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## Psalm 34

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Psalm 34.

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### Topics.

- Magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
- The LORD'S praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- Taste and see that the LORD is good and take refuge in him.
- The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him.
- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers them.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK ONE (PSALM 1-41)

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### PSALM 34:1-6

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A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.

#### **Magnify the LORD with Me, and Let us Exalt His Name Together.**

- **Psalm 34:1-6:** I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. <sup>2</sup>My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. <sup>3</sup>Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! <sup>4</sup>I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. <sup>5</sup>Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. <sup>6</sup>This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

**The story of Ahimelech:** David went to Ahimelech the priest for food when King Saul had charged him with a matter that caused David to flee in haste. He left Ahimelech and went to Achish the king of Gath. Achish servants said to the king, "This is David the king of the land the one they say," 'Saul struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?' When David heard these words, he feared the king so he:

- Changed his behaviour before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. <sup>14</sup>Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? <sup>15</sup>Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?" (1 Sam. 21:12-15). (The full story is in 1 Samuel chapter 21).

The king had no interest in a madman so David was able to depart from Achish and escaped to the cave of Adullam. (1 Sam. 22:1). Now here is the wonder of this story, unlike those who have no faith in God crediting

David's escape to his quick wisdom and skill in being able to act as madman, David credits his deliverance to God and spends the rest of this Psalm giving the LORD the highest praises for his rescue.

**His praise shall continually be in my mouth:** (v1) this expresses the deep heartfelt devotion and gratitude of David. The faithful praise God constantly regardless of whether they are amongst unbelievers, the sceptical or in a worldly environment or amongst those who believe false philosophy. It matters not to them if they are with murmurs and complainers or under the trials and hardships of life or suffering hardships and sickness God is always the focus of their praise. The self-righteous make pretensions to praise and bless God in times of sunshine and prosperity, but true faith always regards the LORD as worthy of praise in the storm as well as in the sunshine; in the dark calamity of the night, as well as in the bright days of prosperity.

God said Job was a righteous man and Job's attitude toward God was:

- Though he slay me, I will hope in him. (Job 13:15).

The prophet Habakkuk's love and faith for God was so great he was able to say:

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, <sup>18</sup>yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup>GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. (Hab. 3:17).

**At all times:** means in every situation, every circumstance and every event of life that occurs. The idea is that David would praise God privately and publicly:

- In prosperity and in adversity, in safety and in danger.
- In joy and in sorrow in blessings and in trials.
- In bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear.

It also means David would give honour, praise and glory to God as the God of:

- Creation and the source of all life.
- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the God of Israel.
- Nature and of fate and chance and the future.
- Love, mercy, grace compassion and forgiveness.
- Salvation, eternal life and all that is good.
- All temporal and spiritual blessings.

David's faith was such that his mind, his heart, his speech, his senses and emotions would always express a sense of God's goodness. God was always regarded as the highest focus of David's adoration and praise.

**His praise shall continually be in my mouth:** carries the idea that the faithful should not only hold in their heart, mind and thoughts a grateful sense of God's favours, but should also publicly express their thankfulness with their lips, both in speech and in song.

**My soul makes its boast in the LORD:** (v2) in this context is not mere boasting with the tongue, but a boasting that flows up from what is dwelling in the heart and is felt in the mind and emotions before it is expressed. David knows he has nothing of his own or within himself to boast of, but of God he will boast all the days of his life. Boasting in one's

own achievements is a very natural human tendency, but it is an act of pride in contrast to this boasting in God's power, love, grace, mercy and His great salvation is not only encouraged, but the more people who indulge themselves in it the better.

**Let the humble hear and be glad:** (v2) the faithful and humble of heart turn away from prideful boasting and lofty speeches, but they are encouraged to boast of the LORD'S goodness and salvation to encourage the saved, to testify to the unsaved and to bring comfort to even the most-lowly child of Adam.

**Magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together:** (v3) David calls all believers to make the LORD'S fame greater among those surrounding him and to manifest the glory of God in collective and public praise and worship. Worship is the natural instinct of the new life. In heaven it is enjoyed to the full and on earth where worship abounds, we are as close to reflecting heaven in this world as we can attain while living in this fallen and corrupted world.

**The LORD, delivered me from all my fears:** (v4) the self-righteous who trust in themselves, and think their own efforts are sufficient for them are utterly destitute of all that is needed for salvation and have every good reason to fear at the judgment seat of God, but the faithful who trust in the Lord have all that is needed and nothing to fear from God. They will shine as bright lights and make up the Lord's treasured possession.

**Those who look to him are radiant:** (v5) when men and women make the Lord the King of their heart and mind, when he is their highest passion and greatest love, his joy, peace, and love dwelling within will radiate joyfulness and contentment in the face and a calm spirit in their nature.

**Their face shall never be ashamed:** (v5) those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in God's grace and who endeavour to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good name to the Lord Jesus Christ have no need to feel ashamed as they walk by faith with the Lord. Neither do they have any need to feel ashamed when they stand at the judgment seat of the Lord, it will not be words of condemnation they will hear from their King and Saviour but, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much, enter into the joy of your master." (Matt. 25:21) (Matt. 25:23).

- As it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (Rom. 9:33).
- For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (Rom. 10:11).

**This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles:** (v6) generally the poor were looked down upon, despised and counted as being worthless (especially by the powerful, the rich and the noble) and were certainly not given any respect or looked after with any concern. But this poor man, who it seems David may have known, prayed and the LORD not only heard his prayer, but saved him to eternal life and everlasting glory. The destiny of the powerful, the rich and the noble without God is the darkness of the grave, the destiny of the poor man is the throne of God. David is highlighting the truth that God hears the prayer of all who pray with an honest and humble heart. He had just said he prayed and God heard the king's prayer and then says a poor man prayed and God heard his prayer. This is because God is not affected by our nobility or lack of it, by our wealth and power or by our feebleness and poverty, because God looks at the heart and not our outward worth or lack of it in this world.

## **Taste and See that the LORD is Good and Take Refuge in Him.**

- **Psalm 34:7-11:** The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. <sup>8</sup>Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! <sup>9</sup>Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! <sup>10</sup>The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. <sup>11</sup>Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? <sup>13</sup>Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. <sup>14</sup>Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. <sup>15</sup>The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. <sup>16</sup>The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

David tells us to fear the LORD and then goes on to teach the reader what the fear of the LORD is saying the fear of the LORD is:

- To keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit (13).
- To turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. (14).

Those who desire to live a happy and good life and live to an old age should fear the LORD, meaning they should do what is right, just and good and treat all people with decency and respect. It is people who are living in this manner who the eyes of the LORD are seeking to make up His treasured possession and whose prayer He will hear. In contrast to this those who have no fear of the LORD and live and speak evil of others, act corruptly pervert justice for their own gain and have malice in their hearts toward others will never find true contentment, mental peace and inner joy and their end is death in the darkness of the grave.

**The Angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him:** (14) the fear of the LORD dwelling within the mind and the heart is manifested outwardly in the following three ways:

1. Refusing to speak lies and deceit and hurtful words that degrade and humiliate others.
2. Refusing to act in any wicked and corrupt way.
3. Pursuing after peace and doing what is good, just and right.

The Angel of the LORD surrounds and comforts those who do all they can to live in such a manner. It is people who are living in this manner who the eyes of the LORD are seeking to make up His treasured possession and whose prayer He will hear. In contrast to this those who have no fear of the LORD and live and speak evil of others, act corruptly, pervert justice for their own gain and have malice in their hearts toward others will never find true contentment, mental peace and inner joy and their end is death in the darkness of the grave.

- For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. (2 Chron. 16:9).

Blameless in this context does not mean without sin, only one man has ever achieved that glorious state and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. If any of us could attain to the glorious state of living sin free Christ died for no reason. Jesus did not surrender his life to the bloodstained cross of Calvary so we could attain to the perfect standard the law demands and attain to the Holiness of God, but because it is impossible for us to do so because of the corrupted fallen body of flesh we live in. The fear of God does not mean we will live free of sin, but that we will do all we can to do what is right, just and good and do all we can to pursue peace in every circumstance and treat all people with decency and respect.

## Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but God Delivers Them.

- **Psalm 34:17-22:** When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. <sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. <sup>19</sup>Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. <sup>20</sup>He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. <sup>21</sup>Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. <sup>22</sup>The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that believing in God and the Lord Jesus Christ does not guarantee a life free of affliction, troubles and the anxieties of the world. David says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers them out of them all, not one of their bones is broken." Certainly, God not only heals many who come to Him and also comforts the afflicted and broken hearted with His love. But the primary focus of these verses is upon eternal life. We know this because, there are many testimonies of faithful believers who have been in serious accidents and their bones were broken and David says the LORD redeems the life of his servants and not one of them will be condemned. When David says, the LORD delivers his people out of all their troubles; he is echoing God's ultimate deliverance, "the resurrection." God is aware of the death of those who belong to him and will at the great resurrection raise them, to immortality and eternal glory and everlasting happiness where suffering will be no more. This is the ultimate deliverance of the righteous from all their afflictions and troubles.

**David's faith:** it mattered not to David what his circumstance were (good or bad) God was always the praise of His heart and God's Spirit and love was what sustained Him and what he most sought after. David's was a king who had abundant riches and wealth, a harem of the most beautiful women and was a mighty warrior, a man full of courage who faced the most horrific bloodthirsty battles and yet within was not only a humble man before God whose greatest treasure was God's love dwelling within his heart and mind, but also a man who was deeply hurt and remorseful when convicted of any sin he had committed before God. Whether David was prospering and full of joy; in despair and depression; surrounded by his enemies; lying on his bed suffering the pain of sickness or facing death he always spoke honestly to God of how he felt, and always ends his Psalms, his prayers and his petitions with praising the name of the LORD, the Most High God.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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