

SBC – Oct. 2, 2022

Psalm 34 (NKJV) - “The Messiah’s Unbroken Bones”

Psalm 34 is another Psalm of David – who wrote at least half of the Psalms. In Acts 2:30 Peter said David was a “prophet” and as a prophet his number one prophetic topic was the Messiah. Dotted throughout his writings are prophetic Messianic nuggets. And the reason we know this is because the N.T. plainly applies what David said to Jesus as the Messiah.

Slide # 1

Outline of Psalm 34

34:1-10 – Celebration of God’s Providential Care

34:11-16 – Call to Experience the Goodness of God

34:17-22 – God’s Providential Care of the Righteous

David gave a title to this Psalm which says...

A Psalm of David When He Pretended Madness Before Abimelech, Who Drove Him Away, and He Departed.

Thus, we know the historical occasion for this Psalm is when God providentially delivered David from the Philistine king of Gath as found in 1 Sam. 21:10-15. It was a time of great weakness in David but a time when in spite of himself God delivered him.

David was on the run from king Saul, and he sought refuge with king Achish of Gath. Abimelech is thought to be a kingly title and not a name proper.

But while there David overheard that they were telling king Achish about David’s reputation for killing tens of thousands and immediately David was terrified. Fearing this Philistine king might kill him he pretended to be insane by making marks on the doors of the gate and letting his saliva drool down over his beard. The king, evidently in keeping with the thinking that having an insane person around was a bad omen, dismissed David not wanting him around. David then escaped to the cave of Adullam.

It is because of this historical occasion that David wrote Psalm 34. When people use the word “insane” it often has the connotation of something that causes wonder and amazement. Psalm 34 has an “insane” theme in that David in terror disguised himself as a lunatic and in the process experienced God’s providential intervention.

This was not a miracle (which is the supernatural suspension or the by passing of the normal laws of nature) but rather God's providential working in which God works within the context of the normal laws of nature to in perfect sync bring about His plan. This was to the astonishment of David that led to this Psalm of praise and thanksgiving.

And in the process of writing this Psalm the Holy Spirit applied some of the words of David prophetically to the Lord Jesus Christ as further revealed in the NT Scriptures.

Let's work our way through this Psalm – getting the background – as it builds to Messianic prophecy as couched in verses 19-20.

Psalm 34:1–22 (NKJV)

1 I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad.

David is giving all the glory to God for his deliverance. Clearly, he was so weak that all he could do was to pretend to be crazy. And yet God uses "crazy" things. When we are weak, He is strong (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). In our great failures, in our great weakness God ever remains strong (cf. Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2 Cor. 10:17).

3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

This is a standout verse as David invites all God's people to join in with him in magnifying and exalting the name of the LORD. And then David specifically tells us why his heart is so filled with praise....

4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles.

In pretending insanity David at the same time was in his heart seeking God for help and deliverance. There are formal prayer meetings and then there are desperate times in life when you are praying in your heart in the midst of all the craziness and desperation. That was David on this occasion.

7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

“The angel of the LORD” was a manifestation of YHWH in the OT prior to the incarnation Christ. After the incarnation we NEVER again see the revealing of “THE angel of the LORD” but only the manifestation of “AN angel of the Lord. This leads many to believe that “the angel of the LORD” in the OT was actually the preincarnate Christ appearing in angel form (cf. Gen. 16:7-13; Ex. 3:2-5; Josh, 5; Judg. 2:1-4; 6; 13, 1 Chron. 21:16-18; etc.).

David was very aware of God’s surrounding presence on behalf of all those who fear (or reverence) Him and the fact that He is the one responsible for deliverance.

David could have said, “Wow, that was close. I really got lucky that time. Good thing I am a great actor.” But NO, he knew that it was actually God’s providence that brought about his deliverance.

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

Note these interwoven terms...

Slide # 2

Trusts – v. 8

Fear – v. 9

Seek – v. 10

These concepts are interrelated and speak of one who is properly looking to God for help and deliverance. To trust is to depend upon; to fear is to reverence, and to seek is to look to God for help. This is a combination that defines a God-honoring faith. This was the heart disposition of David and God responded by providentially delivering him.

In verses 11-16 we have David challenging God’s children to walk in the fear/reverence of the Lord for that is the way that is consistent with those who are truly God’s children. It is the path of blessing.

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 many 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 on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.

16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Peter in exhorting the saints to live in such a way that God can bless quotes from Psalm 34:12-15 as found in 1 Peter 3:10-12.

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1 Peter 3:10–12 (NKJV)

10 For *“He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.*

11 *Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.*

12 *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”*

Clearly Peter believed that the principles David laid out for a blessed life are applicable to New Testament Christians as well. And there is a strong connection between how one lives and answered prayer.

Note it carefully: ***“The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.”*** (Ps. 34:15). God honors the prayers of the righteous. As James 5:16 says, ***“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”***

Slide # 4

v. 15 – “the righteous”

v. 17 – “the righteous”

v. 19 – “the righteous”

v. 21 – “the righteous”

As believers we have no righteousness of our own but when we believe on Christ God imputes (puts to our account) the righteousness of Christ (cf. Rom. 4:11, 23-25). This is positional righteousness which is the position of every believer.

Slide # 5

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

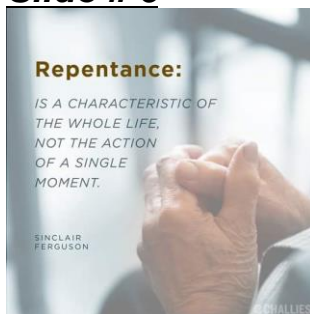
Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)

9 and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is **through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;**

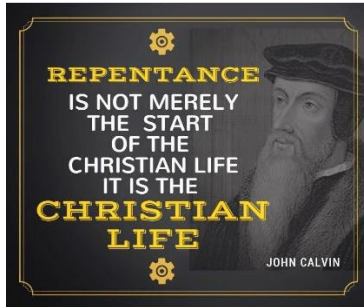
But David has in view here is practical righteousness. Those who are right in their walk with God as seen in verses 12-14 – it is those that the LORD's eyes are upon to whom His ears are open when they cry.

Of course, those that have positional righteousness will show that in some level of practical righteousness as the fruit of their position. Characteristic of true believers is that they are repenters as a way of life. In Russia that is what they call believers – they are “Repenters”. As an overall defining trait this is what defines the people of God. This is the spirit in which David speaks as seen in verses 15 and 16 where David contrasts the righteous who live accordingly with those who do evil and are cut off from the earth (cf. Heb. 12:14).

Slide # 6



Slide # 7



Slide # 8

The First of Martin Luther's 95 theses

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying, "Repent ye, etc.," intended that the whole life of his believers on earth should be a constant penance. (emphasis mine)

Slide # 9



17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

God works through prayer of the righteous. God allows challenging times to come so that His people might cry out to Him and when they do, He hears and delivers. God is constantly delivering His people in one form or another.

Those of a broken and contrite heart are those humbled before God. A contrite heart is one humbled in repentance before God. This is characteristic of the righteous who are God's people. Again, they are repenters.

“A contrite heart is one in which the natural pride and self-sufficiency have been completely humbled by the consciousness of guilt.”

- *International Bible Encyclopedia*

God honors those who are humbled in repentance and dependence upon Him with an ongoing spirit of humility.

Slide # 10

Psalm 51:17 (NKJV)

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, **A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.**

Isaiah 57:15 (NKJV)

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who **has a contrite and humble spirit,** To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Note what David says here: MANY are the afflictions of the righteous. Nowhere does David suggest that the life of faith and obedience will be exempt from afflictions, trials, and trouble. In fact, here he says the exact opposite: Many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Slide # 11

- v. 4 ... delivered me from all my fears.
- v. 6 ...saved him out of all this troubles.
- v. 17...delivers them out of all their troubles.
- v. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Certainly, this was true of our Lord – the most righteous. Isaiah 53:3 says He is “A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”. If that was true of our Lord, why should we expect any different? We are not exempt from “many afflictions” but also note the end of the verse, “But the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

If we only take the short view it might seem like that is not true, but if you take the long view in the end God does deliver the righteous out of all His troubles. Sometimes He does this by way of death. He may do it in this life, but He may do it by means of death. In the case of our Lord His life culminated in the ultimate trouble of the cross, but then He was delivered to glory. And so, it is with us. We can expect many trials and afflictions, but in the end our story is one of deliverance.

Slide # 12

Acts 14:22 (NKJV)

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

But at least all our troubles are confined to this life. What is more, we do not have to bear them alone, for our eternal Friend is by our side.”

– *William MacDonald*

But do note the righteous cry and God delivers them out of all their troubles as seen in verse 17. And in that process we have the promise of God being close to His people who are repenters in verse 18.

God is a God of deliverance for His people who with a broken heart cry to Him. He delivers in one way or another – in one time or another, but the end of the story for us is always one of deliverance.

Slide # 13

2 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 who **delivered** us from so great a death, and does **deliver** us; in whom we trust that He will still **deliver** us,

As I say David is speaking as one of the righteous who experience God’s deliverance and in doing so he ultimately prophetically depicts the most righteous – the perfectly righteous One as found in the person of Christ. And he goes on to say...

20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

Tucked in here we have an amazing Messianic prophecy. We know this because the NT plainly tells us so in John 19. It is truly amazing that Jesus did not suffer any broken bones in the process of being beaten and then crucified.

The Roman governor Pilate had Jesus scourged. Scourging was so violent that many times people died as a direct result of it.

Two Roman soldiers were stationed on either side of the victim. The victim's back muscles were stretched tight above his head. The soldiers took turns whipping the victim from the side, striking the back, waist area, and legs with force. The whipping instrument (called a "flagellum") consisted of a handle from which extended several leather thongs. Small pieces of bones, iron balls, or sharp shards were affixed to the end of the leather thongs.

The soldiers would strike, tear into the flesh, twist, and peel back the skin, exposing the skeletal muscle. It was not uncommon to mis-strike the victim and have the leather thongs wrap around the face and eye areas. We are not told how many stripes Jesus endured, but it sufficiently weakened him to the point that he could not carry his own cross. – ***Pastor Chip Thornton***

Scourging was so brutal that Roman citizens were exempt. Only foreigners and slaves could undergo this type of abuse. Jesus was beaten so badly that Isaiah says you could hardly recognize Him as human.

Slide # 14

Isaiah 50:6 (NKJV)

6 I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

Slide # 15

Isaiah 52:14 (ESV)

14 As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

In other words, he would be so disfigured from the sufferings inflicted on him that his face and body would not even appear to be human.

- ***John MacArthur***

Incredibly Jesus suffered no broken bones in this brutal process! But it had to be this way.

Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover Lamb typology and this Lamb was not to have any broken bones as instructed by the LORD to Moses 1500 years before the time of Christ.

Slide # 16

Exodus 12:46 (NKJV)

46 In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, **nor shall you break one of its bones.**

1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed **Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**

We are not left to wonder if Psalm 34:20 is Messianic prophecy because John specifically tells us how the prophecy of no broken bones was fulfilled in the person of Christ.

Slide # 17

John 19:32–37 (NKJV)

32 Then the soldiers came and **broke the legs of the first and of the other** who was crucified with Him.

33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ***“Not one of His bones shall be broken.”***

37 And again another Scripture says, ***“They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”***

The precision fulfillment here is amazing. They broke the legs of the other two but since Jesus was already dead, they did not bother to break His legs. And this happened the way it did to fulfill the Messianic prophetic nugget found right here in Psalm 34:20.

Note the prophetic flow...

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Exodus 12:46 – 1500 years before Christ

Psalms 34:20 – 1000 years before Christ

John 19:33-37 – FULFILLED in Christ

Furthermore, even though they didn't break any bones they did pierce His side with a spear so that the prophecy of Zech. 12:10 would be fulfilled.

Slide # 19

Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me **whom they pierced**. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

How amazing! The Messiah would not have any broken bones (predicted 1500 years and 1000 years in advance) but He would be pierced as prophesied 500 years in advance. These details were fulfilled with absolute accuracy in perfect fulfillment of prophecy.

From time to time I have been asked since you say at communion that we are remembering the broken body of Christ, how does that square with Ps. 34:20 which says not one of His bones is broken.

Well, to start with when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, He broke the bread and then said, “***Take eat; this is my body***” (Mt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24). Clearly the broken bread represents His body. He did not give it to them whole or unbroken, but first broke it as recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and then in that broken form He said to eat this bread as representing His body. It was not Christ's body in unmarred form that was offered for us, but it was severely abused allowing His blood to be shed for our sins.

Now technically, it is true that the word “broken” is not found in the older manuscripts in 1 Cor. 11:25 where the KJV says, “*Take, eat; this is My body which is **broken** for you; do this in remembrance of Me.*” It is therefore argued that to use the word “broken” here is not accurate. I agree it could be confusing, and we must understand what we are saying with the right nuance. We definitely want to get the right sense which is perhaps why the older manuscripts did not carry through on the word “broken”.

However, note that the Greek word translated as “broken” in the KJV in 1 Corinthians 11:24 is a form of the very same word translated as “broke” (Gk. klao) earlier in the verse and is also used in 1 Corinthians 10:16 where it says, “The bread which we **break**, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”.

In John 19:36 when it quotes “**Not one of His bones shall be broken**” a different Greek word is used (Gk “suntribomai,”) for broken which is the idea of being completely or wholly broken.

“... for though a bone of him was not broken... his skin and flesh were torn and broken by blows with rods and fists, by whippings and scourgings, by thorns, nails, and spear...” - John Gill (Baptist Pastor – 1697-1771)

It is important that we get the nuance right. Even though not a BONE of Christ was broken, understood with the right nuance, His body was “broken” for us as signified in the breaking of the bread that we partake of in communion.

So note the nuance. Clearly Christ broke the bread symbolizing His body that was abused on the cross and then gave it to the disciples to eat. His body most certainly was broken in the sense of torn, pierced, and mutilated. But here is the KEY thing – while His body was broken (in the sense of torn and lacerated) yet His BONES were not! Yes, understood with the proper nuance I think we can say His body was “broken” but NOT His bones!

And note it was because of God’s sovereign providential care: “**He guards all his bones**” and because of this not one of them is broken. God was sovereignly superintending every detail of Christ’s life and death. What an amazing story – what an amazing God behind the story. Truly HISTORY is His Story!

David then ended Psalm 34 in this way...

21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

David ends on stressing TRUST in the LORD. NONE of those who trust in Him will be condemned. Or as Romans 8:1 says...

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...

Psalm 34 is a wonderful Psalm emphasizing God's sovereign providential care of His own. Tucked in here is a Messianic prophecy that God would providentially guard all the bones of the righteous Messiah so that not a single bone of His would be broken.

By way of application, we see that even in death God protects the bodies of His saints. Nothing happens to us except that which is sovereignly permitted and ordained by God. Even the very details related of our death are ultimately orchestrated by the providential hand of God.

Psalm 116:15 (NKJV)

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints.

We can trust and celebrate God's providential care over every aspect of our life even as David did. Let us say with David...

Psalm 34:3 (NKJV)

3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

Footnote:

[1\]](#) Some people, particularly defenders of the King James textual tradition, argue that the Greek word for "broken" in the textual variant in 1 Corinthians 11:24 [κλάω] is different from the Greek words for "broken" in John 19:33 [κατέαξαν] and John 19:36 [συντρίβω] (also used in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12). This is true, but words have a semantic range and can overlap in meaning. It is at least theologically problematic to say Jesus' body was "broken." Moreover, the Greek word for "broken" in 1 Corinthians 11:24 [κλάω] is used once in the LXX and 14 times in the NT—and every time it describes the breaking of bread. This further suggests a scribal error in the variant "broken" in 1 Corinthians 11:24. – Zachary Garris

Footnote:

It is important that we realize the different words used in the Greek for the English word, “broken.” In John 19:36, the Greek word for “broken” [in the phrase, “Not one of His bones shall be broken”] is “suntribomai,” meaning “to be wholly broken.” Also, when we read that the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified victims (in verses 32 and 33), the word is “katagnumi,” meaning “to break down.”

However, the word for Christ’s “broken” body, in 1 Corinthians 11:24, is “klaomai,” which is derived from the word “klao,” (just meaning, “to break”). “Klao” is also used in 1 Corinthians 11:24 (“He broke” the bread), and in 1 Corinthians 10:16 (“The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”).

The use of different Greek words shows that there is no contradiction. Even though Christ’s bones were not wholly broken or broken down, His body was clearly “broken” for us, which is signified by the “broken” Passover bread. – An Unknown Commentator