

Psalm 34

Title: The Lord Delivers the Righteous

Author and Date: David

Key Verses: Psalm 34:4, 7, 17, 19

Type: Thanksgiving

Outline

- A. Thanksgiving: I will bless with a song because the Lord delivers (verses 1-10).
- B. Teaching: I will teach with a sermon because the Lord delivers (verses 11-22).

Notes

Title: "A Psalm of David." See the notes on Psalm 3. "Who changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed." This incident may be the one recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-22:2 where David feigned madness before King Achish of Gath so that he would be left alone. Some commentators believe that "Abimelech" (meaning father of a king) is inaccurate, while others believe this name was a generic, dynastic title (like Pharaoh) of the kings of Gath.

Verses 1-22: This psalm is one of nine alphabetic acrostic psalms: Psalm 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145 (see the notes for Psalm 9, 10, and 25). The first word of each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*aleph, beth, gimel, daleth*, etc.). There are 22 verses just like the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. However, in this psalm two letters (the Hebrew letter *he* and *vav*) are used in one verse (verse 5) and another letter (the Hebrew letter *pe*) is repeated (in verse 16 and 22) which make for 22 verses. Psalm 34 describes the Lord as a deliverer, a savior, and a redeemer of the righteous.

Verse 5: Note that the psalmist switches abruptly from "I" to "they" in this verse. "They" are the saints who fear the Lord (verse 7 and 9) and the righteous (verse 15).

Verse 7: The "angel of the Lord" is the Lord's representative (Ex. 23:20; Josh. 5:14), and he uses his angels to deliver people (Psa. 91:11). The "angel of the Lord" is mentioned one other time in Psalms (35:5).

Verse 8: "Taste and see" means to discover; to know by personal experience (firsthand) the goodness of the Lord. We would say, "Try God for yourselves." This verse may be referenced in Hebrews 6:5 and 1 Peter 2:3.

Verse 11: The “fear of Jehovah”, respect and reverence toward God, is a common theme in the wisdom literature (Psa. 19:9; 34:11; 111:10; Prov. 1:7, 29; 2:5; etc.; Eccl. 3:14; 5:7; 12:13; etc.; Job 28:28).

Verses 12-16: These verses are quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 3:10-12 and applied to the blessings received from the righteous living of the Christian. Much of the epistle of 1 Peter deals with the suffering of Christians making this quote from Psalm 34 (a psalm about deliverance from suffering) especially meaningful. Note in verse 15 and 16 the vivid metaphors used for God: eyes, ears, and face.

Verse 18: A “broken heart” and “contrite spirit” refer to one who is humble and repentant (Psa. 51:17).

Verse 20: This verse mentions that no bones would be broken on the righteous sufferer. This verse, along with the teaching of Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, finds its messianic fulfillment in John 19:36 when Jesus was hanging on the cross.

Questions

1. What does the psalmist promise to do at all times and who will hear it (verses 1-2)?
2. What does the psalmist call upon his readers to do with him (verse 3)?
3. What happened when the psalmist sought the Lord (verse 4)?
4. What happened to those who looked to the Lord (verse 5)?
5. What happened when the poor man cried to the Lord (verse 6)?
6. What does the Lord do for those who fear him (verses 7-9)?
7. What does the Lord do for those who seek him (verse 10)?

8. Who does the psalmist want to teach and what does he want to teach them (verse 11)?
9. What does the man who wants to see good days need to do and not do (verses 12-14)?
10. Who are the eyes of the Lord toward and who is the face of the Lord against (verses 15-16)?
11. What happens when the righteous cry to the Lord (verse 17)?
12. Who is the Lord near and who does he save (verse 18)?
13. What does the Lord do for the righteous and what does he do for the wicked (verses 19-22)?

Applications for Today

1. It is good to bless, praise, magnify, and exalt the Lord “at all times” and “continually” (verses 1-3). What does the Lord give “at all times” (2 Thess. 3:16)? What are we to do always (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16). How often are we to praise God (Heb. 13:15)?
2. The Lord delivers his people from their fears and troubles (verses 4-7). What did God do with Joseph (Acts 7:10), Peter (Acts 12:11), Paul (2 Tim. 3:11; 4:17), and Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-9)? What prayer did Paul ask of others (Rom. 15:31; 2 Thess. 3:2)? Who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10)?
3. The “angel of Jehovah” delivers (verse 7). What did the angel of Jehovah do for Hagar (Gen. 16:7) and for Gideon (Judges 6:11-12)? What is one role that angels have (Heb. 1:14)?
4. The Lord is good and will not withhold any good thing from his people (verses 8-10). What did the psalmist declare in Psalm 37:25? What will not be withheld from the upright

(Psa. 84:11)? What do we learn from Matthew 6:33 about God's care? What will God supply (Phil. 4:19)? What comes down from God (Jas. 1:17)?

5. It is good to teach the next generation about proper living in the sight of God (verse 11). What did Paul tell Timothy to do (2 Tim. 2:2)? What are we to be in time (Heb. 5:12)?
6. "Good days" (good times) are not found in wicked living, but in righteous living. If we want to enjoy good, we must be good (verses 12-14). What use of Psalm 34:12-14 does Peter make in 1 Peter 3:10-12?
7. The Lord hears the prayers of the righteous and humble, but not the wicked (verses 15-18). What does Psalm 66:19 and Proverbs 28:9 teach? What did the blind man understand in John 9:31?
8. The Lord will deliver his people from their many afflictions (verses 19-20). What causes afflictions in the life of the righteous (2 Thess. 1:4; Heb. 10:33)?
9. The wicked will be condemned but the righteous will not be condemned (verses 21-22)? Who will be condemned in the judgment day (Mk. 16:16)? What causes one to be condemned (Rom. 14:23; Gal. 2:11,14; Tit. 3:11)?