

**Growing in the Fragrance of God's Beauty: Psalms 34:1-4, 7, 8**

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## Introduction

This paper is an exegesis of Psalm 34:1-4, 7, and 8 within this report writer will examine the context, content, and application Psalm34: 1-4, 7, 8. The writer search to find the original source and reasoning of the Psalms. The writer will also try to give some insight into the purpose of the Psalms. It explores the human experience in a personal and practical way. It is one hundred and fifty “songs” that starts at creation throughout patriarchal, theocratic, monarchical, exilic, and postexilic periods. The expanse of the scope of the Psalms includes topics like jubilation, war, peace, worship, praise, lament, and messianic prophecy.

The Psalms served as temple hymnbooks and devotional guide for Jewish people. The Book of Psalms were slowly collected and in the beginning unnamed. Psalms was called Sepher Tehillim, “Book of Praises” almost every Psalms contains notes of praise to God.

The Septuagint uses the Greek word *Psalmoi*, meaning “Poems Sung to musical instruments.” The Psalms has been called the psalterium (“A collection of Songs”); this word is for term Psalter. *Liber Psalmorum* is the Latin title for “Book of Psalm.” Psalm 34 is a Psalm of David while he was running from King Saul who was seeking to kill David.

- I. David declares, “I will bless the Lord,” (34:1; Eph. 5:20). This is when he changed his behavior before the priest Abimelech who drove him away.
  - A. I will bless the LORD.
  - B. I will praise the LORD.
  - C. I will magnify the LORD.
  - D. I will hide under His shelter.

## Context

Psalm 57’s Superscription has all three elements: “To the choir master; According do not destroy [technical terms for use in worship.] A Miktam of David [liturgical collection], when he fled from Saul in the cave [historical note]. (Bellinger 1990) pg. 9

Collections; The Psalter contains several collections. Much interest has centered on the Psalms on the Psalms of David. Some believe the occurrence of phrase, a psalm of David in Superscription indicates Davidic authorship, 9 but the reference of the Hebrew is less clear. The Hebrew word contains the name “David,” plus the preposition which has a broad range of meanings: belonging to. The superscription thus offer little basis for a decision about authorship. Evidence suggests that the phrase indicates the liturgical collection came from. The collection in the Psalter, Davidic collection includes: Psalm 3-41; 51-72; 138-145. 9 See, (Hengstenberg 1867), *Commentary on Psalm* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; Edinburgh: T.P.T. Clark, 1867); (Delitzsch 1902) (Kirkpatrick 1902), *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902); A. F. Kirkpatrick, ed., *the Book of Psalms* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: University Press; 1902). (Bellinger 1990) pg. 9-10. The core of the Psalter is the Davidic collections (Ps. 3-41; 51-72; 138-145), texts which most often cries out for help in the midst of crisis and which come from an individual rather than from the whole community.

The Thanksgiving Psalms are individual psalms, which psalm 34 is grouped with. Psalms 34 relate to deliverance to righteousness. Other Thanksgiving psalms urge the community to learn from history’s witness to God’s deliverance. The treatment of the thanksgiving psalms has touched upon the four major issues of psalm interpretation: type/structure, cultic settings,

shaping, and rhetoric. We have seen that the declarative, psalms of praise celebrate the life and joy which Yahweh gives, fullness of life in the present. They exuberantly express a powerful god who delivers and give thanks to that God. “O taste and see that the LORD is good! Happy is the man who takes refuge in him! (Ps. 34:8).

### Content

Psalm 34 is an individual hymn of thanksgiving of David sung on the occasion of the deliverance of his very life by God. Maybe as the ultimate word about those who are in need of God’s help should be contemplated. Readers and hearers should heed the words of the 34<sup>th</sup> Psalm. It is a song of thanksgiving for deliverance and finding hope for deliverance from many oppressive predicaments. Within the focus text Psalm 34:1-8 the psalmist first presents praise to God (Mathis).

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD (Ps. 1:2).

Common themes in the Psalter are blessing and praising God in worship. The Hebrew word “knee” and “bless comes from the same root word. The Hebrew word, as a verb, signifies to bend the knee or to bless (2 Chr. 6:13) also to pronounce or give a blessing because the person blessed kneels before a Sovereign LORD. The words “praise” and “boast” come from the same Hebrew root word, the word that transpire in the phrase “hallelujah.” So, praise will be in the mouth if the psalmist, while the psalmist greatly exists to discover its praise in the LORD. The person then gives the reason for offering songs of praise to the LORD. They will say, “I sought the LORD and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. (v4)

The poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble (v6). There are two additional subjects of the Psalter that come to mind, these verses. God delivers and God saves the psalm singer when the singer cries out to God.

These two verbs are somewhat alike in meaning, (natsal) God delivers and (Yashah) God saves, but carry to some degree contrasting variation of meaning, natsal suggests a snatching away ‘So we , may imagine God pulling the psalmist out of the midst of fears and carrying him to a safer place. Yashah means to help, advocating that God enters the troubled situation of the psalmist and cares for the psalmist in the midst of trouble, notice the word “soul” is spoken in verse 6, as in verse 2. The inward being (soul) of the psalmist cried out to God for help and was cared for (verse 6) and finds its boast in the LORD.

In the end, the singer urges hearers and readers to join in praise of God’s deliverance with words of friendly reproof.

O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together (v.3). Look to him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed (v.5). The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. O taste and see that the LORD is good, happy are those who take refuge in Him (vv. 7 and 8). The words of verse 8 are familiar words, but what does it mean to “taste and see” the goodness of the Lord? The word “taste” means to try something by experiencing it. The Psalm singer advices people to try God’s goodness for themselves, as one would taste new food. Tasting is one of our five senses seeing is also. We can see God’s goodness powerfully displayed in the created universe. Remember that in Genesis 1, God spoke each creative act into being and saw it was good. At the end of the creation story, God saw that

His creation was “very good.” Psalm 34 encourages us to experience God for ourselves, open our eyes and see the goodness.

### **Application**

The passage from Psalm 34:1-4, 7, 8 is a thanksgiving Psalms. Our treatment of this Psalm has touched upon the four major issues of Psalm interpretation; the type structure, cultic setting, shaping and rhetoric.

We have seen that the declarative Psalms of praise celebrate the life and joy which Yahweh gives fullness of life in the present. They exuberantly describe a powerful God who delivers and give thanks to that God.

Paul O. Myhre said, “Music has a way of provoking memories of events in the past long forgotten. Psalm 34 functions something like that for me. (Myhre 2012). Every poetic line is like a line from a song I once knew. “This poor soul cried, and was heard of the LORD.” How many times could I say the same? The line itself transports me back to those flood and drought moments where life seemed out of control or too much control. My poor soul cried, said he, and the LORD heard my cry, God delivered me (Myhre 2012).

The Psalm 34 poetry set to songs serves the people of God in our praise and worship to Him. Every human life is composed of distinct parts or individual of experiences that build over time. We are walking receptacles of all that has happened to us. Each new experience fits into the matrix to find it’s place among the rest.

Psalm 34 is a testimony that fits in the narrative of scripture. The structure of the first eight verses of this Psalm does two things; It establishes the author’s intentions to give a testimony (vv1-3) and it provides details of David’s experience that prompted the testimony.

Wisdom is searching for specific ways ensure personal well being in everyday life. Wisdom should be used to make sense of extreme adversity and vexing anomalies, and to understand the knowledge to pass on to future generations. Biblical wisdom with centers around Old Testament patriarchs such as David was silent until the second century BCE. Within the Hebrew Bible, which is the subject of this book, wisdom expresses itself in different forms, advice and often from different forms, advice, and often from parents to children. (Crenshaw 2010)

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