

Psa. 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

This Psalm has no introduction or identification of the composer. After reading through this Psalm, I would say that it is someone who treasured the fact that he was under the protection of Almighty God.

The “secret place” is a reference to a place of covering or protection, a hiding place. To dwell in the *secret place* of the most High is to dwell in the most secure place available. That means you are basically hidden in plain view under cover of the protective hand of God. Webster defines dwell as “to linger...to continue...to abide as a permanent resident.” This describes a person who has fully committed his life to God in submission and obedience. The word *linger* gave me the idea of someone who likes where he is, he is comfortable there; there is nowhere else he would rather be.

I have learned through my studies in the Word that one characteristic of Hebrew poetry is repetition. The second part of this verse is basically a repeat of the first. Abiding in the shelter of the Almighty is another way of saying that you are living under the protection of YHWH. The Hebrew for *shadow* references being shaded or defended from a root that states “through the idea of hovering over.” It gives me the picture of a loving Father Who is very attentive to the smallest needs of his child.

Psa. 91:2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Now the psalmist makes it personal—“He is my refuge and my fortress: my God.” *Refuge* speaks of a place of shelter provided by someone you trust. *Fortress* speaks of a defense or a strong place. “My God” refers back to LORD (YHWH), the self-existent, eternal Supreme Being. The psalmist is declaring a personal relationship with God—a relationship based on trust or faith in the God who gives him security, confidence and hope. This is a man whose mind is at rest or peace because he has faith in God’s protection of him.

Psa. 91:3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

The “snare of the fowler” speaks of an enemy who is out to trap you. My mind quickly identifies the enemy as Satan, the god of this world, but it can also refer to other evil spiritual forces as well as wicked men.

“noisome” = (in the sense of eagerly coveting and rushing upon; by implication, of falling); desire; also ruin:—calamity, iniquity, mischief, mischievous (thing), naughtiness, naughty, noisome, perverse thing, substance, very wickedness.

“pestilence” = (in the sense of destroying); a pestilence:—murrain, pestilence, plague.

I thought the above definitions from the Hebrew were interesting because they stretch your understanding. It seems as if he is referencing a sudden onset of plague or disease that affects many people or cattle. It seems to allow for

application in today's world of an evil attack using chemical or biological weapons to bring about the destruction of many. In fact, it could reference a sudden overwhelming destruction of any kind that is a result of evil forces.

The psalmist is convinced that God will deliver His people from such evil. I believe that is true. I also believe that God's deliverance can come in unexpected ways. I thought it was interesting that the Hebrew for *deliver* included a variety of possibilities—to snatch away, escape, preserve, recover, rescue. In my mind that allows for Him to take us home, to escape being touched by the evil, to preserve us through the evil to recovery, or to remove us physically out of harm's way.

I just realized the psalmist switched from first person to third person. He is speaking on behalf of all those who trust in God the same way he does.

Psa. 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

In this verse the psalmist is comparing God's protection of people of faith to a bird that is protecting its young by covering them with its wings. In scripture God is compared to an eagle. I believe he was thinking of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy.

Deut. 32:9-12 For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. **As an eagle** stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

A *shield* is a reference to protection from a specific point of attack, while a *buckler* seems to reference a protective surrounding. God's truth, His Word, provides us with a defense from spiritual attack in particular. The Lord Jesus exemplified this truth when he faced the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. God's word also provides people of faith with a protective hedge if they will but live according to its truth. When we step out of God's revealed will for us as established by His word, we are inviting danger.

Psa. 91:5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Psa. 91:6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

In these verses the psalmist describes four things the believer has no need to fear.

- The terror by night – *Terror* is a general term for anything that causes extreme fear, that causes us to feel dread, that agitates body and mind (according to Webster). Night is a reference not only to darkness, but to the presence of evil.

Job 24:13-15 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth *his* face.

Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.
This is fear of danger that you cannot see.

- The arrow that flieth by day – The Hebrew for *arrow* references a “piercer” or something that “wounds.” This would seem to reference fear from danger of which you are aware, an attack that you see is coming.
- The pestilence that walketh in darkness – The root for *pestilence* references something that subdues or destroys. I couldn’t help but think of this verse from Peter when I saw that definition.
1Pet. 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, **walketh about**, seeking whom he may devour:
- The destruction that wasteth at noonday – Since this is Hebrew poetry, I am sure these are parallel sets of phrases, so again the psalmist is speaking of danger you can identify—but I can’t help but think I’m missing a nugget of further enlightenment. Maybe the noonday is a reference to the time of day when we are getting fatigued and we aren’t as prepared for defense as we are bright and early in the morning. I decided to look for a little help on this phrase and Adam Clarke made an enlightening comment.
“The ancients thought that there were some demons who had the power to injure particularly at *noonday*.”

Psa. 91:7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

I think the “thousand” refers back to the arrows and figuratively to any danger or attack of the enemy. The size or number of the enemy(ies) of the person of faith are nothing compared to the power of the protecting hand of Almighty God.

Psa. 91:8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

This seems to acknowledge a promise that we can be sure that the wicked will be judged; they will reap what they have sown. It also implies that the person of faith will observe this judgment from a place of protection.

Psa. 91:9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

Psa. 91:10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

This section is interesting because the psalmist utilizes both first and third person. He is basically conveying the truth that those who have turned to YHWH in faith, as he has, and are trusting YHWH with their lives have no

reason to fear any evil or wickedness. Paul restated this truth in his letter to the Romans.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Those who love God and those who have faith in God are the same. Everything that God allows to touch the lives of those who trust Him is meant for good. What we may at first determine to be *evil* is actually meant for good. It's a matter of trusting God with the outcome. It's a matter of accepting the truth stated by Isaiah.

Is. 55:8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Is. 55:9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psa. 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Psa. 91:12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

These verses immediately make me think of Satan's use of them in tempting Jesus in the wilderness.

Matt. 4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

Matt. 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Matt. 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

It's interesting to me that Satan made direct application of this scripture to the man Jesus, the perfect man of faith, the Son of God. It's an amazing truth that as a child of God, the same truth applies to me. The angels are identified as ministering spirits to the children of faith.

Heb. 1:13-14 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?**

They have been assigned to minister to ALL our ways, our journey through this life. It doesn't mean that we will never get hurt. It does mean that God is in control and will only allow in our lives that which will work good. When Satan used these verses, he (as the wicked often do) looked at the words, not at the heart behind the words. He was using the Word for his own purposes—not God's.

Psa. 91:13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

I think this is the psalmist's expression of the invincibility of a person who is under the protection of Almighty God. The lion is the king of beasts and references a mighty fearful enemy. The adder references the asp, a poisonous

snake whose bite causes death in a few hours. The dragon references a sea monster. Isn't it interesting that all of these images are also applicable to Satan.

- Lion - 1Pet. 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, **as a roaring lion**, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
- Adder/serpent - Rev. 12:9 And **the great dragon** was cast out, **that old serpent**, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
- Dragon – Same as above. It's also interesting that the future Antichrist, the beast that comes from the sea (sea monster), also falls into this description; and John is clear to tell us that he gets his power and authority from the dragon, Satan.

Rev. 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast rise up out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Rev. 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: **and the dragon gave him his power**, and his seat, and great authority.

In other words, the person of faith has nothing to fear from the attack of the spiritual forces of evil. Why? The answer follows.

Psa. 91:14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

The psalmist at this point becomes a prophet; he is speaking the words of the Lord. The Hebrew for *love* states, "to cling, delight in, desire." To know God's name is to understand the power behind that name. In context with loving God it made the reference to "familiar friend" stand out as well. God delights in honoring those who honor Him. Jesus was very clear as to the greatest commandment.

Matt. 22:36-38 Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

He was equally clear that the Father will respond in love to those that love Him.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

The Lord comforted Jeremiah with this same truth.

Jer. 39:18 For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.

Psa. 91:15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

The person who delights in the Lord and has placed his life in His hands by faith can be assured that God will answer when he calls. The next phrase is important—He will be with him in trouble. In other words, we aren't promised never to experience trouble, but that God will always be with us in our time of trouble. Then He promises deliverance from that trouble—according to His

wisdom and His timing. Then He promises to *honor* him, and that speaks of glory and riches beyond our imagination. God always hears the prayer of His child and He always answers. Sometimes the answer is *yes*, sometimes *no*, sometimes *wait a while* or *not yet*. His presence, provision, deliverance and honor are sure. His word never fails.

Deut. 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Is. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Psa. 91:16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

I thought it was interesting that the Hebrew for *long* referenced “forever.” That is the proper perspective. We all know of people of faith who have died young. The only way this verse makes sense is in reference to eternity. Scripture is clear in stating that our lives here are but a vapor and that we cannot be sure of tomorrow.

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Is. 40:6-8 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

1Pet. 1:24 For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

This verse fits right in with the truth stated by Jesus.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, **though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me **shall never die.**

The Hebrew for *salvation* references “deliverance; hence, aid, victory, prosperity:—deliverance, and health.” Salvation includes both deliverance from and victory to. Deliverance from everything evil and wicked and victory to prosperity, health and everything associated with the blessings of God.