

Psalms 34:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

Analysis

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. David issues experiential invitation—don't merely believe abstractly but taste personally and see directly that God is good. This connects propositional truth (LORD is good) with experiential verification (taste and see) and resulting blessing (trust brings blessedness).

O taste and see uses metaphor of sensory experience. Taste (ta'am) means to perceive flavor, experience directly. See (ra'ah) means to observe, perceive visually. Both are firsthand, personal, experiential. Cannot merely intellectually assent to God's goodness; must personally experience it. As food's goodness is proven by tasting, God's goodness is demonstrated by experience. This invitation presumes God is accessible, knowable, experiencable—not remote philosophical concept but living Person to be encountered.

That the LORD is good declares what will be discovered. Good (tov) means beneficial, pleasant, delightful, valuable. Not merely morally good (though He is) but experientially good—delightful to know, satisfying to soul, precious to heart. God Himself is the good being tasted—not His gifts only but His person. As Psalm 16:2 declares: My goodness extends not to You (I can't make You better), but to saints on earth (You make me good).

Blessed is the man that trusteth in him shifts from invitation to pronouncement. Blessed ('ashre) means happy, fortunate, enviable. Man (geber) emphasizes strong

individual, highlighting that trusting God strengthens rather than weakens. Trusteth (chasah) means takes refuge in, flees to for safety. Pronouncement is categorical: trusting God brings blessedness—not might bring, not sometimes brings, but brings. This is reliable cause and effect grounded in God's character.

Peter quotes this in 1 Peter 2:2-3: As newborn babes, desire sincere milk of word, that you may grow thereby: if you have tasted that Lord is gracious. Tasting God's goodness creates appetite for more. Experiencing God's grace produces hunger for deeper intimacy. This experiential knowledge grounds assurance and fuels perseverance.

Historical Context

Invitation to taste presumes covenant meal fellowship. Israel's worship included fellowship offerings where worshipers ate part of sacrifice in God's presence (Leviticus 7:11-21). This communal eating symbolized covenant relationship, peace with God, fellowship with Him and His people. Tasting LORD's goodness occurred literally in worship feasts and metaphorically in experiencing His covenant blessings.

Jesus continued this theme. He offered living water (John 4:10,14). He called Himself bread of life (John 6:35,48). He instituted Lord's Supper where believers taste and see His goodness through bread and wine representing His body and blood (Matthew 26:26-28). Hebrews 6:4-5 speaks of those enlightened who have tasted heavenly gift, tasted good word of God, tasted powers of age to come. Salvation is experiential encounter, not mere intellectual assent.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically to taste and see that LORD is good—how do you experience God personally?
2. How does experiential knowledge of God's goodness differ from and enhance propositional beliefs about Him?
3. In what ways have you tasted God's goodness that produced blessedness and strengthened trust?
4. Why does David use sensory language (taste, see) rather than intellectual language (know, believe) in this invitation?
5. How can you invite others to taste and see God's goodness through sharing your experiences of His faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

אֶת יְהוָה קִדְּשׁוּ יוֹ כִּי אֵין מִחַס וֹר
O fear H853 the LORD ye his saints H3588 H369 for there is no want
H3372 H3068 H6918 H4270

לִירְאָיו:
to them that fear
H3373

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:32 (Parallel theme): He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Philippians 4:19 (Parallel theme): But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Psalms 23:1 (References Lord): The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalms 31:23 (Holy): O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Psalms 89:7 (Holy): God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Genesis 22:12 (Parallel theme): And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Psalms 22:23 (References Lord): Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

Hosea 3:5 (References Lord): Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org