



# **Peninsula City Church**

**Taste and See**

**What does it mean?**

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# Taste and See

## An Introduction

**Q.** How would you explain, the context and intent of tasting and seeing that the Lord is Good?

If you read Psalm 34, how do you know what is all about? Do you know what the verse that we have been speaking on is about? That is,

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the strongman who takes refuge in Him!”  
(Ps 34:8 ESV).

Now, as this truth stands in isolation, we can enjoy the Lord and His goodness. However, what is the context of this Psalm and this verse?

So, it is these ideas that we will briefly review to find out what it all meant. Firstly, we will briefly review what the purpose of the Psalm was from its biblical historical context? Then secondly, we considering this will look at what is the purpose of the Psalm? Finally, we will look at some of its application to us.

### 1. What was the background of the Psalm?

**Q.** What happened to David that Psalm 34 was written?

We need to remember that like any other Psalm, Psalm 34 was not written in a vacuum, but has a context. The context is one of intrigue, murderous intent and deceit. So, in brief, the Israelites have been at war with the Philistines for generations. Consequently, Israel wants a king to lead them and help the nation stand against the marauding Philistine clans, 1 Samuel chapters 9 and 12. In so doing, they rejected God as their King and wanted to be like the nations around them and have a human king, 1 Samuel 8. They chose Saul the son of Kish to be their king, 1 Samuel 9. However, as time went by, Saul rebelled against God and lost his place as King of Israel, 1 Samuel 13 and 15.

As a result, David was anointed as the future King, and the spirit of God lifted off Saul (who then received a troubling spirit) and sat on David, 1 Sam 16. It is at this juncture that David was anointed king by Samuel the prophet, 1 Samuel 16. Probably the most famous account of David's introduction on the scene is that of David and Goliath in 1 Sam 17. Saul then tries to kill David as he resents him, 1 Samuel 18 onwards. Then we read about Davids moving around the desert as he tries to get away from Saul who tries to kill him, 1 Samuel 18-30 (esp. chapter 21-23). See Appendix One

“David's escape from the now paranoid and homicidal King Saul.”<sup>1</sup>

In the following section of 1 Samuel 21, the writer inserted a portion regarding David ironically escaping to the enemy the Philistines for safety as a fugitive. This idea of David with the Philistines will be picked up again in 1 Samuel chapters 23; 27; and 29. So, one could ask regarding the political and religious situation of Israel at the time of this event. Well, it has been pointed out that,<sup>2</sup>

One: Israel was not a sovereign nation just yet.

Two: The Philistines were very active and continuously a thorn in Saul's side, but there were other enemies present as well.

<sup>1</sup> “1 Samuel: Lesson 35 - Chapter 21.” <https://www.torahclass.com/old-testament-studies-tc/52-old-testament-studies-1st-samuel/863-lesson35-1st-samuel-21> (3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019).

<sup>2</sup> “1 Samuel: Lesson 35 - Chapter 21.” <https://www.torahclass.com/old-testament-studies-tc/52-old-testament-studies-1st-samuel/863-lesson35-1st-samuel-21> (19<sup>th</sup> September 2019).

Three: The all-important Levitical Priesthood was fractured.

Four: The first sanctuary location of the Levitical Priesthood (when Joshua first led Israel across the Jordan) was at Shiloh. But the Wilderness Tabernacle that existed there for decades had become ramshackle and was abandoned.

Fifth: Perhaps most important: the Lord God had abandoned King Saul.

Psalms 34 records when David changed his behaviour before Abimelech (meaning either *Melek*, i.e. 'king is father' or 'my father is king'), so that he drove him out, and he went away. It has been said that,

“The story ridicules the Philistines, who cannot tell madness from sanity and who admit to having plenty of madmen.”<sup>3</sup>

We now find ourselves in this unusual section of David's story as recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-22:1.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>10</sup> “And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath (from the city of Nob in 1 Sam 21:1, i.e. about 51 km). <sup>11</sup> 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 (in 1 Sam 18:7; see also 1 Sam 29:5)?’ <sup>12</sup> And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. <sup>13</sup> So he changed his behaviour (“changed his demeanour”)<sup>5</sup> before them and pretended to be insane (altered his good sense or “probably meaning he talked wildly”<sup>6</sup>) in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. <sup>14</sup> Then Achish said to his servants, ‘Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? <sup>15</sup> 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?’ <sup>22:1</sup> David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him” (1 Sam 21:10-22:1 ESV).

Interestingly, nowhere within this section in 1 Samuel does it express how David felt during this event. It merely recorded the paradoxical details of the event and especially that David the anointed one chosen by God played insane in an attempt not to be killed. How does one reconcile these two matters of the chosen and anointed one of God and his bizarre behaviour? Is this the right way for David to act, or is he reverting to his default survival skills?

However, we do read of the expression of his raw feeling and emotions in both Psalms 34 and 56. We know that David recorded this by the preliminary comments to both Psalms. We will deal with Psalm 34 more in section two, but we will briefly outline a couple of things here. That is, the Psalmist said by way of introduction that Psalm 34 was a Psalm, “Of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech so that he drove him out, and he went away.” Then Ps 56 also recorded this event when it says in the introduction to the Psalm, “To the choirmaster: according to *The Dove on Far-off Terebinths*. A Miktam<sup>7</sup> of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath” (Ps

<sup>3</sup> Coogan, Michael D. (Ed.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: NRSV*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 433.

<sup>4</sup> “How is Psalm 34 linked to 1st Samuel 21?” <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/327/how-is-psalm-34-linked-to-1st-samuel-21> (21<sup>st</sup> August 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Apple, Raymond. “Psalm 34 – Does the Heading Tit?” *The Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol. 46, no. 2, (April-June 2018): 97.

<sup>6</sup> Apple, Raymond. “Apple Psalm 34,” 97.

<sup>7</sup> The meaning of the word is uncertain for sure, but has been suggested to mean “from gold, or “from the hidden,” or as many see it a “Poem of Gold.” Chaim Bentorah. *Hebrew Word Study: Revealing the Heart of God*. (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2016), Study 37.

56:1 ESV). As with Psalm 34, this Psalm captures some of the intense emotions of David currently. But it also reveals David's praise to the Lord his protector and deliverer.

Leading up to this account, was the side of the story when David came to the priest for food. This preceding account also has its own inherent paradoxes. These are as follows,

- David's deception to Ahimelech God's priest, which would have dire consequences in the future.
- The eating of the bread of the Presence that was only for God and the priests.
- Doeg the Edomite from an enemy nation of Israel.
- The sword of Goliath the Philistine, which David would take back to Gath the birthplace of Goliath.

So, this story is as follows, in chapter 20 of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, King Saul had a meal to celebrate the new moon (1 Sam 20:5,24), but David was absent as Saul wanted to kill him. Saul wanted to know where David was, and Jonathan covered for him to see if he had fallen out of favour with him, 1 Sam 20:30-34. Jonathan then informed David regarding what had happened and how Saul still wanted to kill him. Thus David left, 1 Sam 20:42. We now find ourselves in the next section of the story,

<sup>1</sup> "Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech<sup>8</sup> (the great-grandson of Eli the priest in 1 Sam 14:3) the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one with you?' <sup>2</sup> And David said to Ahimelech, the priest, 'The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, "Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you." I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. <sup>3</sup> Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread (from the 12 loaves), or whatever is here.' <sup>4</sup> And the priest answered David, 'I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women.' <sup>5</sup> And David answered the priest, 'Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?' <sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence (i.e. it is God's bread), which is removed from before the Lord, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.

<sup>7</sup> Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord. His name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Ahimelech, 'Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.' <sup>9</sup> And the priest said, 'The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the Valley of Elah (1 Sam 17:2,50), behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here.' And David said, 'There is none like that; give it to me'" (1 Sam 21:1-9 ESV).

As mentioned above, there are some paradoxical matters that stand out in this section of the story. The challenge for our western mindset is that we want to solve these paradoxes. However, within the Middle Eastern way of thinking these paradoxical matters can exist in tension as part of the story. The story from this perspective is more interested in the journey of David doing life rather than coming to conclusions. The four paradoxes that that will be briefly looked at here are as follows.

<sup>8</sup> Ahimelech was the priest in this region his name meant "Melek is brother" or "my father is king." Kaiser Jr., Walter C. "Ahimelech." In *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Vol. One A-C. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 88.

Firstly, Ahimelech was alarmed at David coming to him by himself, since he was one of King Saul's army commanders.<sup>9</sup> David claimed that the king had sent him on a "secret royal mission."<sup>10</sup> But this was not actually the case. So, why is it that he says that and must lie to the priest? Is it that David was afraid that the priest would not give him any food if he had known that he had been turned away from King Saul? David needed some food for himself and his men, so Ahimelech wanting to the right thing at the time gave David the holy bread.

It has been said that "His lie had dire consequences."<sup>11</sup> Namely, we read in 1 Sam 22:6-22 that Doeg the Edomite reported back to Saul what Ahimelech had done for David. As a result, David's lie and Ahimelech's kindness (to this lie, even though he was unaware that David had lied) caused him and his household to be murdered by Doeg at Saul's command. All were murdered except for one who escaped that is, Abiathar one of the grandsons of Ahimelech, 1 Sam 22:20. He came to David and told him what had happened to his household, 1 Sam 22:22-23, then David said that he would take care of him.

Secondly, is the matter of David taking the holy bread This was the bread of the Presence that was to be put on the golden table before God,

"And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly" (Ex 25:30 ESV).

This holy bread was only meant to be eaten by the priest, each Sabbath. As it would be changed for fresh bread each Sabbath.

<sup>5</sup> "You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah (about 22 litres) shall be in each loaf. <sup>6</sup> And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the Lord (cf. Ex 39:36; 40:23). <sup>7</sup> And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Every Sabbath day, Aaron shall arrange it before the Lord regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. <sup>9</sup> And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place since it is for him a most holy portion out of the Lord's food offerings, a perpetual due" (Lev 24:5-9 ESV).

David having hastily fled from Saul, had no food for himself and those with him. He asked for food, and Ahimelech gave him some of the holy bread. However, he only took enough to feed himself and his men and no more. From a sacred perspective, David's eating of the bread of the Presence was unlawful, as it was meant only the priests who could eat it. Here we have a paradox if it was unlawful for David and his men to eat the bread, why did they do it? The priest had said that they could eat the bread of the Presence if he and his men were holy. Did God show mercy on David in this situation because he was going to be king of Israel? No, He did not. There was a higher principle to be learnt here. Remember that the bread was made and placed on the golden table every Sabbath. We do not know what day it was when he came to Ahimelech, the priest, whether it was the Sabbath or not. But as it has been pointed out that,

"Every Shabbat, after the Mincha (afternoon) sacrifice, the old loaves were replaced with new ones. The old loaves were given to Kohanim to eat."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Berlin, Adele, & Brettler, Marc Zvi. (Eds). *The Jewish Study Bible*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 602.

<sup>10</sup> Klein, Ralph W. *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel*. Vol. 10. (Waco: TX, Word, 1983), 212.

<sup>11</sup> Berlin, & Brettler, (Eds). *The Jewish Study Bible*, 602.

<sup>12</sup> "The Showbread: The How and Why of the Temple Bread Offering."

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2974301/jewish/The-Showbread-The-How-and-Why-of-the-Temple-Bread-Offering.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2974301/jewish/The-Showbread-The-How-and-Why-of-the-Temple-Bread-Offering.htm) (12<sup>th</sup> September 2019).

Jesus used this event of David eating the holy bread of the Presence mentioned in 1 Samuel 21 to deal with an issue regarding the Sabbath.

<sup>23</sup> “One Sabbath He (Jesus) was going through the grain fields, and as they made their way, His disciples began to pluck heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> And the Pharisees were saying to Him, ‘Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?’ <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, ‘Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>26</sup> how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?’ <sup>27</sup> And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.’ <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath’ (Mk 2:23-28 ESV cf. Matt 12:1-6; Lk 6:1-5).

It has been pointed out that,

“Jesus cited this incident as an excusable violation of a cultic regulation.”<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, since Jesus used the bread of the Presence to illustrate His point regarding the Sabbath, it could be said that ‘the bread was made for people and the people for the bread.’ In the instance that David and his men can go to Ahimelech, they were hungry, and the priest saw the more significant principle at work.

Thirdly, then there is Doeg the Edomite who is said to be “the chief of Saul’s herdsmen” (1 Sam 21:7). The Edomites with enemies of the Israelites as they hindered Israel’s journey into the promised land, Num 20:14-21. So, why Saul had him as the chief herdsman, only Saul knows. But in any case, he was there on the day when David came to Ahimelech the priest, 1 Sam 21:7. He really comes into his own in 1 Sam 22:9-19 when he butchered Ahimelech the priest and 85 priests as the soldiers of Saul would not do it,

“Then the king said to Doeg, ‘You turn and strike the priests.’ And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod” (1 Sam 22:18 ESV).

As disgustingly paradoxical as it is, this slaughter of the priests was, in fact, a fulfilment of prophecy giving in 1 Sam 2:22-36. It took an angry and tormented king and outsider to fulfil this prophecy. See the following passage of this prophecy,

“The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men” (1 Sam 2:33 ESV).

Unwittingly Doeg the Edomite was used to fulfil this prophecy. Then rightly so David “felt responsible for the disaster, and he promises to protect Abiathar’s life like his own”<sup>14</sup> (see 1 Sam 22:22-23).

Finally, David rose and fled that day from Saul. He went to Achish, the king of Gath, which was a tongue-in-cheek way to the town where Goliath was born and lived. Not only that he also took the sword of Goliath with him, the one that he used to cut off Goliath’s head, 1 Sam 17:51. We are told in the story of Goliath that after David kill him,

“And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armour in his tent” (1 Sam 17:54 ESV).

<sup>13</sup> Klein, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel*, 213.

<sup>14</sup> Berlin, & Brettler, (Eds). *The Jewish Study Bible*, 604.

We can only assume that his armour also included Goliath's sword. So, we are not told how the sword came to be with Ahimelech, but in the end, he had the sword. He gave it to David, and he waltzed right into Gath with it.

The sword would have stood out for all to see. When David was recognised by Achish, the king of Gath and his servants, he either absurdly or cleverly played the role of an insane person. This was the last reference to the sword of Goliath.<sup>15</sup> It was said that "There is none like it" (1 Sam 21:9), so, it would have been quite noticeable. We are not told why David took it with him to Gath Goliath's hometown; surely, he knew that it would be spotted. Nonetheless, he took it with him right into the lion's den.

Therefore, as one reads all this story, we may wonder what on earth is going on? However, God knows exactly what He is doing and what He needs to be done in His own people (and in this case David), even if from the outside it does not look like that at times. There is a quote in the story of *Les Misérables* that may help here since sometimes it may appear that things are out of control as God forms and reshapes one Jean Valjean in this story. It says,

"God forges His own instruments using what tools that He needs."<sup>16</sup>

This was the case with David; God used Saul, Jonathan Ahimelech, Achish and even Doeg as His tools that He needed. This was to forge David into the one who had been anointed to lead Israel as her king. But there was still too much dross that needed to be scooped out of his life before this could happen. It was said to Saul that he was not one after God's heart so the kingdom would be taken from him and given to another,

"But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over His people because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you" (1 Sam. 13:14 ESV).

We are told that this one was David,

"And when He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, of whom He testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after My heart, who will do all My will'" (Acts 13:22 ESV).

This is despite all of David's brokenness and weakness, God still saw him as one after His heart. This truth comes through in Psalms 34 and 56, but here we will deal with Psalm 34.

## 2. Taste and see that the LORD is good!

**Q.** What is the Psalm saying considering 1 Samuel 21?

Psalm 34 is what is known as an acrostic poem as a wisdom Psalm, each verse beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 consonants, so there are 22 verses or stanzas to the Psalm. It has been said that it is a "Praise of God for deliverance from trouble."<sup>17</sup> It can be divided into two parts, verse 1-10 praises for God's goodness and protection and wisdom material 11-22. The Psalm was written reflecting on when David was trouble in the hands of the Philistines.

It begins with a statement, which outlines the context for this Psalm. This heading is part of the inspired text of the Psalm. We are not told if this was a heading to the Psalm written by David or by someone else writing about him. It has been said that,

<sup>15</sup> Klein, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel*, 213.

<sup>16</sup> Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables: Translated with An Introduction by Norman Denny*. (London, UK: Penguin, 1982), 1159

<sup>17</sup> Berlin, & Brettler, (Eds). *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1318.

“The intention with the heading assigned to Psalm 34 (as it now stands in the Masoretic tradition) could be to establish a connection between the Psalm and the life of David at the beginning of that stage of his life when he fled from Saul.”<sup>18</sup>

The introduction to this Psalm declares, “Of David, when he changed (a strong verb) his behaviour before Abimelech (possibly a royal title for Philistine kings, not a proper name meaning “Melek is father” or “my father is king”),<sup>19</sup> so that he drove (an active verb) him out, and he went away.” It has been said that,

“Robert Alter says altered his good sense, using ‘sense’ to mean rational, accepted behaviour.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “I will (a strong verb) bless the Lord (Yahweh and throughout this Psalm) at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

<sup>2</sup> My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear (imperative) and be glad.

<sup>3</sup> Oh, magnify (a strong verb) the Lord with me, and let us exalt (a strong verb) His Name (reputation) together!

<sup>4</sup> I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and He caused to deliver me from all my fears.

<sup>5</sup> Those who are caused to look to Him are radiant (reflect His glory), and their faces shall never be ashamed.

<sup>6</sup> This poor (David who had no power to save himself) man cried, and the Lord heard him, and He caused to save him out of all his troubles.

<sup>7</sup> The angel of the Lord encamps around those who reverence Him and delivers (a strong verb) them.

<sup>8</sup> Oh, taste<sup>21</sup> (imperative) and see<sup>22</sup> (imperative) that the Lord is good! Blessed is the (strong or warrior) man who takes refuge (seeks refuge, flees for protection) in Him! (this is verse 9 in the Hebrew and Orthodox versions of this Psalm as they begin verse one with the introductory words).

<sup>9</sup> Oh, reverence (a strong verb) the Lord, you His saints, for those who reverence Him have no lack!

<sup>10</sup> The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

<sup>11</sup> Come (Imperative), O children, listen (imperative) to me; I will teach (a strong verb) you the reverence of the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

<sup>13</sup> Keep (a strong verb) your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking (a strong verb) deceit.

<sup>14</sup> Turn away (a strong verb) from evil and do good; seek (a strong verb) peace and pursue (a strong verb) it.

<sup>18</sup> Botha, J. Phil. “Annotated History – The Implications of Reading Psalm 34 in Conjunction with 1 Samuel 21-26 and Vice Versa.” *Annotated History OTE* 21/3 (2008): 594.

<sup>19</sup> LeFebvre, Michael. *The Liturgy of Creation: Understanding Calendars in Old Testament Context*. (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 106 n. 29. See also *New Geneva Study Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 787. Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Treasury of David*. Vol. One Psalms I to LVII. (McLean, VA: MacDonald, n.d.), 127. Kaiser Jr., Walter C. “Abimelech.” *In the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Vol. One A-C. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Apple, “Apple Psalm 34,” 97.

<sup>21</sup> This word can mean to taste and eat food, but also to discover by experience, notice, learn.

<sup>22</sup> It can mean to see, look at, inspect, perceive, or to consider.

- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears toward their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cause cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and He caused to deliver them out of all their troubles.
- <sup>18</sup> The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and He caused to save the crushed in spirit.
- <sup>19</sup> Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord caused to deliver him out of them all.
- <sup>20</sup> He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken (originally spoke about David, but then also about Jesus on the cross cf. Jn 19:36).
- <sup>21</sup> Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned (a strong verb).
- <sup>22</sup> The Lord redeems the life of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned” (Ps 34:1-22 ESV).

In this Psalm, the title Lord is used 16 times, the righteous are mentioned 4 times and in contrast, the evil 3 times. Notice the strong language used within the Psalm to express the emotion of David during this challenging time in his life. The idea of the Lord being good can only be known by real personal practical firsthand experience.<sup>23</sup>

This is not merely an Old Testament experience. The reason is that Peter in his first letter when he wrote to the Christ-followers of his day alluded to this Psalm and especially verse 8 when he said,

<sup>2</sup> “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted (already for yourselves) that the Lord is good (gracious, fit for use)” (1 Pet 2:2-3 ESV).

In this letter Peter wrote to the scattered, persecuted and suffering Christ-followers of the day,

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion (the scattered for their faith) in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1 ESV).

He was encouraging them to remember that they had already “tasted (experience for themselves that the Lord is good” during their harsh trials. Some of these trials were deadly, and some had died, many were persecuted, lost everything, for merely being Christ-followers and no other reason. Like David, before them, they had one main one who was persecuting them and out to kill them if he could, that is satan and not a person. However, they had a Protector who they had experience and knew that He was good. This was their God as He was David’s God. As David stood strong, they were to stand strong in the Lord and taste and see that He is always good. This is despite the trials that came their way.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** How would you explain, the context and intent of tasting and seeing that the Lord is Good?

We have seen that David and the early Christ-followers experienced the goodness of God. So, can we as His children know by real personal practical firsthand experience that He is Good. This is not merely a theoretical matter; it is so much more. As the Psalmist wrote,

<sup>23</sup> Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 124.

Therefore, we can "taste and see that the LORD is good" (Ps 34:8a ESV) every day of our lives.

In our daily lives from the moment, we made our peace with the Lord and became His children, we had a new experience each day we walked with Him. We would have tasted and seen that God is good, but this needs to be a continual experience. At times own life will have its inherent paradoxes. These may be as follows,

- At times as God's children, we might be deceptive to God's people to try to protect ourselves against the enemy and our sins and failures; which could have dire consequences in the future.
- Like David who ate of the bread of the Presence, which was only for God and the priests, we may be asked by the Lord to do something for the Kingdom of God that seems to be against the norm.
- Satan is the enemy of the people of God, not the person/s that are confronting, or persecuting you, cf. Eph 6:12.
- Like David relied on the sword of Goliath the Philistine, sometimes we can try to rely on things from previous victories rather than the grace of the Lord for the day that we are in now.
- Etc.

So, today, this truth that God is good still stands. Stop and reflect for a moment have you tasted and seen that He is good lately? We have seen what the Bible has said to each person in their day. But what has the Holy Spirit been saying to us in our day? That is, what is it that stands out to us today? We need to apply this; otherwise, it is merely all academic. Then we need to respond to what the Holy Spirit has been saying to us.

In response, we need to ask through this process:

- What personal application can be found from the passages?
- What is God teaching me today?
- That is, "What is God saying to me?"

How should I respond to what is being said, or so what?

- What are you going to do about it?
- What do you need to do to respond?
- Pray and respond

Appendix One:

