

SBC – March 12, 2023

Psalm 91 (NKJV)

“Angelic Care of the Messiah”

We don't really know who wrote Psalm 91. Because it has a similar “refuge” theme as does Psalm 90 some think possibly that Moses wrote Psalm 91 as he did Psalm 90. Both emphasize the theme of security in the Lord.

Slide # 1

Psalm 90:1 (NKJV)

1 LORD, You have been our **dwelling place [refuge]** in all generations.

Psalm 91:1–2 (NKJV)

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, “He is my **refuge** and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”

Others suggest perhaps David or Solomon wrote it, but we don't really know.

The key significance of this psalm is pointed out by the fact that Satan recognized it as a Messianic psalm and quoted from it when seeking to tempt Jesus to bypass the cross (Matt. 4:6).

– **Henry M. Morris**

Psalm 91 certainly has a strong Messianic emphasis but it has application for all believers who find their security in the Lord.

William MacDonald is one of my favorite commentators. He has a one volume commentary on the whole Bible titled, “Believer’s Bible Commentary” which I highly recommend. He titles Psalm 91 “My Psalm” and then shares this:

In 1922, in the Western Hebrides, a five-year-old lad was dying of diphtheria. A mucous membrane was forming across his throat, and breathing was becoming increasingly difficult. His Christian mother turned her back so she would not see him take his last breath. At that very moment there was a knock at the door. It was her brother-in-law from an adjoining village. He said, “I’ve come to tell you that you don’t have to worry about the child. He is going to recover, and one day God is going to save his soul.”

She was distracted and incredulous: “Whatever makes you say that?” Then he explained he had been sitting at his fire reading Psalm 91 when God distinctly spoke to him through the last three verses.

Slide # 2

Psalm 91:14–16 (NKJV)

14 “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.”

MacDonald then says:

I was that boy. God delivered me from death that night; He saved my soul thirteen years later, and He has satisfied me with long life. [He was born in 1917 and died at the age of 90 on Dec. 25 in 2007.] So you will understand why I refer to Psalm 91 my Psalm. I usually add, with tongue in cheek, that I am willing to share it with others – but it is definitely my Psalm!

[I don’t always know how to explain these things but God sometimes moves in mysterious ways. MacDonald then says...]

Most theologians don’t agree with me at all. They say that this is Messianic Psalm. And of course they are right. Its primary interpretation concerns our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ. [But] in a lesser way, we may appropriate its precious promises to ourselves.

I remember Dwayne Showers talking about Psalm 91 as being special to him and he said it was called “The Soldiers Psalm” or “The Soldiers Prayer”. So it has lots of applications, but certainly, as we will see there is a Messianic theme in the mix as well.

Slide # 3

Outline of Psalm 91

Theme: Security

1-2 – Assurance of God’s Protection

3-4 – God’s Protection, Comfort, and Care

5-6- The Result of God’s Protection and Care

7-8 – Assurance for the Believer

9-13 – Promises of God’s Protection

14-16 – God’s Promise and Blessing Over the One Who Loves Him

1-2 – Assurance of God’s Protection

Psalm 91 (NKJV)

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

The secret place that world knows nothing about is the place of communion with God. It is the place of being CLOSE to God – right under His shadow as it were. It is the place of protection. Those who dwell there (live there) are blessed.

In Psalm 90:1 Moses spoke of God as being the dwelling place of His people; but here in Psalm 91:1 the idea seems to be taken even further picturing the “secret place” as a secure inner chamber. Thus, the picture is one of complete security as God hovers over us in intimate fellowship.

2 I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”

There are 4 KEY names for God used in verses 1-2 emphasizing God our protector and security.

Slide # 4

Elyon = “**Most High**”

Shaddai = “**Almighty**”

YHWH = “**LORD**” (Eternal/Unchanging/Loyal)

Elohim = “**God**” (Supreme)

These are STRONG names for God emphasizing His powerful protection for those who belong to Him.

3-4 – God’s Protection, Comfort, and Care

3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence.

4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

In picturesque language the writer illustrates God's protective care of His own. The fowler is a bird catcher. The idea is that of one who is very subtle and deceptive to try and ensnare you. God protects you from such people. Perilous pestilence is deadly disease or plague.

Lord Craven, a Christian, was a nobleman who was living in London when plague ravaged the city in the fifteenth century. In order to escape the spreading pestilence Craven determined to leave the city for his country home, as many of his social standing did. He ordered his coach and baggage made ready. But as he was walking down one of the halls of his home about to enter his carriage, he overheard one of his servants say to another, '***I suppose by my lord's quitting London to avoid the plague that his God lives in the country and not in town.***' It was a straightforward and apparently innocent remark. But it struck Lord Craven so deeply that he canceled his journey, saying, '***My God lives everywhere and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will stay where I am.***' So he stayed in London. He helped the plague victims, and he did not catch the disease himself." (**James Boice**)

We do want to be wise but at the same time realize it is God who preserves our going out and our coming in (Ps. 121:8). Truly our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:15).

God covering you with His feathers is a metaphorical way of depicting intimate protection (cf. Mt. 23:37). It "is a wonderful symbol of the union of power and gentleness". Under His wings we take refuge. His truth is our shield (a smaller round shield) and buckler (larger rectangular shield). Again, the idea is that of God's protection.

5-6- The Result of God's Protection and Care

5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

When God is your protector you don't have to be afraid. After all you are in His care which is the dominant theme of this Psalm. How many times God says to His children, "Let not your heart be troubled" or "be not afraid". We need to focus on God our protector. He is there for us.

We don't have to be afraid of the dangers of the day or the dangers of the night. God has it all covered. Again, we do want to be wise, but we want to trust in the Lord to take care of us.

Slide # 5

Psalm 56:3 (NKJV)

3 Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.

7-8 – Assurance for the Believer

7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.

8 Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward [recompense] of the wicked.

God is able to protect His people against outrageous odds (humanly speaking). A thousand falling at your side – a thousand to one is against all odds. Ten thousand makes the point exponentially. God's protection can take care of us even if it is ten thousand against one.

9-13 – Promises of God's Protection

9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

This applies to those who have put their trust in the LORD – who have made Him their refuge and dwelling place.

10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

This does not promise God's people will never experience any afflictions, but the promise is regarding "evil". In the lives of His children God ultimately works all things together for good (Rom. 8:28). Yes, hurtful things do happen, but through it all God has sovereignly good purposes and we are immortal until our job is done and until He is done working on us. This verse needs to be understood in the BIG scheme of things in light of eternity.

Jesus prayed that His people would be kept from the evil one (Jn. 17:15). 1 John 5:18 says the wicked one cannot touch us – not in the ultimate sense.

We do wrestle with the forces of evil (Eph. 6:12), but ultimately they cannot have their way with us and God in His sovereignty works all things together for good.

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

God uses His angels to protect His own. In 2 Kings 6 when the servant of Elisha was concerned about the army surrounding the city with all their horses and chariots Elisha prayed for him to see.

Slide # 6

2 Kings 6:17 (NKJV)

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And **behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

If we could see the angelic presence guarding and protecting us I am sure we would be astounded. Again, our times are in God's hands and we are immortal until our job is done.

The angels serve God's purpose in our lives for our good. They serve incognito. We don't see them, but they are there.

Slide # 7

Psalm 34:7 (NKJV)

7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

Hebrews 1:14 (NKJV)

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

When I was in bible college one night I was out praying at a local park that was kind of hidden. It was dark and no one really went there at night. It was affectionately known as "mosquito hill".

On this night as I was praying suddenly about 25 yards or so away I sensed a figure in the dark coming towards me. I immediately cried out, ***“The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.”*** And just that quick the person turned aside and went a different direction.

These are the verses (Psalm 91:11-12) that the devil quoted to Jesus in trying to tempt Him.

Slide # 8

Matthew 4:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 and said to Him, *“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”*

Note that Jesus did not deny that these verses applied to Him. Satan knew that these verses certainly applied to the Messiah. He above all people trusted the LORD (cf. Ps. 22:8; Mt. 27:43; Heb. 12:1-2). The problem was that the devil tweaked the meaning by misquoting the text by only partially quoting it.

Slide # 9

Psalm 91:11 (NKJV)

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, **To keep you in all your ways.**

Matthew 4:6 (NKJV)

6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ ***[LEFT OUT]*** and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

The devil left out the important qualifier, “To keep you in all your ways.” The devil is a master at misquoting or being so close and yet twisting it just a little bit so as to deceive.

Slide # 10



The angelic protection for the Messiah (and any of God's people) is promised in connection with obedience and dependence upon God. Outside of His will we are not promised this.

The devil wanted Christ to wow the crowd by throwing Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and thereby show Himself to be the Son of God. But Jesus in His state of humility never did anything apart from the direction of the Father. It was not about Himself, but rather doing the will of the Father. He was here on the Father's mission.

This shows us how the devil often works in quoting (rather misquoting) the Bible. Many quote part of a verse or quote something out of context in a self-serving way. This is what false teachers are all about.

Christ rebuked the devil and showed us the right way to use the Scriptures. He appealed to the whole counsel of God and showed that rightly dividing the Word involves taking the whole word and understanding it in context and in harmony with the full counsel of God. Most all false teaching is a matter of not rightly dividing the Word.

Slide # 11

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

15 Be diligent to present yourself **approved** to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

One cannot invoke a promise of God like a magic spell without appreciating the context of that promise or abiding in the way God has revealed Himself in other parts of the Bible. – **Unknown Source**

The angels were there to help Christ, just not in the way that Satan was suggesting.

Slide # 12

Matthew 4:11 (NKJV)

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

But note one other thing that Satan did – he was very selective in what he quoted as seen in verse 11 and then also in the sense of not quoting verse 13 which has Messianic ramifications related to the ultimate defeat of Satan.

13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

In the Bible from Genesis to Revelation Satan is depicted as a “serpent” (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). It was through the serpent that Satan deceived Eve in Genesis 3.

Slide # 13

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

In Genesis 3:15 God said that the seed of the woman (the Messiah) would crush the serpent’s head. Psalm 91:13 alludes to this key prophecy and Satan definitely did not want to go there. I think he recoiled at the part that says, **“the serpent you shall trample underfoot”** and so he didn’t go there.

14-16 – God’s Promise and Blessing Over the One Who Loves Him

14 “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.”

These last three verses are spoken in first person by God as He speaks His blessing over His people. It applies to those who set their love upon Him. God blesses and preserves those who love Him. Sometimes Romans 8:28 is glibly quoted as causing everything to work together for good but note the verse specifically says, “all things work together for good to those who love God”.

Certainly this applies to the Messiah Who is the only One who ever loved God the Father perfectly in this earthly experience. But then again there is application for all those who know and love the Lord.

Those who know and love the Lord call upon Him. They look to Him and depend upon Him in times of trouble. They look to Him for deliverance. And then God works through prayer. Time and time again they are delivered.

God promises (within His sovereign will) to satisfy this person with long life and show Him His salvation (deliverance).

Ultimately verse 16 finds fulfillment in the resurrection. We tend to think in terms of this life, but the Word of God has a bigger view that reaches beyond this life.

Slide # 14

Psalm 22:20–21 (NKJV)

20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog.

21 Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!

[Answered in the Resurrection]

You have answered Me.

Slide # 15

Isaiah 53:10 (NKJV)

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed,

He shall prolong His days, [In the Resurrection] And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

Psalm 21:4 (NKJV)

4 He asked life from You, and You gave it to him— Length of days forever and ever.

[This Psalm] warns about hidden traps, deadly plagues, terrors at night and arrows by day, stumbling over rocks, and facing lions and snakes! However, in view of terrorist attacks, snipers, reckless drivers, exotic new diseases, and Saturday night handgun specials, the contemporary scene may be as dangerous as the one described in this psalm. – **Warren Wiersbe**

But here is the takeaway from this Psalm. For those who know and love the LORD, He is our refuge, our fortress, our deliverer, and our protector. We are safe in the sovereign will of God. Christ's life and death was right on the schedule of God the Father. Even though He only lived 33 years everything God wanted to accomplish in and through Him was completed.

In like manner, we can trust God that our times are in His hand and we are immortal until our job is done. And beyond that, we are safe and secure for all eternity.

Therefore we can say with the Psalmist...

The Most High, the Almighty "is my refuge and my fortress; My God , in Him I will trust." Indeed, we can trust Him! Rest in this!

This is the secret place of Most High! This is where we find our security!