

Psalm 34: Look to God and be radiant



Psalm 34 (33) (Mode 2. 5....31 / 4.....32)

Recalling how God responded to his cry of distress, the psalmist is encouraging others to follow his example by placing their trust in Yahweh who is 'near to those whose hearts are broken and saves those whose spirit is crushed'(verse 18). It is important also that they 'stop doing evil and do good'(verse 14).

[כ] I will bless the Lord at all times,
praise continually on my lips.

[ב] With thanksgiving I glory in the Lord;
let the lowly hear and be glad.

[א] Join with me in singing the greatness of the Lord,
together let us praise our God

[ד] I sought and the Lord replied,,
setting me free from all my fears.

[ה] Look to the Lord, and be radiant,
no need to hide your face in shame.

‘His eyes were like a flame of fire ... his face like the sun shining with full force’(Revelation 1:14,16).

‘All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’(2Corinthians 3:18, 4:6).

Exodus 34:29-35

‘Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them.

Exodus 34:29-35

‘Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.’

2Corinthians 3:7-18

‘Now if the ministry of death, chiselled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses’ face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

2Corinthians 3:7-18

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

2Corinthians 3:7-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.'

The letter ‘waw’[ו] is missing here.

[ו] This poor person cried, and the Lord heard me,
and saved me from every danger.

[ו] The angel of God encamps
around those who revere the Lord.

‘The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them’(Exodus 14:19).

[٧] O taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed are you who take refuge in God.

‘Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation – if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good’(1Peter 2:2-3).

‘It is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit.’

(Hebrews 6:4)

{'}] Live in awe you holy ones of the Lord,
You will want for nothing.

‘You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation’(Exodus 19:6).

‘You shall not profane my holy name, that I may be acknowledged as holy among the people of Israel: I am the Lord; I make you holy, I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord.’

(Leviticus 22:32-33)

‘I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I will walk among you. I will be your God, and you shall be my people’(Leviticus 26:11-12).

k^ebirim (not k^epirim: young lions)

[ד] The rich and powerful suffer want and go hungry.

Those who seek the Lord want for nothing.

[ב] Come, children, listen to me;

I will teach you to cherish the Lord.

‘Assemble the people – men, women, and children, as well as the aliens residing in your towns – so that they may hear and learn to fear YHWH your God and to observe diligently all the words of this law, and so that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear YHWH your God, as long as you live in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess’(Deuteronomy 31:12-13).

[מ] Are you one who desires life,
and time to enjoy success?

[נ] Well, then, keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.

[ד] Finish with evil. Learn to do good.
Seek peace, and pursue it.

[ע] The eyes of the Lord are on the just,
to attend to their cry for help.

[פ] The face of the Lord confronts those who do evil,
to erase all memory of them from the earth.

Peter quotes these verses (leaving out the final line) after writing:

‘Have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing’(1Peter 3:8-9).

[פ] Cry out for help. The Lord hears,
and rescues from every danger.

[ק] The Lord is near to those whose hearts are broken,
to help those whose spirits are crushed.

‘The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise’ (Psalm 51:17).

[ר] Many are the afflictions of the just,
but the Lord rescues from them all.

[ψ] The Lord keeps guard over all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.

The people experience suffering, but their ‘bones’ will not be broken. Just as bones survive death, so the nation will continue on.

This truth was symbolically represented in the Passover ceremony in which no bone of the lamb was broken: ‘you shall not break any of its bones’(Exodus 12:46).

John draws attention to this as he depicts Jesus on the cross: ‘These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled: None of his bones shall be broken’(John 19:36).

[ת] Evil brings death to the wicked.

Those who hate the just will be condemned.

The Lord redeems the lives of his servants.

Take refuge in the Lord. You will not be rejected.