

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Thirty-Four: God's 'Unwise-Decision-By-Head-Of-Household-Under-Stress' Coverage (Psalm 34:1-22)

I. Introduction

- A. God places upon Christian heads of households the responsibility of making the income to feed and house and clothe the rest of the family. For them to do otherwise is to fail in their testimony, 1 Timothy 5:8!
- B. However, **unless** a head-of-household is **perfect** in wisdom, **perfect** in understanding, **perfect** in every decision he makes and **NEVER, EVER sins**, he is bound to make a mistake while facing duress that **costs** him and negatively affects his dependents!
- C. God is not ignorant of the human weaknesses in heads of households who face duress, and God has an "Unwise-Decision-By-Head-Of-Household-Under-Duress" Insurance Coverage for heads of households. David explains this coverage and how to keep the premiums up to maintain it as follows:

II. God's "Unwise-Decision-By-Head-Of-Household-Under-Stress" Coverage, Psalm 34:1-22.

- A. This psalm was written about an event where David did a very risky, self-help move to save his life:
 1. David faced the pressure of having to flee Saul's designs to kill him, 1 Samuel 20:1-21:10a.
 2. However, in fleeing Saul, David went into Philistine territory, the land of Israel's enemies, 1 S. 21:10b.
 3. While there, the servants of Achish, the Philistine ruler, advised him that David might be a problem as they recalled the women singing David's praises after his defeat of Goliath, a Philistine, 1 Sam. 21:11.
 4. Fearing what might happen in this pinch, David **pretended** to be **insane**, a **deception** until Achish drove David from his presence, ending the crisis, 1 Sam. 21:12-22:1 with introduction notes of Ps. 34.
- B. Following this event, David noted God's hand in controlling Achish to give David protection, and he drew conclusions on God's "Unwise-Decision-By-Head-Of-Household-Under Stress" Coverage as follows:
 1. We know that David meant this psalm mainly for adult males who are responsible for their livelihoods:
 - a. David gave his admonition to adult males as he addressed them with the word, **geber**, the title for adult male warriors responsible as heads of households in v. 8b.
 - b. The context also refers to his life being salvaged (introduction notes to the 34th Psalm) and to life's provisions being supplied, Ps. 34:10 and the context of 1 Sam. 21:8-9.
 2. Then David opens this psalm with a praise for **God's** involvement in saving his life in this event, 34:1-6.
 3. To **explain** God's involvement, David instructs his hearers in the psalm as follows, Ps. 34:6-22:
 - a. Because David **feared** (or, **respected** in today's concept) Jahweh, the Angel of the Lord whom we know to be the preincarnate Jesus Christ (cf. Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, p. 44-54), He encamped as a protecting army around about David while he was in the recent crisis, Ps. 34:7. This meant that **Christ** protected David in Saul's realm **and** in the Philistine territory under Achish even though David had foolishly, faithlessly made the decision to **fake** his insanity before Achish!
 - b. Accordingly, David challenged his hearers to **experience** (meaning of "taste") the **gracious** blessings of God on heads of households who like him make foolhardy decisions under stress because they, like him, **respect** the Lord, Ps. 34:8. Though powerful, kingly "breadwinners" like **lions** may even suffer hunger, those who **respect** the Lord will not have such livelihood shortages, Psalm 34:9-10.
 - c. So important is **respecting** the Lord, the **PREMIUM** for such insurance, that David explains what is meant by such respect, Ps. 34:11-12. His instruction is as follows: (a) Respecting God means avoiding the evil and lying use of one's speech, Ps. 34:13. (b) It means seeking and pursuing peace instead of conflict in relationships, v. 14b. (c) It means living righteously in a general sense, v. 14a.
 - d. God thus notes these qualities as signals of real respect for Him, and helps in grace heads of households when they are pressed against the wall and stressed out, Ps. 34:15-22!

Lesson: A head of household can expect God graciously to "cover" for his foolish or unwise decisions made under duress if his "premiums" are paid up, and those are RESPECTING GOD as measured by (a) avoiding the sinful use of one's speech, (b) seeking to avoid relationship conflicts and pursuing peace instead and (c) living uprightly in general. God's coverage for a stressed householder's mistakes is GREAT and WHOLESOME, even when he under enormous stress in his livelihood endeavors!