

PSALMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE

Psalm 34:1-22 (NASB)

- ¹ I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.
- ³ O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
- ⁹ O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want.
- ¹⁰ The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.
- ¹¹ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- ¹² Who is the man who desires life And loves *length of days* that he may see good?
- ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.
- ¹⁴ Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are *open* to their cry.
- ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- ¹⁷ *The righteous* cry, and the LORD hears And delivers them out of all their troubles.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
- ²⁰ He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.
- ²¹ Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- ²² The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

Psalm 34 and 1 Samuel 21: Seek the Lord

This psalm was written by David near the time of his capture by the Philistines in Gath. He had killed Goliath, the giant of Gath, who had been an enemy to Israel. The battle took place in the Valley of Elah. For forty days the giant challenged Israel with cursing and threats to the living God. David accepted the challenge and with a stone slew the giant. David took the giant's sword and decapitated him. This was a victory for David, but it created problems for him.

The praise of the people for David's bravery aroused a deadly jealousy in King Saul. David was relentlessly hunted until Saul's death. Weary of running from Saul, David went to the priest Ahimelech and convinced the priest to give him and his companions shewbread to eat. David also got the sword of Goliath. At this time, he decided to escape to a place where Saul would never find him. He went to Gath to seek protection from the ruler of the Philistines. However, because of the death of Goliath, the people of Gath wanted to kill David. As soon as his identity was discovered, David was imprisoned.

Out of God's will, he used deceit to get out of trouble. He pretended that he was a mad, mentally deranged man and Achish released him and expelled him from his country.

David returned to his own country and fled to the cave of Adullam in the hill country of Judea. It was in this cave that David wrote Psalm 34. The first part of this Psalm is a song, devotional in nature (verses 1-10); part two is a sermon, doctrinal in nature (verses 11-22).

A. The song (verses 1-10)

1. David's vow of praise, "*I will bless the Lord at all times.*"
2. David's remembrance: "*I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*"
3. David's exhortation: "*Taste and see*"; put God to the test of experience. Trust, fear, seek Him, and you "*shall not lack any good thing.*"

B. The sermon (verses 11-22).

In verses 13 and 14, we read that David encouraged the people to do what was right. He spoke of God's righteousness and His hatred of sin. He told the people of God's judgment against the wicked and His redemption of the righteous.