

## ***My Safety and My Security***

*Psalm 91 - NCBC, December 9, 2018*

Main Point: **God's most secure protection is reserved for those who trust and love Him.**

- Trust God's Name for your protection (1-2, 9, 14)
  - You trust whoever you believe is most powerful
  - You love whoever you believe is most precious
  - You rest with whoever you believe is most personal
- Trust God's Faithfulness for your protection (3-13)
  - God's words always prove true
  - God's judgment always transpires
  - God's angels always guard you
- Trust God's Promises for your protection (14-16)
  - God keeps you from danger
  - God answers your prayers
  - God saves and satisfies your soul

Application: **Abide with God in growing faith and love!**

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### **Opening Announcements:**

- Salem Ranch Update from Shane Knapp
- Still seeking Ice Camp Prayer Partners!

<<O Come O Come Emmanuel>>



Emmanuel means God with us.<sup>1</sup> Just think about this miracle that God Himself – the holy, majestic, all-powerful God Himself – is with us. By His Spirit He is among us here this morning.

For all who trust in God, the truth that God is with us should calm our fears and fuel our worship this morning!

But what if you don't believe God? What if you are trying to hide from God? Then Emmanuel – God with us – should cause you to tremble. For you are in the very presence of your Holy Judge.

Yet today this God that has every right to destroy you – is coming to you through the preaching of my voice and inviting you to believe on Him that you might be saved! The God who is with us is also named Jesus – for He has come to take away our sins!<sup>2</sup> Good news of great joy!! Emmanuel is Jesus – so whoever believes on Him no longer has to fear being banished to hell! Through

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 1:23; c.f. Isaiah 7:14

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 1:21

repentance and faith in Jesus – every one of our sins can be forgiven and we can be more welcomed and loved by our holy God than we ever could dare to dream or hope to imagine!

No wonder we gather together to worship God by opening our Bibles to **Psalm 91**!



If you don't have a Bible today, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. **Psalm 91** is on page \_\_\_\_ in the giveaway Bibles today.

Between the conclusion of our study in **1 Peter** and Christmas, we're preaching on the top 5 favorite psalms of New Castle Bible Church. We've already studied **Psalm 1**, **Psalm 23**, and **Psalm 51**. Now today we turn our attention to **Psalm 91**.



Please stand in honor of the public reading of God's Word, as I read **Psalm 91** from the **English Standard Translation**.

- 91** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- <sup>2</sup> I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."
- <sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence.
- <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
- <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.
- <sup>8</sup> You will only look with your eyes

and see the recompense of the wicked.

- 9 Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge—  
10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.  
12 On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.  
13 You will tread on the lion and the adder;  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample  
underfoot.
- 14 “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver  
him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.  
15 When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.  
16 With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation.”

This is the word of our Lord. You may be seated.

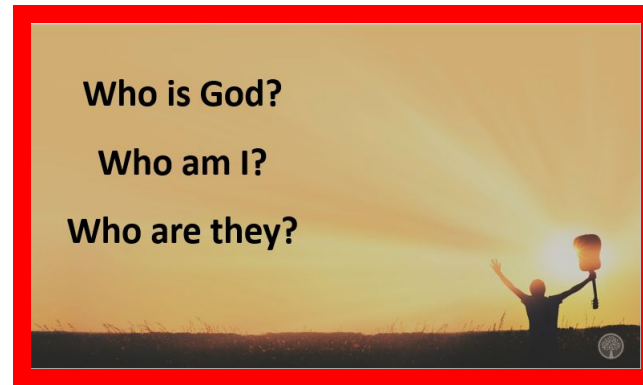
### Let's Pray.

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Counselor and writer Ed Welch teaches that there are three big questions continually in operation at the core of your life:

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<sup>3</sup> Welch, Ed. *What do you think of Me? Why Do I Care? – Answers to the*  
Page 3a of 15



### Who is God? Who am I? and Who are they?

These three questions, or more accurately how you answer these three questions, will frame your entire outlook and attitude in life. Who do you believe God is? Who do you believe you are? And who do you believe those other people are?

Important questions like these deserve more than just a token response. After all, it's easy to give the right Sunday School answer to these questions: Who is God? He is the holy Redeemer and Lord. Who am I? Well, I am an adopted child of God. Who are they? They are sinners for me to love and witness to.

But then trouble comes into our life to test and prune us. And suffering is a very good diagnostic tool for the human heart – for it always exposes the real answers to these questions inside us.

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*Big Questions of Life*, New Growth Press, 2011.

So when the bills pile up and the creditors start to call and we feel this pressure to purchase Christmas gifts that we can't afford... our functional view of God will determine what we do, and how we do it. Will we complain, believing that God has mistreated us? Will we steal, believing God has deserted us? Or will we pray, believing God will answer us?

When others are quick to tell us all that we are doing wrong, and we see more failure in our own life than success – what we really believe about who we are will be exposed. If I believe that I deserve to be respected, or I believe that I'll never be good enough, or I believe that I am secure in God's love ...frankly how I answer the question of *Who I am* will directly influence my mindset and manners in trouble.

And when others hurt you – your response helps you to see how you answer that third question, right? Are they the ones who give you worth? Do you believe they exist for you? Do they exist for your happiness or for your holiness?

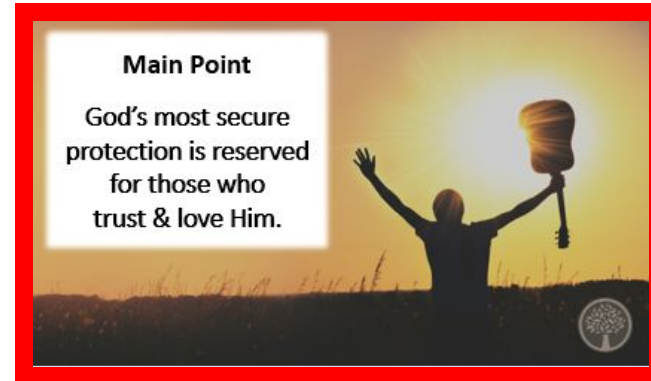
Here's the point – God designs storms to enter our lives at times to test our answer to all three of these questions – and our joy depends on how our answers reflect the life-giving truth of God's Word.

So this morning if you are in the midst of fearful trials, turn to **Psalm 91**. The author of this Psalm is not revealed, but it's likely Moses wrote both **Psalm 90 and 91**.<sup>4</sup> So listen to this man of God speak into your pain

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<sup>4</sup> The language between Psalm 90 and 91 is closely connected, along with references to Moses' words in Deuteronomy 32-33.

and help reorient your heart to a biblical answer to Who is God? **Psalm 91** is one of our favorite psalms since it powerfully reminds us that God is a protector. He's our security.



**God's most secure protection is reserved for those who trust and love Him.**

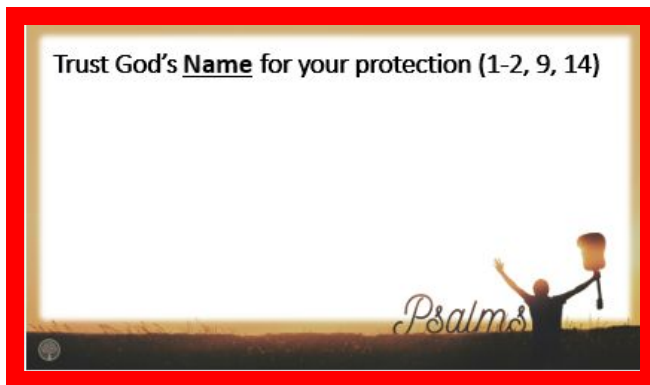
No matter what or who I am facing – I can trust God. Although my circumstances are difficult, my God is delightful. **Psalm 91** is a great foxhole psalm – a cheerful song to encourage the faint-hearted and strengthen the perplexed.

**Psalm 91** is neatly divided into three sections. In **verses 1-2**, Moses gives his own personal statement of faith – referring to himself with the pronoun, “I.”

But then in **verses 3-13**, the pronoun changes to “you.” This is Moses teaching you directly about all the ways God can be trusted to protect those who trust and love Him.

Lastly in **verses 14-16**, the pronoun changes back to “I,” but it is no longer Moses who is speaking. These last three verses contain God’s promises to those who abide in Him by faith and love. In **verses 14-16** God offers six specific promises to all who believe on Him.

So let’s first consider Moses’ own personal statement of faith which urges us to,



Trust God’s Name for our protection.

Friend – no matter what you are facing - you can trust who God is. *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.*<sup>5</sup>

**Verse 1 says,** *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’*

Now notice the four different names for God used in these first two verses. All four names emphasize some aspect of God’s power or omnipotence.

Moses knows that,



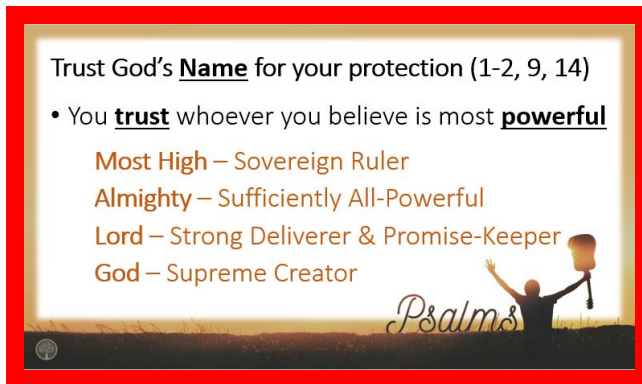
You trust whoever you believe is most powerful.

When you’re in trouble – you’re going to trust whoever or whatever you believe has the most power for your safety and security. It doesn’t matter if you’re facing a home intruder, or a house fire, or a vicious military enemy... it just makes common sense that you will trust whoever you believe is most powerful for your protection.

So how does Moses describe God in these first 2 verses?

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<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 18:10  
Page **5a** of 15



The **Most High** means God is above all others. No one is higher than God. Church – soak on this – God is sovereign ruler over all! He is the Most High! He is above your family, your neighbor, your boss, your government. God is more powerful than your enemy, and greater than your bully! He is the **Almighty** – meaning He is all-sufficient. There is no power that God Himself does not possess and righteously execute for the sake of His own will. **Lord** in **verse 2** translates the name *Yahweh* – referring to God's power to keep His promises with His people and deliver them. The Lord is strong enough to save the Israelites from Egypt in faithfulness to His covenant. And **God** or *Elohim* refers to God as the supreme Creator – the One who has the power to speak matter into existence with just a simple word!! *Let there be...* and there was!!

No wonder Moses says I will trust in God. For Moses truly believed that God was the most powerful source of protection.

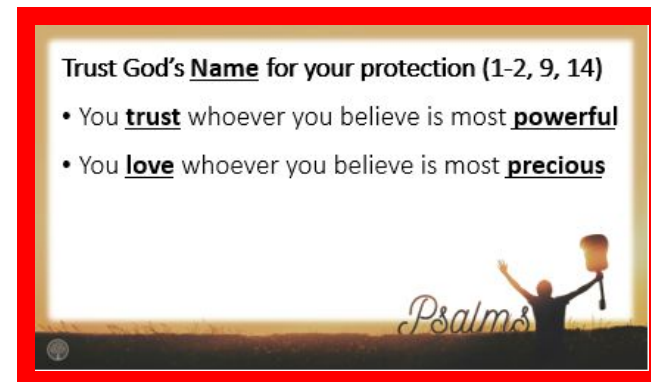
Now of course like us, there were times Moses doubted God's power. Like when the millions of Israelites were

demanding meat in the wilderness, and Moses became suicidal.<sup>6</sup> Or when he proudly struck the rock at Meribah to bring forth water for the people.<sup>7</sup>

So let me ask you – are there times like Moses when you begin to despair that no one – not even God Himself – is powerful enough to protect you? Or are there other times when you believe you yourself are the only person you can trust?

Carefully consider the power of the Biblical God! You trust whoever you believe is most powerful.

And then remember that our God is not only powerful, but He is also good. God is worthy of your love and affection.



For You love whoever you believe is most precious.

<sup>6</sup> Numbers 11:4-15

<sup>7</sup> Numbers 20:10-13

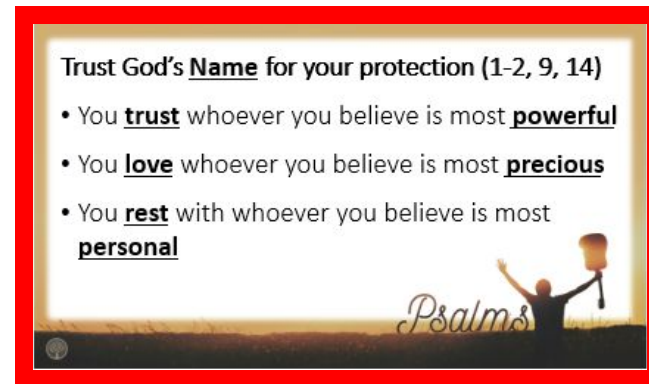


Look down at God's promises starting in **verse 14**,  
*Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows my name.*

You will only cling to God in love and affection when you come to understand that all His power is employed not against you – but for your eternal joy and blessedness!<sup>8</sup> God promises<sup>9</sup> to deliver and protect those who trust him and love him.

So God is the Most High, all-powerful God? Yep. And He promises to deliver and protect me? Well... that actually depends on whether you are satisfying the conditions of **verse 14 and verse 9**. God's most secure protection is reserved for those who trust and love Him – those who hold fast to God in love. Those who possess a passion for God, and have a sincere desire to fellowship with God personally. Those who look to God for protection.

Friend – do you cherish God? Is the Almighty God precious or most valuable to you? You will trust whoever you believe is most powerful, and you will love whoever you believe is most precious. And,



You will rest with whoever you believe is most personal.

**Verse 9** gives the third “because,” or condition of God’s protection in this chapter,

*Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge...*

Dwelling place conjures up the idea of rest. Coming home. Intimacy. Fellowship. It points back to the two verbs in **verse 1**: *to dwell or to abide*. Fearful soul – come rest your anxious soul in the shelter of the Most High. Come stay and spend the “night” in the shadow of the Almighty!

Sin whispers to battle-weary souls – come dwell with me. I will give you pleasure and I will give you security. But sin is a liar. Never trust sin to protect you loved ones. Sin will promise protection even while it’s leading you to your ultimate ruin.

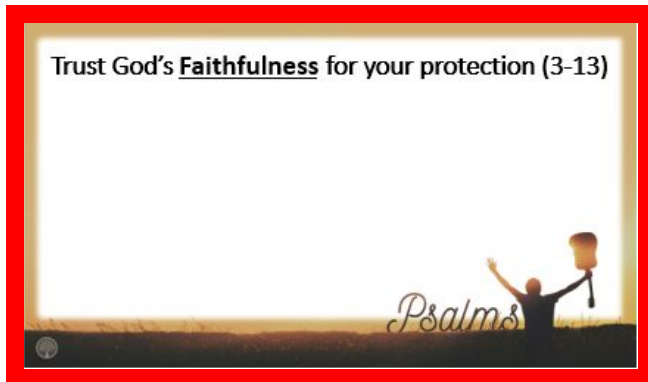
So join with Moses’ personal statement of faith in say to the Lord in **verse 2**, You alone are my refuge and my

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:31ff

<sup>9</sup> C.f. 1 Peter 1:8 for the symbiotic relationship between love and faith – which results in joy.

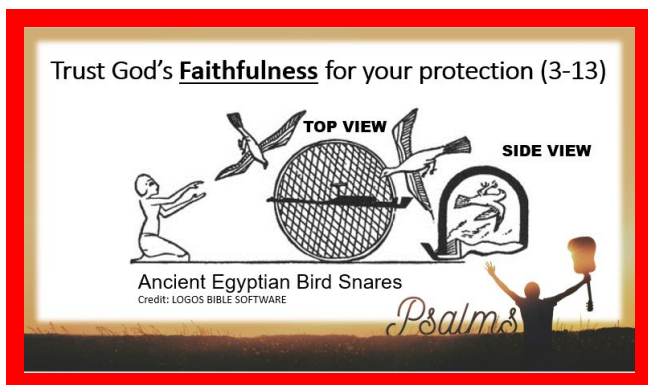
fortress – where I run when I’m in danger and insecure – for you are my God – in whom I trust!

Now in **verses 3-13**, Moses explains further why we should,



Trust God's Faithfulness for our protection

The promises of these 9 verses are comprehensive and life-giving to our souls.



In **verse 3**, God delivers from *the snare of the fowler* – meaning a bird-hunter’s trap. The snare refers to deadly traps from enemies.<sup>10</sup>

*Deadly pestilence* at the end of **verse 3** refers to God’s fatal plagues of judgment – whether by disease or by disaster.

When you trust in God’s Name, and make Him your security, and hold fast to Him in love, and come to know His Name personally in salvation – God promises to deliver you from deceptive traps and deadly destruction.

Now what does Moses mean by *deliver* in **verse 3**? Or **verse 10** that says *no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent*. At first blush – this almost sounds like no real Christian should ever die of an infectious disease or ever suffer from an enemy’s plot or ever have anything bad happen to them on this earth.

But remember – God clearly promises that *all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* in **2 Timothy 3:12**. Jesus prepared His disciples to suffer many things,<sup>11</sup> and He Himself suffered the wicked trap of the cross by the hands of wicked men.<sup>12</sup>

So the deliverance of **verses 3-13** is not promising that Christ-followers will have fullness of health, wealth, favor, and comfortable prosperity as long as their faith is strong enough here on this earth. That would be contrary to other clear Scripture.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 2:11

<sup>11</sup> John 15:18-16:4; Matthew 10:16-33

<sup>12</sup> 1 Peter 2:21-25



Rather, these verses point us to God's most secure protection of eternal safety and security. Although wicked men may be able to kill our bodies here and now, our souls are forever safe in God's hands.<sup>13</sup> Cancer can only destroy our bodies for a few short decades. But God is powerful enough to deliver us forever from the grips of cancer!!

**Verse 4** makes the source of our strong confidence clear with two images of protection – first a mother bird and second a warrior's armor,

*He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.*

Pinions are the outer feathers of a bird's wings. This is a picture of Divine nurture and protection. Perhaps Moses even was thinking of the mercy seat under the cherubim's wings on the ark of the covenant here?<sup>14</sup> *Buckler* literally means "to surround" and some translations translate the word as tower or wall. But it likely refers to a smaller shield that would encircle the warrior's hand in protection while he wielded his weapon.

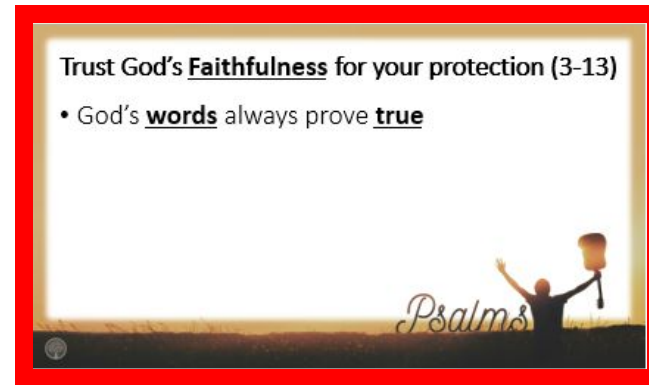
In other words, **verse 4** is saying that God's faithfulness provides a complete and utter defense around us. No one can get to us without God's permission.

So what does it mean to trust God's faithfulness for your protection?

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 10:28

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 25:18-22, 37:7-9; Numbers 7:89; 1 Kings 8:6-7



First, God's words always prove true

The source of our security is the truth that God never breaks a promise. Never. God will always be true to His Word. This is the believer's ultimate security.

Therefore in **verses 5-6**, Moses uses a very strong prohibition – a negative command – emphasizing that you must not fear all the various dangers that can come upon you at any time of day or night – for though all hell breaks out against you – you are securely held fast in the promises of God! Those who trust and love God are in Christ – and thereby eternally secure and safe!! Rest in God's faithfulness for your protection,



Since **verses 7-8** remind you that **God's judgment** always **transpires** ... or comes to pass.

Although it may seem like the wicked are winning...God's judgment is always right in the end. **Verse 7** speaks how God's judgment will utterly destroy all who oppose God – but those who trust in God will be passed over by judgment.

Christian – since you are dwelling in the shelter of the Most High and abiding in the shadow of the Almighty - you will not suffer the judgment of God that your own sins deserve. Rather, in **verse 8** – you will safely watch God's judgment fall on the wicked, while you remain safe in God's dwelling place.

Then notice **verses 11-12**,



**God's angels** always **guard** you

What a precious promise of protection for those who trust and love God!!

*For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone.*

Now when you read of angels in Scripture, do not think of cupid on a cloud with a bow and arrow of love. Think strong, fearsome messengers of God who are sent to serve God's purposes among His people.<sup>15</sup> In **2 Kings**, one angel held back the entire Assyrian army and killed 185,000 people in one night.<sup>16</sup>

Now perhaps it is worth noting here that the concept of every person having their own guardian angel is not found in Scripture.<sup>17</sup> The idea of a personal guardian

<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 1:7, 14

<sup>16</sup> 2 Kings 19:35; c.f. how an army of fiery angels preserved Elisha and his servant from the Syrian army in 2 Kings 6:15-16

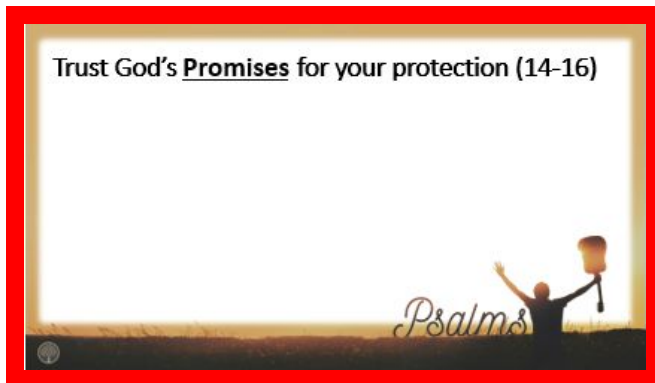
<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/guardian-angels.html>

angel is a Jewish tradition that dates back to the intertestamental period.

However, what is clear from Scripture<sup>18</sup> is that believers are continually being guarded by heavenly warriors sent from God for our eternal good.

Let this encourage you today embattled believer!! How would your attitude change if you could see the heavenly host around you as you walked into the cancer center this week? How would we treat one another differently if we could just see the heavenly entourage of angels God has commanded to guard our brothers and sisters?

God's angels don't give us an identity – but they testify to our identity as belonging to the Most High! No harm will ever befall you outside of God's will. You can trust God's faithfulness for your protection.

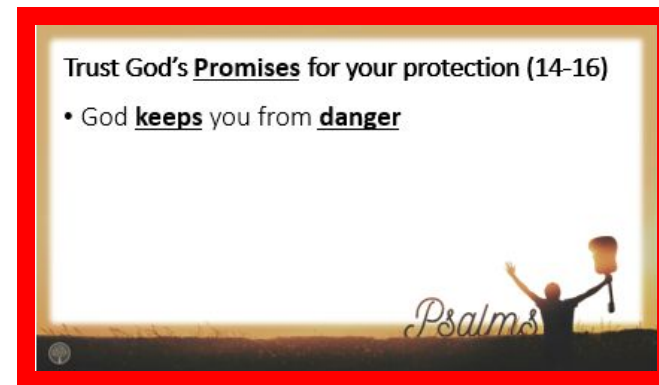


Finally, let's consider God's promises at the end of this Psalm as we learn to **Trust God's Promises for your protection** in **verses 14-16**.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:7, 14  
Page 11a of 15

In these last three verses, God makes six promises using the phrase, "I will..."

We can summarize these 6 promises this way:



First, **God keeps you from danger**

*I will deliver him. I will protect him.*



Second, **God answers your prayers**

*I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble.*

And third,



God saves and satisfies your soul

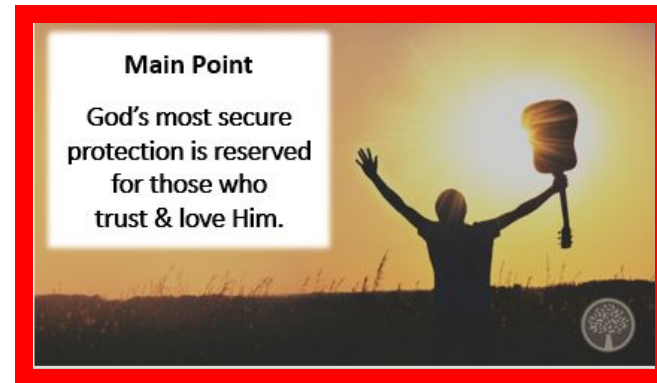
*I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.*

What complete safety and security! Again please don't misunderstand – this doesn't mean that everyone who lives a long life is a godly person, and anyone who dies young is under God's judgment. Jesus Himself only lived into his thirties. Rather the long life refers to a satisfied life – a complete or full life of satisfaction in God.

Though He slay me here and now – yet I will trust Him!<sup>19</sup> I will hold fast to Him in love, and personally rest in His character...for God alone is my most secure protection.

Back in **verse 13** Moses refers to the two fearsome animals of death and destruction – the lion and the snake. And isn't it interesting that **1 Peter 5:8** refers to

Satan as a roaring lion, and **Revelation 12:9** refers to Satan as a snake?<sup>20</sup>



The point of this Psalm is joyfully clear -- **God's most secure protection is reserved for those who trust and love Him.**

God's salvation is entirely complete. There's no danger that we need to fear when we are abiding in Christ, and dwelling with the Most High God.

Church – when Moses closes this song with the phrase, *Show him my salvation* ... it literally means cause him to enjoy my salvation to the fullest.

Our God is a God of joy. He delights in satisfying us with His love.<sup>21</sup> Sin can never ultimately satisfy us. Only God can satisfy a soul that He has created to know and love Him.

Therefore my exhortation for us from Psalm 91 this morning is,

<sup>19</sup> Job 13:15

<sup>20</sup> C.f. Revelation 20:2

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 90:14



To Abide with God in growing faith and love!

To abide in the shadow of the Almighty means to believe on Christ,<sup>22</sup> and to rest in His love.<sup>23</sup> To focus your life's pursuit on your fellowship with Christ. Overcome fear and discontent by remembering Who God is, and What God does, and What God has said to you in His Word.<sup>24</sup> Never forget that God's Spirit is now in you.<sup>25</sup> Therefore by the power of His indwelling Spirit you have the freedom now to obey God and walk in His commandments<sup>26</sup> – even in the midst of persecution!

Abide – dwell – with God. In troubling times of distress, focus more on your abiding than on your producing. Focus more on who God really is, rather than on what is happening around you.

<sup>22</sup> 1 John 4:15-16; John 15:3

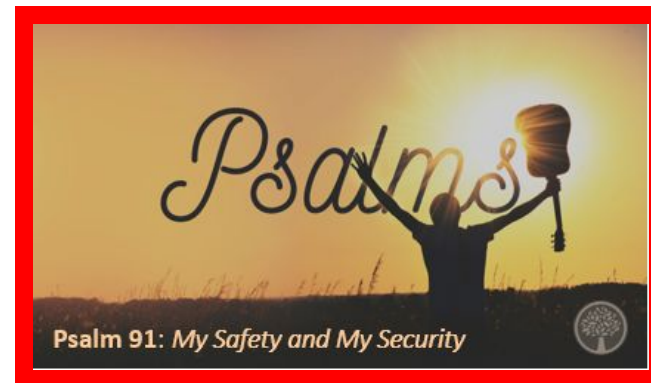
<sup>23</sup> 1 John 4:16; John 15:9

<sup>24</sup> Romans 10:17

<sup>25</sup> 1 John 3:24; 4:13

<sup>26</sup> 1 John 3:24; John 15:10

For you can trust God's Name, and God's faithfulness, and God's promises for your most secure protection.

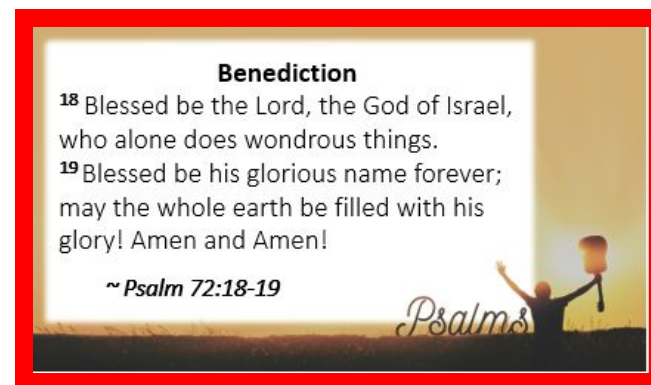


Let's pray.

<<Exit Offering for Salem Ranch>>

<<Children's Program Today at 9:30a>>

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.





*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful things. Blessed be His glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen! **Psalm 72:18-19***



### **Recommended Resources on My Safety and My Security:**

- Genesis 15:1
- Exodus 19:4
- Deuteronomy 32-33
- Psalm 34:19; 46, 90
- Proverbs 18:10
- Isaiah 40:31; 41:10; 43:1-2
- Habakkuk 3:17-19
- Matthew 23:37
- Luke 10:19
- Romans 8:31-39
  
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/scripture/psalms/91>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-surprising-role-of-guardian-angels>
  
- *The Attributes of God*, A. W. Pink
- *A Heart for God*, Sinclair Ferguson
- *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges
- *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer
- *Answers to Common Questions about Angels & Demons*, House & Demy
  
- “Abiding in Christ” sermon on John 15:1-11, preached by Pastor Kevin at NCBC on October 30, 2016.

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Read Psalm 91:1-2. Identify all four names of God used in these two verses, and discuss together the significance of meaning behind each of these different names. How does the character of God specifically increase your confident trust in Him for your safety and security?
2. Review Psalm 91:3-13. What does God promise to do for those who trust in Him? How do you reconcile these promises with the reality of Christians in real suffering today? Did God lie? Why or why not?
3. Read God’s promise in Psalm 91:14. What condition must be met in order to benefit from God’s promise of protection? What is the meaning of “trusting” in verse 2, and “holding fast” and “knows” in verse 14?
4. Read Satan’s quote of Psalm 91:11-12 in Matthew 4:5-7 (c.f. Luke 4:9-12). How does Satan twist this promise? How does Jesus respond?
5. Review Psalm 91:14-16. Recount together times when you’ve been aware of God’s protection over you. Pray for one another to grow more in sincere belief in our all-powerful God.
6. Where are you tempted to seek false security? What is the end result of putting your trust in other people or yourself for your safety and security? (C.f. Psalm 118:8-9)
7. Is Psalm 91 teaching that it is wrong to dial 911 when you find yourself in trouble? Why or why not?