

PSALM 91

It is not known who wrote Psalm 91. Some think Moses wrote both Psalms 90 and 91 to comfort the Israelites during their forty years sojourn in the wilderness. Others think it is a Messianic Psalm prophesying God's protection over the Messiah who was to come – Jesus – during His earthly ministry. Regardless of who wrote it and whether or not it is a Messianic Psalm, the promises it contains are for believers in every age (CP Psa 91:1-16). Here believers are promised virtual immunity from every sickness and disease imaginable, calamities, evils, plagues, demonic attacks, robbery, murder, venomous snakes and other poisonous creatures, wild animals, accidents, and even premature death.

Some might find it hard to reconcile these promises with the fact that down through the ages countless Christians have been victims of the very things from which the Psalm promises immunity. But Christians cannot allow the experience of some to affect their faith in God to fulfil His promises in them. God has said He will do it, and by faith Christians must believe that He will (CP Nu 23:19; Psa 89:34; Isa 55:10-11; Jer 1:12 with 2Cor 1:18-20). Every promise of God is fulfilled in Christ and is *yes* for New Testament Christians. If some cannot appropriate the promises, others cannot let that influence their thinking. It does not alter the fact of scripture that the promises are there to be fulfilled (CP Ro 3:3-4). However, like every other promise in scripture, the promises of Psalm 91 are not open-ended. They are dependent upon believers conforming to the conditions (CP V1). We learn from this that in order to *abide under the shadow of the almighty*, which means to be under the care and protection of almighty God, one must first *dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*. The word *dwelleth* means to remain, abide, continue, endure; to possess a place and live therein (CP Jn 6:56; 14:10; 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:6; 3:24; 4:15-16). *Dwelleth* and *abide* in these scriptures means to be and remain united with Christ, one with Him in mind, heart, and will. The clear teaching in all this is that for believers to appropriate any of God's promises, they must live in unbroken fellowship with God, never acting in self-will but doing only what God directs in His word. They must be totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus (CP Ex 15:26; 23:25-26; De 7:12-15; 28:1-14; Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:13).

Only Christians whose relationship with Jesus is mirrored in all the foregoing scriptures can be sure that they dwell in the secret place of the Most High – under the care and protection of almighty God. They can affirm that God is their *refuge* – their hope, safe shelter, and their *fortress* – their defence, strong tower (CP Psa 9:9-10; 46:1; 61:3; 142:5; Pr 14:26-27; Isa 25:4). Believers totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus can also affirm their trust in God to deliver them from the *snare of the fowler* and the *noisome pestilence* (CP Psa 91:2-4 with Job 5:19-23; Psa 124:7-8; Isa 43:1-2). *Snare of the fowler* refers metaphorically to Satanic plots to trap unwary Christians (CP Eph 6:11-18; 2Ti 2:24-26; 1Pe 5:8). *Noisome pestilence* refers to deadly

plagues, dreaded disease, epidemics (CP Jer 14:12; Eze 5:12; 14:19). *He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust* in Psa 91:4 also speaks figuratively of God's care and protection (CP Ruth 2:12; 2Sam 22:1-4; Psa 17:8; 57:1). *His truth shall be thy shield and thy buckler* also in Psa 91:4 means that the sure word of God is the Christian's protection and defence against the hidden traps laid by Satan, and the deadly plagues and other hazards we looked at in V3 – *the snare of the fowler and the noisome pestilence* (CP Josh 1:7-8; Psa 119:1-6, 89, 105, 130, 151, 165, He 4:12).

Truly committed Christians in whom God's word abides will not be afraid of the terror of night when all sorts of evils are committed. Nor will they be afraid of the *arrow that flieth by day*, which speaks figuratively of dangers and disasters which can strike at any time of the day. Neither will they fear the *pestilence of darkness* (CP Psa 91:5-6). *Pestilence of darkness* refers back to the deadly plagues, dreaded disease and epidemics of V3 (CP Job 5:19-23; Psa 112:4, 6-8; Pr 3:23-26). Regardless of what disaster befalls others it will not affect Christians who comply with the conditions applying to Psalm 91 (CP V7-8). Even when there are thousands struck down around them it will not affect those who abide in Christ and in whom His word abides. They will simply be spectators, free from harm when the wicked are punished (CP Psa 1:4-6; 37:18-20, 34-38; 91:9-10; Pr 12:21; Mal 1:4-5). No evil of any description or plague can overcome Christians who have made God their habitation – their abode, their dwelling place. God sends His angels to minister to their every need. They are lifted up by the angels so they do not even stub their toe (CP Psa 34:7; 91:11-12; 103:20; Mt 18:10; He 1:14). Christians who have made God their habitation have power over wild beasts, venomous snakes and other poisonous creatures, as well as power over all Satanic powers they symbolize (CP Psa 91:13 with Lu 10:1, 17-20; 2Cor 11:3; Eph 6:11-18; 1Pe 5:8; Rev 12:9).

In the last three verses in Psalm 91, God Himself pronounces eight blessings for those who have consecrated themselves to His service (CP V14-16). *Love* in V14 in this context means delight in, cling to. This teaches that God has only obligated Himself to deliver those who truly delight in Him from all their troubles, and He will honour them (CP Job 22:26-28; Psa 37:1-6; Isa 58:2; Ro 7:22). God will satisfy those who qualify for the blessings of Psalm 91 with a long life on earth and salvation (CP 1Sam 2:30; Psa 50:15; Pr 3:1-2). It should be noted here in closing that the conditions of salvation are the same in both the Old and New Testaments. God has laid down the conditions and they must be complied with in order to be saved. God has only obligated Himself to save those who comply (CP Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:31). No one will be saved who is not totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus. Christians need to know this and understand that these are the conditions of entry into heaven and no one can enter in on any other terms (CP 2Cor 13:5). Paul is teaching Christians here of the necessity to constantly examine themselves to ensure that they qualify for salvation. This is an imperative that all Christians must heed.