

Faith OVER Fear

A study of Psalm 91

LESSON 3

Introduction: Psalm 91 is one of the most comforting passages in the bible. In line with Psalm 23 and Psalm 27 as well as others that we are drawn to in times trouble, this text is at the top of the running as a reminder of the character of God. This passage is a powerful note of why we have hope and comfort in God. This passage expresses the embodiment of what trust and faith are all about. More specifically, it offers comfort for the fearful and troubled. And, as we have begun looking at the subject of “Faith OVER Fear,” we will be especially interested in seeing the comfort that God gives us during our times of fear and difficulty.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to consider Psalm 91 and its contents on Faith OVER Fear so that we understand and apply these truths to our walk with God during troubling times.

To accomplish this purpose, we will consider at least four pictures of faith that this Psalm offers.

Those who go to God Most High for safety will be protected by the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God and I trust you.” (Psalm 91:1-2 NCV)

I. PICTURE OF PERSONAL CARE (1-2)

A. The psalmist uses the language of faith as he addresses The Most High, or The LORD. A lesson for every believer is to keep God as the centerpiece of your life and reality. Notice the description of our position in God while walking through the turbulence of this world.

1. **Dwell in the secret place.** All believers function from a duality. We are in this world, but we are not of this world. This reality, this world, can never be considered home. It is not final. Yet, when one is with God, they are always in the inner sanctum of His covenant care. **(Col. 3:1; 2:12)**
2. **Abide under the shadow of his wings.** The psalmist describes the care and position of this relationship like the tender love and care of God over His offspring. Like chick to a hen, or like small birds under the coverage of their mother.

B. Description of tender love of the object of your faith

1. My **refuge.** God is the refuge and shelter that we are blessed to live within. He alone is our sure place when everything else is questionable and doubtful. The believer can hear the promises of God whispered while walking through the calm spaces of their Creator’s residence. **(Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:6; Psalm. 118:6; Josh. 1:8-9)**
2. My **fortress.** God is the stronghold and unbreakable place of resolve when the human condition demonstrates how frail and temporary it is. He alone is the imperturbable power source during the winds of life. David, in his lifetime would call God the same. **(See Psalm 18:1-2)**

- a) I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:1-2)
 - b) The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall, I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)
3. My **God**. God is the Creator and covenant God. The psalmist grabs the plural designation of God used in Genesis. Perhaps as a reminder that when things are dark and chaotic, disconnected and shadowy that God can call light out of darkness and order out of chaos. (See **Gen. 1:1-ff**)

“God will save you from hidden traps and from deadly diseases. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you can hide. His truth will be your shield and protection.” (Psalm 91:3-4 NCV)

II. PICTURE OF PROVIDENTIAL CARE (3-4)

- A. A second picture in the Psalm is one of the providential care of God. *By providential care it is intended to mean the ability or means of God to see before the needs of His creation and provide what is necessary to cover and safeguard.* God is at work with His covenant children to walk with them through all of life’s dynamics. This psalm illustrates the meaning of providence in two ways.
- B. He shall **deliver**. Meaning He will “pull you out,” “Rescue you,” “Save you,” “Rescue you.” From what?
 - 1. The Snare of the fowler. The hidden traps that are set without your knowledge but, are devised according to one’s own appetite and inclination. Such as, the longings of an animal or prey.
 - 2. Perilous pestilence. The unseen subatomic, bacterial like dangers that infiltrate systems that are not obvious or seen with the naked eye. This is especially relevant to the current context. We are matriculating through dangers that hang over us and are unknown until it effecting us. Yet, even in the uncertain moments of dangers seen and unseen, God’s promise of comfort is that He will deliver. He will go ahead of the believer and ensure that they will be cared for beyond what they see and even what they do not see.
- C. He shall **cover**.
 - 1. Not only does God, “El Shaddai” deliver, he covers. Here is the picture of the tender nurturing like imagery of God. He will cover, brood over and protect us.

2. “As the mother bird covers her young with her wings, so God protects his people (Dt. 32:11). God’s truth, i.e., his faithfulness to his promises, is a defense (shield) against these dangers.”
3. The idea of God covering is shielding one in complete and perfect protection against anything in this created realm.
4. For those that trust and rely on God (remember our definition of trust), God has already made provision to watch over your life in way that parentally supersedes your own ability. He really is better to us than we are to ourselves.

You will not fear any danger by night or an arrow during the day. You will not be afraid of diseases that come in the dark or sickness that strikes at noon. At your side one thousand people may die, or even ten thousand right beside you, but you will not be hurt. You will only watch and see the wicked punished. (Psalm 91:5-8 NCV)

III. PICTURE OF PROTECTIVE CARE (5-8)

- A. Protection of **mind**. “You will not Fear” this describes one’s most reasonable response as a result of being in the care of God almighty!
- B. Protection from the unknown **dreads** of the night. The idea here ought to make one think of radars who come in and take advantage of persons. This is the notion of hostile troops ravaging one’s place of peace and comfort. When one faces the issues of life that are aggressive and unfair, remember that God will protect and keep you, ultimately, from being hurt by any force that is of this created realm.
- C. Protection from the **arrows** aimed from a distance (enemies near and far). Is it not amazing that God sees the plots of the arrow man that has taken you a target for death while you did not know that an unseen enemy wishes you harm? It includes the notion that you will overcome the small but violent effect of the arrow that flies through the air hoping to land in a lodging place of harm and life taking ramification. Vs. 5
- D. Protection from the **unseen** subtle micro biotic level attacks (Pestilence). Vs 6
- E. Protection from the **obvious** seen high noon horrors. Vs 6
- F. Protection from the **consequential** damage of the human condition. You will remember that God is in control and you will see that life includes his hand moving all around you. You will not fear or be dismayed. Why? Vs 7
- G. Protection from **doubt** and **fear**. Vs 8. You, the believer, will remember that God’s will is being done. God is in charge. God knows what is best for you currently. God see and knows what we do not see and know for ourselves.

The LORD is your protection; you have made God Most High your place of safety. Nothing bad will happen to you; no disaster will come to your home. He has put his angels in charge of you to watch over you wherever you go. They will catch you in their hands so that you will not hit

your foot on a rock. You will walk on lions and cobras; you will step on strong lions and snakes. (Psalm 91:9-13 NCV)

IV. PICTURE OF PERFECT CARE (9-13)

- A. This section of the psalm echoes what has been mentioned earlier.
- B. The structure of the text is chiasmic as it seems to be two book ends on the same argument.
- C. He opens the passage describing the care of God and the comfort of the believer in that care and now is concluding with the same reminder.
 - 1. He is our refuge. Vs 9
 - 2. He is my dwelling place. Vs 9
 - 3. He is my protection. Vs 10
- D. An added note of comfort is given with the promise of the angelic servants that are at the disposal of the believer. “He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.”
- E. One can certainly here this text referenced in the trial of Jesus as he faces Satan. (Mt. 4:6; Luke 4:11). The point it seems, is that God is faithful in offering comfort that transcends the natural to the supernatural. The hope we receive is that even the unseen realm of the celestial is on our side to cover and care for us through all of trouble and challenges of the human condition.

The LORD says, “Whoever loves me, I will save. I will protect those who know me. They will call to me, and I will answer them. I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honor them. I will give them a long, full life, and they will see how I can save.” (Psalm 91:14-16 NCV)

V. PICTURE OF PERSONAL CARE (14-16)

- A. The final picture is one that takes a pivot in the Psalm and God speaks to the covenant participant.
- B. He is stating His promises as a result of the believers resolve.
- C. Notice the implications of the passage. When we trust Him. When we have intense and complete reliance on God that is based on our relationship with Him, devotion to His word and remembrance of His nature, then God will:
 - 1. **Deliver** him. Vs 14
 - 2. Give **security**. Vs 14
 - 3. **Answer** us when we call on Him. Vs 15
 - 4. **Rescue**. Vs. 15
 - 5. **Honor** with a long life. Vs. 15
 - 6. He will **satisfy** him. Vs. 16
 - 7. He will allow him to see his **salvation**. Vs.16

Conclusion: This Psalm is a reminder of the unequivocal care and devotion that God has for His most prized possession, His children. He is not surprised by the conditions that surround our existence. Our posture ought to be that we will see the pictures of His covenant care and celebrate the faithfulness of The Father.