

Classic Christian Writings:

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God has directed my focus of ministry for at least the last 30 years on using the authority of the believer to stand strong against the schemes and plans of the enemy Satan. There's not any portion of Scripture that is more worthy for that subject than Psalm 91. I believe we who are in God's work ought to be praying this Psalm over ourselves, our ministries and our families every day. I encourage you to memorize it.

We aren't sure who wrote this Psalm. Most Bible scholars assign it to Moses, and the major reason for that is that it follows Psalm 90, which is definitely credited to Moses, the man of God. I believe there is some internal evidence as well that probably indicates it is a Psalm of Moses. Let us read it:

1) He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2) I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

3) Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. 4) He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. 5) You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, 6) nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. 7) A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. 8) You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

9) If you make the most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—10) then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. 11) For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; 12) they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. 13) You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

Then God steps into the Psalm and speaks: 14) "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. 15) He will 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 will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Myriads of times the various Psalmists cry out for deliverance from their enemy. The word "enemy" or "enemies" appears directly over 100 times. There are at least 100 other titles describing the enemy, like "the wicked one," "the adversary," "those who hate me," and "the fowler" as in this Psalm, "the evil one," "the destroyer." Why all this focus upon enemies in the hearts of those who are crying out to God?

This is a very significant and important topic. Sometimes the Psalms have in mind real, tangible enemies, like the armies of the Philistines or Saul with his javelin in his hand ready to pin David to the wall, or soldiers of Saul sent out to find him, or in one case, his own son Absalom, who wanted to take the kingdom from his father. David knew what it was to have real, physical world enemies and most of us have had some experience with that.

But as you examine the Psalms you will discover that some of the enemies which they refer to are the internal kind, the enemies that are in the heart. These are the enemies that come out of the fallenness of man. It makes our hearts hateful, bitter, angry, resentful, unkind, lustful, jealous, etc. Those enemies can be very destructive. David in Psalm 25 talked about these enemies that hated him with a cruel hatred, and they hated him because the troubles of his heart were enlarged. David had spiritual heart trouble just like all of us do. We have to deal with it. The fleshliness of temptation is something very real in our world system in the experience of most of us.

But as you examine the Psalms you can't miss the fact that sometimes the Psalmist is talking about the spiritual enemy—the enemy Lucifer, the devil, and that is the focus of Psalm 91. Moses had a great deal of experience in dealing with the infernal enemy in his encounters with Pharaoh. He was up against the soothsayers, the magicians, the astrologers and all of those who had supernatural contact with the realm of darkness. Moses understood that battle very much. But he also understood the application of the victory that belongs to you and me. That's the focus of this Psalm, and I've given it the title of, "The Sure Stance for Defeating Darkness."

We need to realize when we are talking about revival that the devil hates revival more than any other subject.

I have written several books on doing battle with the enemy. I only wrote one book that focused wholly on revival. Many folk have said to me, "When you wrote those books, did you experience a great deal of battle?" I had to say, "Not too much when I wrote 'The Adversary' and 'Overcoming the Adversary,' but when I wrote the book, 'The Rise of Fallen Angels,' the study of Nehemiah and how God used him to bring revival, the battle was fierce, almost overwhelming at times."

Revival is something that the devil hates. We need to know when we're involved in seeking revival that there's a place where we can know victory and protection.

A Safe, Restful Dwelling Place

First of all, we can be sure of a safe resting place. Notice how the writer begins this Psalm: "He who dwells [He who abides] in the shelter [that's the protection] of the Most High" [that's Elyon, which is one of His transcendent, superlative names, a measureless name, infinite]. You and I have the privilege of choosing to dwell, to abide in the provided protection of the Highest of all the high, of whom there is no one higher. It is a wonderful thing to dwell upon the greatness of our Lord, His transcendence. God wants to bring us to focus upon the infinite greatness of God, the measureless wonder of who He is, the "high and lofty One who inhabits eternity" says Isaiah 57. What a majestic One is our Lord! You can be sure of dwelling there with Him.

And the one who chooses to dwell in that provided protection will rest, will be at peace in the shadow of the "Almighty." There you have the second Old Testament focus on the awesome majesty of God in His infinite power. It is the word "Shaddai." It's another transcendent word, a superlative word, a measureless word—all power, omnipotent power. When you choose to dwell in the provided protection that Elyon gives you, you will rest, you will be at peace, you'll be safe in the shadow of Shaddai. We need to know that because the enemy hates us with a cruel hatred. We are in the shadow of our high and lofty Elyon, our Shaddai. It speaks of His nearness, of His closeness, of His focus, to give us protection, to give us peace.

But the Psalmist doesn't stop with two names. He goes on: "I will say of the Lord [that is Yahweh, Jehovah] 'He is my refuge and my fortress.'" That is God's personal name. It describes our Lord in His love, in His mercy, in His grace, in His compassion and in His goodness. So the focus is upon the loftiness, the power, the love, the kindness, and the mercy of our Lord.

He doesn't stop there. He says, "my God"—that's Elohim. That is one of the Old Testament names for God that staggers all the theologians. Nobody can really explain it. It is what some call a singular-plural word—one, and yet the plural ending. That perhaps is a hint at least of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We may have a very personal relationship to God. We can be sure of a safe, restful dwelling place.

A Hiding Place

We can also be sure of a comforted, protected hiding place. In verse 3 it says He will save you from the "fowler's snare." The fowler is the devil. One of the first books I read on the subject of our personal battle with the realm of darkness was, "The Snare of the Fowler." He is a cruel, ruthless hunter and you're his target. The fowler put his bait out and prepared a snare. In case the snare didn't work, he had a boomerang kind of instrument he threw to stun his prey, and then walked over and picked it up. That's the kind of enemy we have. This Psalm bears it out and certainly it's all through the Scripture.

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). Moses, if indeed he is the author, or whoever the Psalmist is, had a very clear awareness of the battle with the fowler. He always has deadliness on his mind—"from the deadly pestilence." But the Psalmist brings us right back to where all the focuses should be, upon Elyon and Shaddai and Jehovah and Elohim: "He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." What a wonderful picture!

If you didn't grow up on a farm, you've missed one of nature's great studies. When a hen gathers her chicks and comes strutting out after she has hatched them, she has a number of different clucks. She has a certain cluck that tells the chicks where the food is, and they come running. But she has another cluck when danger threatens. Somehow God has built into the hen and into the chick the word of alarm, and when that cluck is sounded, they come running. Then she fluffs her feathers and she settles down on the chicks. They're safe there. She'll not leave them. She'll die there for those chicks.

I remember as a boy I had a dog that was absolutely fearless. He'd tackle anything on the farm. I used to try

to get him to go to an old hen and see if he could get her off her brood. The only time I remember old Sport putting his tail between his legs and going the other way was when I tried to get him to do that. There was something about the look of that hen in her eye that scared the dog. We've all read stories of going where a prairie fire has been. You come to a little mound and you kick the little mound over. It's a carcass of a hen, and the little chicks, saved by the death of the hen, run out from that protection.

Remember what Jesus said about Jerusalem as He wept over the city? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34). That is what Jesus did for us: He put His feathers over us and He didn't leave us and He died. He died to cover you with His feathers, so that under His wings you can find refuge.

Fearless, Confident Skirmishes

Next you'll notice in the Psalm that we can be sure of fearless, confident skirmishes. We never have to wonder about this. It is absolutely a part of what we face in this struggle with evil. The enemy is always pressing the battle to us.

You will notice in verses 5 and 6, "You will not fear the terror of night." Fear is one of the devil's strongest tools against all of us. He tries to make us afraid. He roars like a lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8), and his motive is to make us fearful and afraid. He likes to use terror. He uses the darkness of night to focus on fear and terror. That's one of the ways he battles us.

"Nor for the arrow that flies by day." He doesn't just come against us at night. He shoots at us all day long.

"...nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness." I've been a counselor all my pastoral years and in these later years, I've been called upon to head up a ministry that's devoted to counseling. I don't believe there is any kind of counseling that is more difficult to deal with than somebody who is under the attack of a stalker. Somebody is just stalking the person all the time: waiting for the person outside the store when he or she comes out. Sometimes the stalker waits outside the house. That's the kind of enemy the devil is. He is a stalker. He uses pestilence to stalk in the darkness.

"...nor the plague that destroys at midday." The picture is of the fowler, this trapper, this brutal, cruel enemy who wants to use fear and terror and darkness and shooting at you and stalking you to destroy you. That is his agenda. And yet, we can be sure of fearless, confident skirmishes.

Satan's agenda is not successful if you dwell in the shelter of the Most High, and are resting in the shadow of the Almighty. You can see some who are failing, falling victims. Verses 7 and 8 are fascinating verses: "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you." That's quite a statement. A thousand falling, ten thousand falling, and you not experiencing it? Who are these people who are falling? They are obviously victims of the fowler. They are people who have come under the attack of the destruction of the evil one. They are everywhere around us—not just thousands, or tens of thousands, but millions who have been brutalized by evil, whose lives have been destroyed. Families have been destroyed. Nobody seems to care. But God cares!

Why do you think that this Psalm says, "No harm will befall you"? Is it so you can strut around and bask in your safety? No, He keeps you safe for one reason—so you can get down where they are and pour in revival, to bind up the wounds, and set the captives free. Your safety is for ministry, for healing the brokenhearted, binding up the wounds. He says, "You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked," and it's a tragic sight.

I don't believe we'll see revival until God can break us over the fallen ones, the wounded ones, those who are in destruction and defeat. And they're just everywhere. We ought to pray for the brokenness and the woundedness that's all around us because of the fowler's schemes to rule the world, and to destroy human life and to keep people from coming to Christ. If we don't weep over these things, who will? It has to begin in the house of God's people.

Protecting, Caring Angels

In the midst of this great battle, and the fowler's attempt to destroy us and rob us, we have this promise that we can be sure of protecting, caring angels to help us. Verse 9 marks a switch in the Psalm. This is the Psalmist giving his testimony. It's coming right out of his heart. "If you make the Most High [that's Elyon] your

dwelling—**even the Lord [Yahweh], who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.**"

If this is Moses, I believe he is testifying about something very personal in his life. He did make the Most High his dwelling, and the Lord was his refuge. He experienced that last night in Egypt, with no harm befalling him, no disaster coming near his tent.

"For He [that's Elyon, Jehovah] will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." That is a picture of the victory our Lord Jesus Christ lived out for us. Satan knew this Psalm was about Him. He quoted it to the Lord Jesus when he tested Him and tried to get the Lord to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and see if God really would have His angels catch Him. The Lord quoted the Word and would not respond to that temptation (Matt. 4:5-7).

It helps us to know that the angels of Heaven have a tremendous assignment to take care of us in the heat of battle. In spiritual revival and awakening, they will be very attentive to join in the battle, and to protect us. We can be sure of protecting, caring, holy angels watching over us. What a contrast between evil angels who are bent on our destruction and defeat, and holy angels, whose major assignment is to care for God's people.

Satan conveniently stopped his quoting of this Psalm with verse 12. He did not quote verse 13: "You will tread upon the lion and the cobra." The lion is strong and the cobra is cunning. "You will trample the great lion and the serpent."

You can be sure of crushing and trampling Satan's kingdom. There isn't anything that would trash and crush his kingdom more than a mighty revival awakening that would stir the church. Revival would bring two major things. First of all, it would bring the refinement and the healing of the woundedness in the Body of Christ. There is much sin and hurt and woundedness among God's people. Secondly, it would bring a tremendous ingathering of lost people that would glorify God.

God's people, walking in God's provision, crush the kingdom of darkness. As we move out in believing God for revival awakening, great victory comes. God puts Satan under our feet in defeat as we bow before Him. Might we be sure of intimate, deepening, godly fellowship with Him.

Who Are These Resting, Protected People?

I love the way this Psalm closes. There is something about the Psalm that is so honoring to God, so glorifying of who He really is and what He longs to do through His people. The Psalmist is pouring this truth out, and challenging his own heart and all who would read it. Right in the midst of it, it is like God wants to get in on what's happening here. God speaks. He is giving us insight into who these people are who dwell in the shelter of the Most High and rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Who are they?

First of all, they are people who love the Lord. "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him." I hope you never tire of just repeating to the Lord that you love Him and that you worship Him. You love what He's done for you, and you pray back to Him what He's done for you. Express your love in that way.

"I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name." The focus of this Psalm is upon the names of God. Balanced spiritual warfare always focuses upon God and who God is, never upon the devil. One of the greatest ways to appreciate who God is, is to focus on His names. Set your heart upon knowing more about God. You'll notice that the Lord is pleased with that: "I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."

Then they are people who pray: "He will call upon me, and I will answer him." There are people who find the whole focus of their life centered in the Lord. "I will be with him in trouble." When troubles comes they turn to the Lord, for they know that He will be with them. "I will deliver him and honor him." They will be delivered by Him, and He will honor them. The only honor that really matters is God's honor. In the final analysis, no honor we ever get in this life will amount to much at all. But when God honors us, that is an awesome thing.

"With long life will I satisfy him..." There is no satisfaction in life apart from its coming from God. My wife and I have lived long enough to know that nothing in life really matters except what God has for us, and the satisfaction that comes from Him.

Then He concludes with, "I'll show him my salvation." That's very New Testament, because the word for

salvation in Hebrew is the way a Jewish person would say "Jesus." God is saying, "I'll show you My Jesus." That's what we're all looking for, the coming of our Jesus!

A Closing Prayer

O Heavenly Father, how wonderful it is to focus upon You as we've done through this Psalmist! We've sought to lift our eyes unto the One Who is High and Lofty, the One who transcends all loftiness and highness, the One who is measureless in the wonder of who You are. We look upon the Heavens, and sometimes we're staggered by the immensity of the skies, and we remember that You're infinitely greater than Your creation, measureless in the wonder of Your Person! Thank you, Lord, that You are indeed Almighty and Omnipotent, that You are able to humble our hearts before the throne of God, and to bring us to the place where we are a broken people, sensitive to the leadings and moving of Your Holy Spirit. We treasure this from Your heart....Do for us what we cannot do for ourselves....