delitzsch - K & D)

² An excellent verse around which to build one's marriage!

B3 David's Experience 34:6

C1 Desperation: This poor man cried and the LORD heard him,

C2 Salvation: And saved him out of all his troubles.

B4 Yahweh's Vigilance 34:7

C1 Protection: The angel of the LORD ³ encamps ⁴ around those who fear Him,

C2 Liberation: And rescues them.

A3 PROMISE OF REWARD TO THOSE WHO SEEK YAHWEH 34:8-10**B1 Challenge to Experience Yahweh 34:8**

C1 Taste test: O taste and see that the LORD is good;

C2 Benefit of blessing: How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

B2 Challenge to Fear Yahweh 34:9

C1 Command for the saints: O fear the LORD , you His saints;

C2 Provision for the saints: For to those who fear Him, there is no want.

B3 Benefit for Seeking Yahweh 34:10

C1 The suffering of lions in nature: The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;

C2 The security of believers seeking Yahweh: But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

A4 ADVICE REGARDING THE FEAR OF YAHWEH 34:11-14

³ 34:7 - angel of the LORD: "The mal'ak of Jahve (sic) is none other than He who was the medium of Jahve's intercourse with the patriarchs, and who accompanied Israel to Canaan.... He, the One, encampeth round about them, in so far as He is the Captain of the host of Jahve (Josh 5:14), and consequently is accompanied by a host of inferior ministering angels; or insofar as He can, as being a spirit not limited by space, furnish protection that covers them on every side. *Choneh* ... is perhaps an allusion to *machanaim* in Gen. 32:2 ff., that angel-camp which joined itself to Jacob's camp, and surrounded it like a barricade ..." (K & D)

[Gen. 16:7-13] ... "is the first reference in the Old Testament to "the Angel of the LORD" (lit., "the Angel of Yahweh"). This Angel is identified with Yahweh in 16:13, as well as in [Gen.] 22:11-12; 31:11, 13; 48:16; Judges 6:11, 16, 22; 13:22-23; Zechariah 3:1-2. And yet the Angel is distinct from Yahweh (Gen. 24:7; 2 Sam. 24:16; Zech. 1:12). Thus "the Angel of the LORD" may refer to a theophany of the preincarnate Christ (cf. Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1; Num. 22:22; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; Zech. 12:8). (Allen P. Ross, Genesis, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, TBKC*)

⁴ 34:7 encamps (*chanah*, khaw-naw' 2583): a primitive root (compare 2603); properly to incline; by implication to decline (of the slanting rays of evening); specifically to pitch a tent; generally to encamp (for abode or siege) ... etc. (Strong's). The verb seems to signify to camp in a tent either for the purpose of living (Gen. 26:17), for traveling (Ex. 13:20) or, more often, for conducting a war (Joshua, Judges, 1 Sam 4:1). Definitely if the Angel of Yahweh encamps all around a believer it is for the purpose of protection in the battle between good and evil!

B1 The Call to "School" 34:11

- C1 The students to be taught: Come, you children, listen to me;
- C2 The subject to be taught: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

B2 The Blessings Sought 34:12

- C1 Life: Who is the man who desires life,
- C2 Long life: And loves *length of days*
- C3 Quality of life: that he may see good?

B3 The Life-Style to be Lived 34:13-14

- C1 In speech 34:13
 - D1 Wholesomeness: Keep your tongue from evil,
 - D2 Honesty: And your lips from speaking deceit.
- C2 In actions 34:14
 - D1 Regarding good and evil
 - E1 Activities to prevent: Depart from evil,
 - E2 Activities to promote: and do good;
 - D2 Regarding peace
 - E1 Search: Seek peace,
 - E2 Pursuit: and pursue it.

A5 ADVANTAGES OF BEING RIGHTEOUS; JUDGMENTS FOR BEING EVIL 34:15-22

B1 God's Attention toward the Righteous 34:15

- C1 Open eyes: The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous,
- C2 Open ears: And His ears are *open* to their cry.

B2 God's Opposition to the Wicked 34:16

- C1 Unfriendly face: The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
- C2 Inattentive mind: To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

B3 God's Answering the Righteous 34:17

- C1 Hearing: *The righteous* cry and the LORD hears,
- C2 Rescuing: And delivers them out of all their troubles.

B4 God's Sympathy toward the Emotionally Bankrupt 34:18

- C1 Emotional companionship: The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
- C2 Emotional healing: And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

B5 God's Care for the Righteous 34:19-20

- C1 Adversity: Many are the afflictions of the righteous, 34:19
- C2 Rescue: But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
- C3 Illustration 34:20
 - D1 He keeps all his bones;
 - D2 Not one of them is broken.

B6 God's Abandonment of the Wicked 34:21

- C1 To death: Evil shall slay the wicked;
- C2 To judgment: And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

B7 God's Preservation of His Servants 34:22

- C1 Redemption: The LORD redeems ⁵ the soul of His servants;
- C2 Acquittal: And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 34
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⁵ 34:22 - redeems: Many times in the Psalms the writers prayed to be redeemed from trouble *padah*, “to ransom, redeem,” is used in 31:5; 44:26; 49:7; 55:18; 69:18; 78:42; 119:134). That Hebrew word was often used when referring to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (cf. Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 24:18; 2 Sam. 7:23; Micah 6:4). (Allen P. Ross, *TBKC*.)