

Part 2 – Our Refuge and Fortress

In part 1 we learned that the subject/title of this 91st Psalm is “***Rest Provided In, And For Messiah***”. And it was written (likely by Moses) for the comfort of “the Church in the wilderness”, which were those *not* condemned to die in the wilderness during the 40 years of penal wanderings in the wilderness. While Psalm 90 spoke much about the sorrows of the vast multitude in the wilderness, who were condemned to die within forty years, this Psalm 91 (on the other hand) presents the contrast of those under the ‘shadow of the Almighty’. Thus, we also learned about an analogy our Heavenly Father used. Just as an eagle protects her eaglets, and also teaches them to fly, by using her wings, so too did our Heavenly Father protect Israel with His cloud (that He was in via His flying vehicle) as they were coming out of Egypt *and* in the wilderness.

But, we also learned that this beautiful type, which was physical for Israel back then, has an astounding *spiritual* lesson for us today. For, we also learned that the *spiritual* application of dwelling in the ‘secret place’ of the Most High (YHWH) means *to trust in* God, and in Jesus Christ (who is God incarnate). It is our *trust in* the Word of God that keeps us *spiritually* close to Him (i.e. *in* His ‘secret place’), who is on the throne in heaven. And so long as we *continue* to trust in, *and obey*, God (and Jesus, John 8:31-32) we will *always* remain under His protective ‘shadow’ of His precious ‘wings’ via the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit, that dwells *within us*. And that’s because Jesus Christ is our intercessor, who is literally at the right hand of God (Rom 8:26-34) – i.e. He’s *also* in the ‘secret place’ of the Most High. And that’s why Jesus told us we *must* ‘abide in Him’ (keep our heart and mind firmly on Him) and He ‘in us’ (His Words and Holy Spirit in us) *if* we want to be, *and remain*, part of the Vine (in the ‘secret place’, being spiritually close to God), which is the Body of Christ that will rule with Jesus Christ (forevermore) when He returns (John 15). But, being part of the ‘Vine’ is also what makes us productive servants *here on earth* and ensures we’ll *always* be under the protection of God’s mighty wings (shadow) as we serve Him in a world full of sin and wickedness...

Psalm 91

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

Now, as the outline in the *Companion Bible* points out, this verse is the Messiah ‘speaking’ via the Holy Spirit though Moses, who penned this. But, of course, this is undoubtably something Moes could (and did) say as well, for he was indeed a faithful servant who trusted in God. Therefore, this verse *continues on explaining* what it means to be ‘in the secret place’ of the Most High (close to God, spiritually) by trusting in (and obeying) Him, which is what keeps us ‘abiding’ under the ‘shadow’ (protection) of His Almighty ‘wings’ (His Word and Holy Spirit), which verse 1 spoke of. And the word ‘**LORD**’ here is important to understand because it’s God’s Sacred Name ***Yehovah*** (#3068), which means (the) ***self-Existent*** or ***Eternal***. Yet, Moses (i.e. the

‘Messiah’ who is ‘speaking’) also uses the ‘title’ ‘God’, which is ***Elohiym*** (#430), which means ***the Supreme God***, who is our Creator. Thus, ‘*Elohiym*’ (or ‘*Elohim*’) is God the Creator putting His omnipotence (‘*El*’) *into operation*. So, while ‘*Elohim*’ is God as the Creator of all things, Yehovah is the same God in covenant relation to those whom He has created. And while He is the God of Israel, He’s *also* the God of those who believe in (and serve) the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26-29).

And, the use of God’s Sacred Name, Yehovah (i.e. YHVH - <https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/946>), along with the use of the title of ‘*Elohiym*’, is important. For the Psalms use different ‘titles’ of God (and His Sacred name) for specific purposes. As we learned in the first verse (of this great Psalm 91) the Psalmist used the ‘titles’ of ‘The Most High’ and ‘The Almighty’ to point out that, our Heavenly Father is not only the **possessor of heaven and earth** (Most High) but, He also has the **power to supply all the needs of His people** (The Almighty). And if we simply dwell ‘in Him’ (spiritually) in the ‘secret place’ (our faith in Jesus Christ *allows us access to* His very throne room via our prayers) then we’ll forever be protected under the precious ‘shadow’ of His ‘wings’ (His Holy Spirit). And that *also* means He’ll *always* give us the physical, *and* spiritual, food (and protection) we need to continue to serve Him here on earth. So long as we keep our heart and mind *firmly on Him* (His Words) – and sincerely continue to strive to obey Him (John 8:21) - then we truly have nothing to fear. So here, in verse 2, the Psalmist (Moses, which symbolizes the Messiah) uses *Yehovah* and ‘*Elohiym*’ to point out that, when we are in a covenantal relationship with the Lord (YHVH), then we can say that He is our refuge and fortress, for He will protect us *because* we are His servants. And that’s *also why* He is our ‘God’ (‘*Elohiym*’, the Supreme God who is our Creator) who we trust in.

Now, there’s also a few other important words to understand in this 2nd verse (here in Ps 91). The word ‘**refuge**’ means ***a shelter*** (literally or figuratively) and has also been rendered as *hope*, *shelter* and *trust* (#4268). And it comes from a prime root that means ***to flee for protection*** and, figuratively, ***to confide in*** (#2620). So, this is definitely referring to our *spiritual* refuge (shelter). And then the word ‘**fortress**’ means either ***a net, capture*** or ***fastness*** (#4686) and has been rendered as *castle*, *defense*, *fort* or even a *strong place* (among several other things). So, the meaning (for fortress) being expressed here in this 2nd verse is undoubtedly *fastness*. Therefore, when we trust and obey the Lord (YHVH), He’ll always be a strong shelter for us. And while this certainly means He’ll protect us physically – so much as we need protection to serve Him on earth – it also means *spiritual* protection. If we continue to ‘dwell’ in the ‘secret place’ of the Most High (keep our heart and mind firmly on God’s Word, John 15) then we’ll *always* be protected, which is why verse 1 said that we’d abide under His protective wings. And then the word ‘**trust**’ here (in Ps 91:2) means ***to hide for refuge*** and, figuratively, ***to trust, be confident*** or ***sure*** (#982). So, A "refuge" is *a place people can fall back to* in times of hardship or danger. A fortress is similar, but the typical "fortress" is a building designed for battle. It provides safety from an attacking enemy and gives those inside *the means to withstand an assault*. Indeed,

whenever we're having hard times, the Word of God is what we should *always* 'fall back to' by *remembering* (and studying) the Scriptures, which *give us hope* the wicked won't get away with anything (as Ps 37 so profoundly declares) and the Lord (YHVH) will *always* help us. As Ps 119:50 says: *this is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me*. God's Word gives us the hope we need to continue on serving Him faithfully and steadfastly. The word '**quickened**' means both *to live* and *to revive* (#2421) - and *that's* what God's Word does for us. It makes our spirit (heart and mind) *alive* when we understand the truth (God's Word) because it teaches us *who* God is and *what* we must do to have *eternal* life. And God's Word also 'revives' us each time we study (or think) about it because *it reminds us* of God's promises (i.e. to reward the faithful and punish the unrepentant sinners). Further, the Scriptures are what keep us safe from the *lies* and thick *deception* that continues to plague the world.

So, when we're faithfully serving the Lord (YHVH) God Almighty ('Elohiym, the *Supreme* God who is our Creator) then we have *nothing* to worry about. He'll *always* protect us from harm. And while that doesn't mean we won't ever have hard times - for *we will*, if we're *truly* serving Jesus Christ (2 Tim 3:12; John 15:20) – it means there won't ever be any hard times, or temptations, that we cannot handle (endure and make it through) because the Holy Spirit will help us get through all things *if* we continue to *trust in Him* (1 Cor 10:11). As 2 Thess 3:3 says, *the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil*. Paul points this out too, in Phil 4:6-7, when he tells us not to worry about anything but to take our concerns to God, in prayer (with thanksgiving). And when we do so – and truly trust He'll help us – then the Holy Spirit *will* give us amazing peace in our soul, which will 'keep' (meaning to *protect* and *guard*, #5432) our heart and mind so we *won't* be deceive and we *won't* fall from our faith. Jude 24 also points out that, through our faith in Jesus Christ, our Heavenly Father is able to keep us from falling (spiritually, to deception) so that we can be faultless (faithful servants) when Jesus Christ returns. And, this was something that the prophets of Old understood too. As Isaiah wrote: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength* (Isa 26:3-4). Therefore, it is our unwaivering trust in the Lord (YHVH) God Almighty (Elohiym, the Supreme God, our Creator) that protects us as we serve Him in this flesh body. So long as we don't forsake Him, He'll never forsake us!

Psalms 91

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler; and from the noisome pestilence.

Now the Psalmist (Moses) gives us a couple of examples of just *what* trusting the Lord (YHVH) will protect us *from*. And remember, this is the Holy Spirit 'speaking', as the outline of this chapter shows. And we should also remember that, historically, this Psalm is speaking to the people who lived during Moses' day but were *not* condemned to die in the penal 40 years of wanderings. Therefore, in this Psalm 91, Moses is speaking (historically) of things the people

faced. Yet, those who were not condemned to die, *were protected from these things* while those who *were* condemned to die (because of their rebelliousness to God) did *succumb* to these things. And, as with most of the Psalms, while there was a *historical* application to this, there's also a beautiful *spiritual* application to it, and even *prophetical* applications to it as well. For, while this Psalm describes those who are protected from these things described in this verse (and other verses in this Psalm) it also describes what those who 'abide in' the 'secret place of the Most High' are protected from yet *still today*! So, then, let's take a look at some of the words in the Hebrew to help us understand what they were, and we too can be, protected from. First off, the word '**deliver**', means *to snatch away*, whether in a good or a bad sense (#5337). It's also been rendered as *defend, escape, pluck, preserve, recover, rescue, and save* (among other things). Jesus used a similar Greek word to explain this when He said...

27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, **neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.***

29 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and **no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.***

John 10:27-29

The Greek word for '**pluck**' here means *to sieze* (#726). So, when we continue to dwell in the 'secret place' of the Most High (i.e. remain *spiritually* close to Him by studying His Words and keeping them in our heart and mind) then there's no one who can steal us away from the Lord. In other words, no matter how hard Satan tries to tempt us to apostatize (give up our faith in Jesus Christ) *it will never work* so long as our heart and mind is steadfast upon *the* 'Rock', which is God's Word (Deut 32:24, 1 Cor 10:4, John 1:1, 14). And that's simply because, when we strive hard *not to let ourself be tempted* (by faithfully studying and remembering God's Word) then we become untemptable – for the Holy Spirit of God will strengthen us so we *can* resist, *and* reject, *all* temptations the Devil tries to 'snare' us with (1 Cor 10:11). And that leads us to the next Hebrew word we should look at. The word '**snare**' here means (in the context of this verse) *a spring net* (as spread out like a lamina) (#6341). The purpose of a snare is, of course, to catch animals. And the word '**fowler**' means *entangled*, i.e. by implication (intransitively) *a snare*, or (transitive) *a snarer* (#3353). So, no matter what the snares are, nor who is the one trying to snare us, the Lord (YHVH) will *always* deliver us (snatch us away from it) by giving us the strength to either endure it *or* leave it completely.

A really good example of this is when Potiphar's wife kept trying to seduce Joseph to 'lie with her'. He kept refusing her yet, one time, she literally grabbed his clothes and tried to force him to 'do it'! But, instead of caving to the pressure, *he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out* (Gen 39:12). When the temptation got too be too much for poor Joseph, instead of caving to it, he fled... without his clothes! So, sometimes we might just need to leave an area, or

room, to get out of a bad situation, when the pressure is too intense. And when we truly trust in our Heavenly Father, He will always give us the strength to do so. As Paul so well reminds us, *the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil* (2 Thess 3:3). And truly, while there are many people in the world who put ‘snares’ in your way (to try and ‘ensnare you’ *spiritually*), they are *all* (knowingly or unknowingly) working for the Devil. As Peter said, in 1 Peter 5:8-9: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

So, when you believe in Jesus Christ, and are earnestly striving to obey Him, you should *be aware* that Satan *is trying* to ‘trip you up’ by laying ‘snares’ (traps) for you. Again, these ‘snares’ are *spiritual*. They might have *physical manifestations* (as with Joseph being enticed to commit adultery) but the bottom line is always *spiritual* because it’s your soul that Satan is truly after. Satan (the Devil) wants you to sin willingly against God because that *jeopardizes your soul*. Satan is trying to get as many of God’s children to rebel against Him, because that means joining *Satan’s side* in the spiritual war, *even if it’s unknowingly*. That’s why the Scriptures warn us that Satan sets snares (traps) to *spiritually* ‘catch’ believers, i.e. trying to cause their faith in God to fail and entice them to sin. That’s why Paul gave instructions to Timothy, regarding the office of an overseer, where he directed that leaders should have a good reputation, *lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil* (1 Timothy 3:7). Paul also warned Timothy about coveting riches...

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

*10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which **while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

1 Tim 6:9-11

While it’s no sin to have money (even a lot, so long as it’s gotten legally), loving (coveting) money **is** a sin because it causes us to err from faith in God (Jesus Christ) and will cause many sorrows to come upon our self, in our search to ‘get rich’. That’s why Paul warns Timothy to flee those things, just as Joseph fled Potiphar’s wife. So, this verse (Ps 91:3) promises that the Lord (YHWH) will not allow His servants to succumb to snares (traps) so long as they remain close to Him *spiritually* (i.e. under His protective wings, vs 1). Keeping our heart and mind sincerely focused on God’s Word (His Will) each day **is** how we *spiritually fight* against such schemes. And, if we should succumb to them (for we all fall short and sin at times, Rom 3:23), knowing God’s Word (by studying it daily), helps us to come to a good repentance *and get back into* a covenantal relationship with our Heavenly Father again. As Paul also told Timothy: *Thou*

*therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth **entangleth** himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier* (2 Tim 2:3-4). The word ‘**entangleth**’ here means (in the Greek) **to entwine**, i.e. (figuratively) **involve with** (#1707). And that means we shouldn’t let our heart (desires, emotion, intentions, motivations) and mind (thoughts) be focused on worldly things, such as money, sex, entertainment, etc.

Further, as Paul wrote to the Colossians: *If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*** (Col 3:1-2). The word ‘**affection**’ here means **to exercise the mind**, i.e. **entertain** or **have a sentiment or opinion**; by implication, **to be** (mentally) **disposed** (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively, **to interest oneself in** (with concern or obedience) (#5426). Now, this does not mean we should be a religious fanatic and run around quoting scriptures all day, especially to people who don’t want to hear it. Rather, it simply means to that, along with studying God’s Word, we should keep His Words in our heart and mind, think about it throughout the day *and strive to obey it in our daily life*. When we do this, we shine the truth (God’s Word) to others simply through our words and actions, even if we never quote any scripture (directly) to them. As Jesus said in Matt 5:16, shining our light (the truth, God’s Word) simply means to produce good works via obeying Him. And the point for our study is that, **when we keep our mind on ‘things above’ (God’s Word) then we will be able to avoid the snares of the fowler, who is Satan and his many servants** (willingly or unowning ones).

Paul also gave us good advice as how to avoid the ‘snares of the fowler’ in Gal 5:24, when he said that: *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*. The word ‘**affections**’ here means an **emotion** or **influence** (3804) and the word ‘**lusts**’ means **a longing** (especially for what is forbidden) (#1939) and comes from a word that means **to set the heart upon**, i.e. **long for** (rightfully or otherwise) (#1937). So, **to avoid Satan’s many snares, we must learn to set our heart upon God’s Word and serving Him – instead of ‘things of the world’** (1 John 2:15-17). As Peter also wisely advised, us, in 1 Peter 4:1-2: *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but **to the will of God***. If we set our heart upon God’s Word – instead of worldly things (like money, power, prestige, sex, entertainment, ect.) - then we’ll be able to avoid the ‘snares of the fowler’!

Now, there’s one other thing that this 3rd verse (in Ps 91) tells us that the Lord will deliver us from, if we keep our heart and mind set **firmly** on Him (i.e. ‘dwell in the secret place’, vs 1). It’s called the ‘noisome pestilence’ and is a combination of two Hebrew words. The word ‘**noisome**’ means **desire** as well as **ruin** (#1942). In the context of this verse, **noisome** means **ruin**. And the word ‘**pestilence**’ does indeed mean **a pestilence** (#1698), which is *a contagious or infectious*

epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating. The word ‘plague’ is pretty much synonymous to pestilence’ for it simply means *an epidemic disease causing a high rate of mortality*. However, a pestilence (or plague) can also be used, figuratively, to refer to *something that is destructive or pernicious*. Now, the Bible records *many* plagues and pestilences throughout the time. It happened to Egypt when God was plaguing them to let Israel go free. It happened to Israel when they were in the wilderness *because* they disobeyed God. It happened when Israel was *still disobeying* God while in the Promise Land. It also happened to Israel’s enemies at times, such as when the Philistines thought it would be a ‘good idea’ to steal the Ark of the Covenant, parade it around the country (like a trophy) and set it in the temple of their false god (1 Sam 5-6). And, of course, pestilences (and plagues) still go on today [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/205>].

But, our Heavenly Father promises us (here in Ps 91:3) that He will always ‘deliver’ us (snatch us away from) the snares of the folder *as well as* the noisome (ruinous) pestilence. **That means He won’t let us be ruined by it.** In other words, when we serve the Living God (YHVH), He’s not going to let us die until it’s our time. But, that doesn’t mean we won’t ever get sick. After all, we’ve already studied Psalms where David was praying to God *because he was sick* (Ps 32, 38) as well as *Heman too* (Ps 88). And even the great prophet Elisha died from a sickness (2 Kings 13:14). **So, just because we get sick in the flesh doesn’t mean that God is not keeping His Word.** He *does not* promise to keep us from *ever* being sick but rather, that we won’t die from any sickness (plague or pestilence) if it’s not in His Will. In other words, when we serve Him, He’ll help us to stay as healthy as we need to be (so long as we’re doing our part in taking care of ourselves) in order to serve Him. As Solomon pointed out in 1 Kings 8:37, pestilences, plagues and sicknesses were a part of life back then, just as they are now. Yet, if we pray to God for help, He will surely heal us IF it’s not our time to die. But if we don’t eat very well, or refuse to get some exercise (or do other stupid things to harm our flesh, like using drugs or abusing alcohol), then we’ll probably have to ‘bear our iniquity’ and be sick for a while longer.

But, never forget that our Heavenly Father is NOT stupid. He *knows* we typically need good health to serve Him on earth. And if we try our best to take care of our flesh bodies, *He’ll bless our efforts*. And even when we do get sick (which all do at times) then He’ll graciously help us to get over it; and we’ll likely even be stronger (more immune) afterwards. So, the beautiful lesson, from these past couple of verses, teach us that when we trust in our Heavenly Father (and flee to Him for help) then He’ll help us avoid Satan’s traps and won’t let any sickness come upon us that we can’t heal from. We are, after all, His servants. And He is certainly a *wonderful* God to serve....

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Ps 9:9-10

We'll pick this up in part 2...

AMEN.