

THE REWARDS FOR PLEASING GOD

PSA. 34: 15-22

INTRO: In coming to any passage of Scripture it is of primary importance that we determine at the outset the person or persons to whom the passage is addressed. Only then can we interpret properly, and apply.

It is very clear that our passage is addressed to the people of God. Cf. "saints" in v. 9, and sons, or "children" in v. 11. The promises of blessing are for "the righteous" (vv. 15, 19, 21, but not v. 17 in Heb.).

But a closer examination will show that these are not blanket promises for all believers, irrespective of the way they live.

It is addressed to believers who desire v. 12 and who meet the conditions of vv. 13, 14.

In other words, THE PASSAGE IS ADDRESSED TO THOSE BELIEVERS WHOSE DESIRE IT IS TO PLEASE GOD!

REMEMBER THAT | EVIL IS THAT WHICH DISPLEASES GOD.
| GOOD " " " " PLEASURES HIM.

I. THE PROBLEM (v. 19a). "many" = multiplied, manifold, problems.

"Good" does not mean an absence of "afflictions." To please God does not mean that we are delivered from problems.

This is often confusing to the child of God - especially when we learn that "afflictions" are experiences which seem designed to ~~break us in pieces~~ to wear us down until we are worthless - TO BREAK US IN PIECES.

In seeking for the reason behind this, let us look at

II. THE PURPOSE (v. 18a). Cf. also "the humble" in v. 2b where it means that a person has become "humble" or meek as a result of humbling experiences, "afflictions."

David found that God was dealing with the PRIDE that was in his heart - that is in every believer's heart.

What does God want?

Not only outward obedience, but inward brokenness: "a broken heart... a contrite spirit" (v. 18).

A "broken" person is not only broken in pieces, but discouraged.

On one occasion sin brought David to this place (Psa. 51:17).

But sin is not the problem here. SAUL was his problem.

"Contrite" = crushed into small pieces.

Oh, how God hates the pride of our hearts, and will go to any lengths to deal with it.

I think of what Paul had to go through to say, "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18a).

Cf. Jer. 17:9.

III. THE PROMISES - or the rewards.

A. HIS PRESENCE: "The Lord is nigh" -

REWARD #1 The Heb. word conveys the idea of touching. He is close enough so that we can touch Him, and He can touch us.

Cf. Heb. 13:5, 6. How often this has been a comfort.

Cf. Mary Magdalene in John 20:17.
(The RSV, "Do not hold me.")

Also the woman with the issue of blood who "touched the hem of His garment" (Mt. 10:20, 21).

Cf. the Lord with the child - Mark 10:13, 16.

B. HIS PERCEPTION. Two things are emphasized:

REWARD #2

1. His eyes (v. 15a; cf. Psa. 33:18).

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout..." (2 Chron. 16:9).

This speaks of His awareness, His knowledge, yes, His all-knowledge (omniscience).

"Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Mt. 6:8b).

2. His ears (v. 15b; cf. vv. 4, 6, 17).

Cf. Psa. 66:18, "If I regard..." also Jer. 59:1, 2.

Cf. Psa. 18:6.

He is attentive to the cry of the righteous. This is a cry for help, with the Lord as the only hope.

REWARD #3

C. HIS POWER. What can we expect Jehovah to do in times of testing when we have been seeking to please Him - or when we are brought to that place, that we want to please Him?

1. He keeps (v. 20).

This was originally stated in connection with the pasover lamb (Ex. 12:46).

It was also stated of Christ (Jn. 19:36). What does it mean?

It is "a pictorial exemplification of the thought that God does not suffer the righteous to come to the extremity, that He does not suffer him to be severed from His almighty protecting love, nor to become the sport of the oppressors" (Dolitzsch, I, 413).

2. He delivers.

In this ~~chapter~~ David uses three different words - one of them 2x.

cf. v. 17 - "delivereth"

" v. 18 - "saveth"

" v. 19 - "delivereth"

" v. 22 - "redeemeth"

"Delivereth" in vv. 17, 19 are the same, having been used previously in v. 4.

"Saveth" was used before in v. 6.

"Redeemeth" appears only here in this Psalm.

NOTE their meanings in this order

a. "Redeemeth" ^(v. 22) - Jehovah cuts us loose from our troubles, as a servant is cut loose from bondage and slavery. Cf. Ex. 21:8.

b. "Delivereth" (vv. 17, 19). He snatches away the trouble and prevents its return.

c. "Javelin" (v. 18). He brings us out into a large place.

"So the Hebrews broad space, wide room, is the emblem of liberty, deliverance from dangers and straits... As on the other hand narrowness of space, straits, is put for difficulty, distress, danger (Leremius, p. 435).
Cf. Psa. 18:14.

So, He cuts us loose, snatches the trouble away, and brings us out!
And note: "out of all their troubles" (vv. 4, 6, 7, 19).

Concl: no wonder David starts Psa 34 as he does (vv. 1-3)! And then adds vv. 8, 9, 11!

But what about the person who loves life, but does not want to please the Lord? (Thinking esp. of ^{unbelievers})
note vv. 16, 21 in closing.

They will be cut off, forgotten, and not only held guilty, but punished in line with their guilt?

The believer, on the other hand, who will see that he must please God, is promised "no fear, no lack, no guilt" (Lange, Vol. 5, p. 238).

WHAT A WONDERFUL GOD JEHOVAH IS!