

Psalm 34

A Messianic Psalm

David's heartfelt cry in the midst of a life-threatening situation harmonizes perfectly with Joseph's apparent lostness in Pharaoh's dungeon. As a Messianic psalm, this could also be seen as an insight into the thinking of Christ facing his crucifixion.

The superscription says: "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed."

1 Samuel 21:14 records the incident, but it doesn't concern Abimelech but rather Achish, the king of the Philistine city of Gath.

Rashi argues that Abimelech is a royal title, not a name. Both Abraham (**Genesis 20**) and Isaac (**Genesis 26**) had dealings with an "Abimelech." At the time of the Amarna tablets (mid-14th century B.C.), there was an Egyptian governor of Tyre similarly named Abimilki, who is sometimes speculated to be connected with one or more of the biblical Abimelechs.

David probably wrote this much later, after reflecting on his life, as counsel for his children (vs. 11).

David changed his "taste" (or, what he desired as sustenance). He depended on his own wits, like Jacob, instead of on God, with almost disastrous results.

The word for "behavior" in **vs. 1** is *ta`am*, which can mean both behavior and "taste."

The same word is used in **vs. 8** - "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

One theory is that the psalm is focused on David's repentance from his actions and attitude before Abimelech, when he feigned madness.

In **1 Samuel 21**, Achish's servants were reminding Achish that the Israelites had been boasting about David's exploits in battle. They had been exalting David's name. David hadn't acknowledged God's help in **1 Samuel 18**, and as a result of the people boasting about him, Saul became jealous (which led to David fleeing to Philistia). David is acknowledging that he should have boasted only in YHWH, and he is stating that he does and will do so since his repentance.

In his changing his "taste" due to fear of man, he had really suffered want -- the want of assurance of safety. David exhorts those listening to the psalm to *taste* the goodness of YHWH. Even though it seemed like David had to solve his own problem in Gath, if he had sought YHWH, he would have been satisfied in YHWH Himself, even if he had been killed by Achish.

That's why this psalm provides an interesting insight into Jesus facing his crucifixion.

Psalm 34:18-20 - "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the contrite (crushed, pulverized) in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken."

David is saying he escaped from Achish in one piece. But this verse is also applied to Jesus in **John 19:36** - "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

John combines **Psalm 34** with **Exodus 12:46** and **Numbers 9:12** to show that Jesus was the Passover Lamb sacrifice whose bones were not broken.

Psalm 34:21 - "Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate."

NET - "Evil people self-destruct; those who hate the godly are punished."

See an interesting discussion of all this at hermeneutics.stackexchange.com:
<http://buff.ly/2uatGBb>

Concerning Jesus as the Passover Lamb, see the Hadavar.org site:
<http://buff.ly/2taM20U>