

**Eternal Lessons from the Great Escape**  
**Psalm 34**  
**Superscript**

<p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">לְדָוִד בְּשִׁנוֹתָו אֶת־טָעְמוֹ          לִפְנֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּגְרָשְׁהוּ וַיֵּלֶךְ :</p>	<p>By David, when <b>he changed his behavior</b> before Abimelech, and he drove him out, and he left.</p>
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And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said to him,

“Is not this David the king of the land?  
 Did they not sing to one another of him in dances,  
 ‘Saul has struck down his thousands,  
 and David his ten thousands’?”

And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So **he changed his behavior** (וַיִּשְׁנֵו אֶת־טָעְמוֹ) before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard.

Then Achish said to his servants,

“Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?”

David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam.

1 Sam 21:10-22:1a

## Acrostic Wisdom Psalm

אֵלֶּף = aleph = “learn, teach,”

1. 22 verses of Hebrew alphabet = completeness
2. Center is v. 11 – “I will teach you” on the horizontal axis
3. Last letter is a פ – creates אֵלֶּף on the vertical axis

In Psalm 33:18 David wrote, “Behold, the eye of I AM is directed toward them that fear him,” and in 34:16 we hear, “the eyes of I AM are directed towards the righteous.” David, being pressed by Saul, fled into the territory of the Philistines where he was recognised as the one who killed Goliath. He is seized and brought before Achish, the king. Psalm 56 documents David’s prayer for deliverance. David’s life is spared by his Academy Award performance playing the part of a madman. The king is deceived and berates his court for adding to the population of madmen in Gath. David is driven away and flees to the the cave of Adullam in the wilderness of Judah. In Psalm 34 David pays his vows (Ps 56:12) with a sacrifice of praise. David is so appreciative for his narrow escape, he turns into a sage, imparting life-changing wisdom to the next generation in highly structured acrostic centered around the theme of “teaching/learning.”

<p>1 לְדָוִד בְּשִׁנוֹתָיו אֶת־טָעְמוֹ לִפְנֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּגְרָשֶׁהוּ וַיֵּלֶךְ :</p> <p>2 אֲבָרְכָה אֶת־יְהוָה בְּכָל־עֵת תְּמִיד תִּהְיֶה לְפִי :</p> <p>3 בִּיהוָה תִּתְהַלֵּל נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנָוִים וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ :</p> <p>4 וַדַּלּוֹ לִיהוָה אֲתִי וַנְרוֹמְמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו :</p> <p>5 דִּרְשָׁתִי אֶת־יְהוָה וַעֲנֵנִי וּמִכָּל־מְגֻרֹתַי הִצִּילָנִי :</p> <p>6 הַבִּישׁוּ אֵלָיו וַנִּהְרֹו וּפְנֵיהֶם אֶל־יַחֲפָרוּ :</p> <p>7 זֶה עָנִי קָרָא וַיִּהְיֶה שָׁמֵעַ וּמִכָּל־צָרוֹתָיו הוֹשִׁיעָו :</p> <p>8 הֲנֵה מִלְאֲכֵי־יְהוָה סָבִיב לִירְאָיו וַיִּחַלְצֵם :</p>	<p>By David, when he altered his demeanor before Abimelech, and he drove him out, and he left.</p> <p>1 I will bless I AM at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.</p> <p>2 In I AM my soul makes its boast; let the humble hear and rejoice.</p> <p>3 Oh, magnify I AM with me, and let us exalt his name together!</p> <p>4 I sought I AM, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.</p> <p>5 Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.</p> <p>6 This poor man cried, and I AM heard [him] and saved him out of all his troubles.</p> <p>7 The angel of I AM encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.</p>	<p><b>Superscript (1 Sam 21:10-22:1a)</b></p> <p><b>I. Call to Praise (1-3)</b></p> <p><b>A. Commitment to ceaseless praise</b> “bless” = (<i>barak</i>) to acknowledge I AM as the giver of life, which allows one to flourish &amp; subdue evil “at all times” – even in Abimelek’s clutches</p> <p><b>B. Praise resonates and awakens the humble</b> “humble” (עָנִי <i>‘ānāw</i>) – humble, needy, afflicted, poor</p> <p><b>C. Praise resounds throughout the congregation</b> “together” implies that God’s faithfulness to the king impacts the entire nation</p> <p><b>II. David’s Thanksgiving and Praise (4-7)</b></p> <p><b>A Thanksgiving: Personal testimony</b> note: w/o the psalm we would have never known that David’s initiative to act like a madman was divinely inspired through prayer</p> <p><b>B Praise: Universal application</b> “radiant” נָהַר (<i>nāhar</i>) be radiant, shine, beam (Isa 60:5) “the gracious countenance of God is reflected on their faces” (K&amp;D)</p> <p><b>A’ Thanksgiving: Personal testimony</b> “poor” (עָנִי <i>‘ānāw</i>) – humble, needy, afflicted, poor</p> <p><b>B’ Praise: Universal application</b> “angel of I AM encamps” – David evokes the memory of Jacob’s deliverance from Esau (Gen 32:2) and Hagar’s deliverance (Gen 16:11), Elisha’s servant (2 Kgs 6:16).</p>
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<p>9 טַעֲמוּ וּרְאוּ כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה  אֲשֶׁר־יִתְחַבֵּר יִתְחַבֵּר בּוֹ :  10 וְרְאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה קִדְשׁוֹ  כִּי־אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו :  11 בְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרַעֲבוּ  וְדֹרְשֵׁי יְהוָה לֹא־יִחְסְרוּ כֹל־טוֹב :  12 לְכוּ־בָנִים שְׁמְעוּ־לִי  יִרְאַת יְהוָה אֲלַמְּדְכֶם :  13 מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֲפֵץ תַּיִם  אֲהַב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב :  14 נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵה מַרְעַ  וְשִׁפְתָיִךְ מִדְבַר מְרֻמָּה :  15 סוּר מִרַע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב  בִּקְשׁ שָׁלוֹם וְרַדְפָּהוּ :</p>	<p>8 Oh, taste and see that I AM is good!  Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him!  9 Oh, fear I AM, you his saints,  for those who fear him have no lack!  10 The young lions suffer want and hunger;  but those who seek I AM lack no good thing.  11 Come, O children, listen to me;  the fear of I AM <b>I will teach you.</b>  12 Who among you is there who delights in life  and loves to see many good days?  13 Keep your tongue from evil  and your lips from speaking deceit.  14 Turn away from evil and do good;  seek peace and pursue it.</p>	<p><b>III. The Experience of One Becomes an Invitation to All</b>  “One’s testimony is only valuable to others if it rests on a changeless truth about God.” (Motyer)  <b>“taste and see”</b> -&gt; “come and see” (John 1:46)  Tasting precedes seeing; for spiritual experience leads to spiritual perception  “taste = “take refuge in him”  “fear him” = “seek I AM”  “good” = “no lack” and “lack no good thing”  “young lions” – the governing metaphor</p> <p><b>IV. Lessons for Life from the Sage (11-22)</b>  <b>A. Wisdom’s invitation and appeal</b>  “I will teach you” = center words of psalm  The poet appeals to our greatest longings</p> <p><b>B. Essentials for the good life</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Negative:</b> guard your tongue from deceit (David attempting to disguise his true identity in a foreign land)</li> <li><b>Positive:</b> “Do good” = “seek peace and pursue it” (1 Sam 24, 26; Rom 12:9-16)</li> </ol>
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<p>16 עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֶל-צְדִיקִים וְאָזְנוֹ אֶל-שׁוֹעֲתָם :</p> <p>17 פְּנֵי יְהוָה בְּעֹשֵׂי רָע לְהַכְרִית מֵאֲרֶץ זְכָרָם :</p> <p>18 צָעֲקוּ וַיהוָה שָׁמַע וּמִכָּל-צָרוֹתֵם הִצִּילָם :</p> <p>19 קָרֹב יְהוָה לְנֹשְׁבְרֵי-לֵב וְאֶת-דַּכְּאֵי-רוּחַ יוֹשִׁיעַ :</p> <p>20 רַבּוֹת רָעוֹת צָדִיק וּמִכָּלֵם יִצִּילֵנוּ יְהוָה :</p> <p>21 שָׁמַר כָּל-עַצְמוֹתָיו אֶתֵּת מִהֲנֶה לֹא נִשְׁבְּרָה :</p> <p>22 תִּמְוֹתֵת רָשָׁע רָעָה וְשֹׂאֵי צָדִיק יִאָּשְׁמוּ :</p> <p>23 בּוֹדֵה יְהוָה נַפְשׁ עֲבָדָיו וְלֹא יִאָּשְׁמוּ כָּל-הַחֹסִים בּוֹ :</p>	<p>15 The eyes of I AM are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.</p> <p>16 The face of I AM is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.</p> <p>17 [The righteous] cry out, I AM hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.</p> <p>18 I AM is near to the brokenhearted and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.</p> <p>19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but I AM delivers him out of them all.</p> <p>20 He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.</p> <p>21 Evil will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.</p> <p>22 I AM redeems the life of his servants; and none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.</p>	<p><b>C. I AM's "way" with humanity</b></p> <p><b>1. I AM's stance to the righteous &amp; the wicked</b>      "eyes...toward" = constant care and protection (Deut 11:12)      "ears...toward" = attentive their prayers      "face...against" = fierce resistance ignites wrath      note: This assumes that the wicked are given freedom to carry out their devices, but God will ultimately judge (Prov 10:7).</p> <p><b>2. I AM's care of the righteous when evil prevails</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He hears their cries and saves them</li> <li>• He provides an intimacy that transcends the brokenness and pain</li> </ul> <p><b>3. The breadth and depth of I AM's loyal-love</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breadth: Though afflictions are many, I AM's faithful record to deliver is impeccable.</li> <li>• Depth: Ultimate preservation and care              "bones" is a metaphor for I AM's care for his own, but is literally fulfilled in Jesus on the cross (Exod 12:46; John 19:33-37)</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Ultimate vindication of the righteous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wicked reap what they sow vindicating God's moral order</li> <li>• "In his closeness to us the Lord <i>delivers</i> (19), safeguards (20), sides with us against our opponents (21), pays whatever price will meet our need (<i>redeems</i>, 22a), and offers himself as an available refuge (22b)." (Motyer)</li> </ul>
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