

Psalm 91 in Word, Worship, and Prayer

BACKGROUND:

Psalm 91 is traditionally ascribed to Moses, who wrote the preceding Psalm. Where Psalm 90 reflects on God's rescue from sin, Psalm 91 reflects on God's rescue from evil.

The poetic images and allusions to specific dangers in verses 3-13 (e.g. human enemies, hunger, and wild animals) suggest the Psalm was composed during the Israelite's *wandering in the wilderness*. This takes on new meaning when we read about Jesus' *temptation in the wilderness*, where Satan twisted the words of Psalm 91 in a cunning and deceitful way:

Then the devil took [Jesus] to the holy city, Jerusalem, and said,
"If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say:
 '*He will order his angels to protect you.*
 And they will hold you up with their hands
 so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say,
 '*You must not test the LORD your God.*'"
Mark 4:5-7 (see also Luke 4:9-12)

Surely we must never similarly misuse the promises of scripture to serve our own desires or purposes.

We must also be careful about how we understand and interpret the images and metaphors in this and every other Psalm. Do the words of Psalm 91 mean that God has actual feathered wings under which we hide? Do they actually promise that God will keep us from ever facing hardship, struggling with illness, or dealing with danger? Do they truly declare that he will literally give us power to crush living lions and slithering serpents with our feet? Or do these poetic images reflect deeper spiritual truths?

As you read Psalm 91, note these things:

Verse 1 summarizes the Psalm's overall foundational truth.
Verse 2 is the Psalmist's declaration about the LORD.
Verses 3-13 describes God's powerful and faithful protection.
Verses 14-15 is the LORD's declaration about his children — those who love and trust him.

**Other images of God's protective shadow refuge:

shadow of your wings (Ps. 63:7)
shadow of his tree (S. of S. 2:3)
shadow of the rock (Is. 32:2)
shadow of his hand (Is. 49:2)

OPENING PRAYER:

Listen to Amena Brown's spoken word **"The Place of Prayer"** (2:00)

Pray these words: (1:00)

Our Father - We come to you — our refuge, our fortress, our place of safety — to say:
 thank you for your immeasurable and undeserved love —
 thank you for your faithful provision and comfort —
 thank you for your revealed words of truth and light —
 forgive us for when we have not leaned on you and listened to you —
 heal us of our brokenness and division —
 rescue us from hatred and despair —
 protect us from evil that surrounds us and evil that ensnares us —
 You are our God, and we trust you.
 Amen.

READ/HEAR:

Read Psalm 91 aloud (2:00)

Listen to Psalm 91 sung [here](#) (NIV)] (6:45)

WRITE:

List all the descriptions of God, both explicit and implicit.

Copy verse 2 (the declaration of the Psalmist)
verses 14-16 (the declaration of the Lord)

If time allows, copy out all of Psalm 91 spending slow and careful time with the Word of God.

If time allows, use the outline below to compose your own Psalm following the frame of Psalm 91.

Compose This I declare about the LORD _____
He rescues and protects me from _____
I will not be afraid of _____
The LORD _____

REFLECT/RESPOND:

- What do you personally declare about God? “This I say about the Lord, _____”
- How has God rescued, protected, answered, delivered, and satisfied you in the past months during virus fears, ministry disruptions, social unrest, relational discord, and daily unknowns?
- How do you intentionally and daily place your trust in God?
- How has your faith, trust, and understanding of God grown in the past months?
- How has your faith, trust, and understanding of God been challenged in the past months?
- “In these unknown days, I”
- “In these unknown days, God ...”

HEAR:

Listen to Renew Collective’s worship version of “Psalm 91” [here](#) (6:51)

PRAY:

Pray these words again: (1:00)

Our Father - We come to you — our refuge, our fortress, our place of safety — to say:
thank you for your immeasurable and undeserved love —
thank you for your faithful provision and comfort —
thank you for your revealed words of truth and light —
forgive us for when we have not leaned on you and listened to you —
heal us of our brokenness and division —
rescue us from hatred and despair —
protect us from evil that surrounds us and evil that ensnares us —
You are our God, and we trust you.
Amen.