

Psalm 91: Security of the One Who Trusts in the Lord.

Tom Holubik, Fredericksburg Bible Church, Sunday School Lesson, November 27, 2016

Psalm 91

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"
- 3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.
- 5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day;
- 6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you.
- 8 You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.
- 9 For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place.
- 10 No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent.
- 11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.
- 12 They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.
- 13 You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down.
- 14 "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.
- 15 "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.
- 16 "With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation."

Authorship... not sure, but likely Moses (Moses is acknowledged as author of Ps 90)

Grace Notes: Ps 91 may be the most up-beat, positive, cheering, psalm of all...!

It's a "Hebrew ode." Written in Hebrew... with three parts: the strophe, antistrophe, and epode; which is akin to a song with two soloists, then a duet...

In the first half of the Psalm, verses 1-8 provide great security to believers in the midst of danger.

Wisdom and faith will keep believers from fear without cause or fear of the unknown

Then, in the second half, verses 9-16 promise that whatever happens, nothing shall hurt the believer!

A believer will live long enough to do the work God needs him to do... who would wish to live even a day longer? A good man may die young, and be satisfied with living; but a wicked man won't be satisfied with long life. Fool.

There are a couple of primary ways to analyze this psalm:

- 1 traditional Bible commentary (exegesis plus studies from Grace Notes, Walvoord, Wycliffe, Matthew Henry)
- 2 focus as a Soldier's Prayer... closely following many of the ideas discussed in Peggy J Ruth's book

I have chosen to do a bit of both.

¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

During the past few years, the events of 9/11, 2001 have forced people to confront their deepest fears. Who or what do you really trust when all else fails? Where do you go when you need a safe place? Do you have a safe place you plan to go to if there is a disaster? Nowadays we're advised to be prepared for some disruption of our normal life. But, what can we do to prepare for spiritual shelter when we experience trouble?

Checkout Ps 91!!!

What does it mean to "dwell in the shelter of the Most High?"

"Dwelling" . . . is not just a physical presence of where you are located; it's a state of mind so encompassing that it inspires a palpable confidence!

Maybe it's in the Holy of Holies... protected by God's glory... once reserved under the law, only for the high priest, now available to all believers via the New Covenant! Here, one is safe from every evil. Ps 91 is also about SHELTER! Not just any shelter: God's amazing, total security, total protection overwhelming, absolutely wonderful, loving shelter!

Author Peggy Ruth tells of an incident in her youth when her family was on a lake when suddenly the wind picked up, clouds swept in, and immediately they were being pelted with rain and hail! Her father headed for the shore of the only island on the lake, where he had them jump ashore and lay down as he covered the five of them... and wrapped his arms around the five of them... in a powerful stroke of manliness and a father's love.

Many of you have grandchildren... and have noticed that when they are visiting, each of them seems to gravitate to some private spot... maybe in the den behind the sofa...there they seem to be under that kind of tarp or tent where it's an extraordinary "hiding place." With our loving heavenly Father, you and I can be in that safe place any time! Still, however, you must strive to get there, You have to get up and do something... go there... maybe physically !

² I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"

In verses 1 & 2, the psalmist uses four names of God : the Most High, the Almighty, the Lord, My God Notice the emphasis in verses 1 and 2 for God's protection, he who DWELLS in God's shelter, and he who SAYS this "prayer:" "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" I bet we all have a "difficult person" or "difficult situation" in our lives... or some amazing challenge we have to face... well, why not try saying—or praying--that phrase just before your next meeting. Biblical examples abound: David, Joshua, Shadrack, Meshach, Abednego, Jesus Himself!

In Ps 60:11, admonishes that: "... deliverance by man is in vain!" Even when Jesus sent out his disciples (Matt 10:16), He told them: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves"... and He told them to take a sword! [In like manner, Al Capone once stated that "You get a lot more respect with a smile and a gun than with just a smile."] Imagine how much confidence you have when the Creator of the universe is WITH you and you're not just acting with your own confidence

Biblically, we are often referred to as "sheep." Why? Because a sheep has no innate protection. It can't roar or bark, doesn't have vicious teeth, no venom, can't spray a noxious odor, and cannot run very fast.

We need help... Aren't you glad that Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd? Our Fortress!?!

Also, to "say" something is to verbalize it... But imagine how much more powerful if many people... even an entire country is saying/praying/proclaiming "trust in God"... consider Dunkirk in WWII

In 1940 during World War II, French, Belgian, and British troops were trapped by German forces at Dunkirk, France: with the English Channel on one side and the Nazi army on the other, and there seemed to be no hope. When Winston Churchill, British prime minister, addressed the nation about the situation, and he warned that no more than 20,000 or 30,000 of the 200,000 British soldiers could possibly be rescued.

But that is when people across the nation went into prayer, filling the churches and synagogues; the king and queen knelt at Westminster Abbey, so did the Archbishop of Canterbury, the prime minister, the cabinet and members of parliament... all on their knees. And certainly, the soldiers on the beaches of Dunkirk were praying.

Suddenly, the Nazis made an unexplainable halt in their advance, giving time for the soldiers to be evacuated across the English Channel; still, they remained exposed to strafing from German aircraft while awaiting transport on the beaches. C.B. Morelock, a war correspondent reported what happened next: he was with a group of 400 men on the beach. He wrote: "I lay with 400 men who were machine-gunned systematically, up and down and bombed by 60 enemy aircraft, and in the end, there was not a single casualty in that group. I have been personally told by Navy men, who picked up those particular survivors from Dunkirk, that the men not only recited Psalm 91, but they shouted it aloud at the top of their lungs!"

³ For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, And from the deadly pestilence.

The believer is delivered from the snare, from all of Satan's devices, all kinds of dangerous maladies, slanderous spoken words, noisome pestilence, blasting/injurious winds.

Trapping is a common form of hunting for all manner of "game;" and whether it's a giant trap for a bear or a South Texas hog... or a small trap for beaver or rabbit, squirrel, or a mouse... traps and snares can be effective in baiting/catching animals... and men. In many wars and battles of the last century or so, a lot of soldiers were affected by booby traps and land mines... Traps are strategically placed and set... many are dangerous and deadly, even though "snares" initially appear to be "good" or "desirable." And traps are not just "physical." We're constantly exposed to "harmful words," advertising messages-like prosperity gospel ... and political promises—we just had a grand mudslinging election cycle... for months, one candidate or another was trying to get our attention... baiting voters with duplicitous political promises, hoping to "snare" my vote and your vote away from another candidate. Paul warns in 2 Cor 2:11, "not to be ignorant of the schemes [traps] of the enemy." And in 2 Cor 10:4-5, he says: "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

And as for "pestilence" (Webster's Dictionary) is "any virulent or fatal disease; an epidemic that hits the masses of people" not just germs and viruses attacking healthy cells; it can be groups of soldiers attacking other armies... countries attacking other nations... it's about gaining control/power, taking, winning. Physical, financial, mental, spiritual... a pestilence can start with a small "infection"... maybe just a few germs that grow bad/worse, at times rapidly

I found that in the original Hebrew language, the words “word” and “pestilence” are very similar:

(Heb: dabar = words

deber = *pestilence*

Maybe you’ve noticed some similarity to the power and effects of “words” and “pestilence,” too.... I’m sure you recall in Genesis, that in the beginning, God made everything “good” and “very good,” didn’t He? Well, yes, but... the enemy has perverted so much of our world... we’re under assault from all quarters ... we must stay alert.

Serpents and snakes, and snares... are built to be sneaky and to cause harm... just ask Adam and Eve... In sum, verse 3 asks for deliverance from both temptation (snares) and from harm (pestilence). In great measure, the idea expressed in this verse mirrors the prayer in Matt 6:13 “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

⁴ He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

What are “pinion” feathers? A bird’s major and strongest structural feathers.

Can you imagine what it would mean to be protected under those “pinion” feathers?

When the mother hen “clucks,” her chicks run to her to hide under her pinions for protection.

Imagine a hen sheltering her chicks with those powerful pinion feathers as a dangerous bird of prey sweeps by or chilling blasts come through. In Matt 23:37, Jesus laments: “How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”

And, a “bulwark?” Nelson’s Bible Dictionary defines bulwark as: “a tower built along a city wall from which defenders shoot arrows and hurl large stones at the enemy.”

Well, for those whose trust is in the Lord, this amazing promise (to the soul), is akin to having the best shield for the body. Here’s what David knew about being safe and sheltered under a strong wing (not an Isa 40:31 wing that can carry you away on the wings of eagles):

Psalm 17 A prayer of David.

8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings

9 from the wicked who are out to destroy me, from my mortal enemies who surround me.

Psalm 57 When he had fled from Saul into the cave.

1 Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the disaster has passed.

Psalm 61 Of David.

1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of Your wings.

God wants us to run to Him... because His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

The ‘comforting’ aspect of this verse is that HIS faithfulness gives us so much safety: and, even ‘If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself (2Tim 2:13). We all know what a “shield” is...

but have you ever imagined one so large that it would completely block an enemy’s view of you/me:

That shield is our awesome God!... so, a bulwark takes on both a defensive and an offensive role

Verses 5 & 6 address three evils in the darkness and light: terror by night, arrows, pestilence.

⁵ You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day;

Night provides cover for terror, treason, plunder, robbery, rape, murder. . . . So what? A godly man sleeps quietly and in peace... trusting his body and soul unto the hand of God—who without sleep/slumber, keeps all safe. And about that “arrow that flies by day?” An arrow. . . pierces or wounds intentionally... physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually... especially when it strikes in the most vulnerable spot... and does the most damage.

A *Chaldean* translation might read: Thou shalt not fear the demons that walk by night; nor the arrow of the angel of death shot in the day time. Some ancient civilizations feared two demons of death: one ruled by day, the other by night. The Vulgate and Septuagint refer to a noonday devil. These cultures’ superstitions’ feared demons with the power to injure particularly at noonday. And, fear is at all-time highs during wartime. Fear comes when we think we are responsible for our own safety, especially on the night before a battle. Faith won’t deny the existence of fear, it does however provide a higher power for overcoming it! In 1Sam 17, David did not deny the physical presence of Goliath the giant, but his faith saw promise... and he went into the fight confidently. And... what did Jesus say about “fear”? “Do not fear! I am with you.” Fear is the opposite of faith.

In Deut 31:1 & 7... Moses’ Last Counsel addressed “fear”

1 So Moses went and spoke ... to all Israel...

7 . . . Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. 8 The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

In the Exodus 12:23, the Passover story tells us that Israel put blood on the door facings... so the destroyer could not come in... Hebrews 8:6 tells us: “I am protected by the blood of Jesus,” and this prevents the devil from coming in.... One commander told his troops that he experienced fear before every battle... but he overcame it with Psalm 91!

Overcoming fear is also addressed in Psalm 4:8

In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For you alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety!

But really, what are we to do? Try FAITH; but remember, Faith is not a tool to manipulate God into giving us something we want; it is simply the means we have to accept what God has already made available! What does this mean? Well... IF I pray to God for protection, He will not be held hostage to provide that protection... but IF I do not pray to Him... I certainly won’t receive his awesome protection. He’s offering his protection, before we ask: He wants us to come to Him!

Note also... Matthew Henry Commentary on verses 5-6: Wisdom will keep you from being causelessly afraid; while Faith will keep you from being inordinately afraid. Matthew Henry also wrote about one family’s wonderful prayer to overcome fear: “Blessed Lord, take us into thy protection this night, and preserve us from disease, from sudden death, from the violence of fire, from the edge of the sword, from the designs of wicked men, and from the influence of malicious spirits.”

What can we deduce from this about God's uninterrupted care? Night and day: Fear NOTHING! And... for protection, Eph 6 says: Put on the full armor of God! God doesn't say most of those arrows will miss us... He says He will protect us, and all of them will miss their target!

⁶ Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

What about "pestilence"... (this is the second mention: it implies emphasis!) In verse 3, it was "deadly pestilence;" now in verse 6, we see "pestilence in the dark. It's likely the psalmist was thinking in terms of leprosy or maybe the plagues that hit Egypt in the land of Goshen. Nowadays, we have a "wonderful" variety of pestilence to be concerned with: malaria, AIDS, cancer, heart disease, TB, nerve gas, bio-agents, terrorist attacks Generally, these are conditions that men can exercise some manner of control, but we certainly cannot eliminate them completely. The reassurance of Psalm 91: we don't need to eliminate them completely, we've got an awesome God with us!

And what about the: "destruction that lays waste at noon?" In O.T. days" pagans feared a one-eyed demon mentioned in Rabbinical tradition. But these evils don't need to sneak around in the dark: they are huge, dangerous, we cannot control them: flood, hurricanes, tornadoes, hail, earthquakes, fire, natural disasters. NO PLACE on earth is safe or immune to every destruction!" Still, we do have our protection with the Lord!

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, *But* it shall not approach you.

The psalmist notes that even though you go into battle to meet an attack and attackers, you are PROTECTED! Both defensively (the attackers can't get to you) and offensively (preemptively: you will be warding off evil before it has time to strike you.)

Calmet, a French Benedictine monk of 1700s, rephrased this as: "A thousand enemies may fall upon thee on one side, and ten thousand may fall upon thee on thy right hand; but they shall not come nigh thee to take away thy life." This is a promise of perfect protection and utmost safety!

The best news: the words in Ps91

1) have superior significance among the psalms

2) provide the same amazing level of comfort/confidence as Ps 23:4-6

⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

3) aren't written only for inspiration, they are for deliverance from affliction!

⁸ You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

Meaning: While all havoc is going on around you... you will see your enemies "discomfited" (embarrassed, confused, unsettled, perturbed, distressed) and cast down! These terms describe an enemy in defeat, in retreat!

⁹ For you have made the Lord, my refuge, *Even* the Most High, your dwelling place.

Again... the psalmist asserts his confidence in dwelling in the Lord. Where we dwell (our state of mind, our beliefs, etc.) is a choice. In Joshua 24, as Joshua recounted Israel's history (with details of God's protection during the Exodus and their wanderings in the desert, protection in battles, and victory in Jericho), he stated

¹⁴ "Now, therefore, ^[g]fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and ^[h]truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the ^[i]River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Also, regarding verses 9 & 10: Does God's protection mean Christians are immune from any and all harm? No... but... we do have eternal safety. I bet you can think of an instance when you were miraculously delivered or protected from some accident of evil... "against all odds?"

¹⁰ No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent

Two things: One, "any plague" means any evil or wrong; and your "tent" is your "household!" In other words, the protection provided isn't just *for you*, it includes your family while you are hidden behind that big shield we mentioned earlier. Ps 112:7 says: "He [The good man] will not fear evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

Matt 13:32 the parable of the mustard seed. . . tells of having even the faith of a mustard seed... Another parable tells of how large the mustard plant grows: well, a town is a collection of families... and there's a wonderful story about the families in the town of Seadrift, TX...and their great faith: During WWII the Seadrift townspeople decided to pray Ps 91 collectively over ever husband, son, grandson, cousin, uncle or friend at war... they made a bulletin board with pictures of every serviceman... and EVERY day, intercessors prayed for them... using Ps 91... At the end of the war, every man returned... not a single combat loss: What a victory for the Soldiers Prayer!

11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.

12 They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone

Evil spirits may attempt to injure you; but they shall not be able. God's angels have a special charge to accompany, defend, and preserve you; and the influence of evil spirits cannot prevail. Angels can also turn your steps out of the way of danger; ward it off when it comes in an ordinary path; and suggest to you prudent counsel, profitable designs, and pious purposes; In all, angels will minister to you as a child of God, and an heir of salvation. You are truly blessed! But still, the way of safety is the path of one's proper duty...you can't reasonably expect protection if don't walk in obedience, which is a path of God's word and providence already marked out for you. The way of sin is not the way to go—be where you belong, and God will take care of you. Wycliffe wrote that the Talmud states that every man has two

ministering angels beside him throughout life. Luke 4: 9-11 tells us that “Satan led Jesus to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him,

If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,’ 11 and, ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’

We are blessed in many ways... and I certainly believe in angels! It’s likely that when we get to heaven, we’ll get to realize all of the other trouble and accidents we avoided because of angelic intervention!

What does it mean when angels have “charge”? To be in charge is a position of leadership... telling others what to do and how to do things So... when God Himself has angels take charge, THEY, and not the circumstances have authority in the situation! Heb 1:14 says: Aren’t all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” And Heb 13:2 tells us it is possible “to entertain angels without knowing it.” The great Christian convert writer C. S. Lewis reported a miraculous incident in 1914 in WWI in which safety was provided to a number of British soldiers who witnessed an “intervention of angels” at Mons, Belgium... and in 1915 a group of German prisoners reported a battle in which an “army of ghosts armed with bows and arrows and led by a very tall figure on a white horse urged the English to go forward.” As you know... when a soldier has the duty to stand guard, he’s at attention... alert, watchful, ready to protect at any sign of attack. Recently, an Army Corporal reported that an Iraqi soldier had dead aim on him... he suddenly stopped, startled by “something”, yelled at his comrade and the two of them turned and ran... leaving the Corporal safe! Let’s hear it for the angels!

¹³You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

This verse describes a tremendous amount of safety. Vs 13... with its lion, cobra, young lion, and serpent... is similar to Luke 10:19, where Jesus says: “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, nothing will injure you.” Really! The king of the jungle won’t be able to injure you; as the angels God sends will give provide an easy victory over him. Think of “Lions” and “cobras” as unforgettable representations of potentially harmful things or satanic oppression in our daily lives. A LION could be a car wreck, a face-to-face encounter with an attacker, an unexpected lab test result, a balloon bill payment--these are insurmountable... But... God says we can tread on them!

Next, consider that the cobra or asp (one of the most venomous of snakes) won’t be able to hurt you. This snake, BTW, is small and found only in Egypt and Libya. Its poison has no antidote and it kills victims quietly without any pain in their sleep over a period of 3-8 hours. Probably because of this, Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, chose to die by the asp to prevent her being carried captive to Rome where she would have served the designs of Augustus, in his triumph. Think of COBRAs as sneaky little issues that lurk in the grass, they might strike anytime... with venom working quickly or just destroying over time.

YOUNG LIONS might be foxes, smaller issues, harassment or temptations... that can become LIONS... In the Song of Solomon 2:15, we’re told to “Catch the foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in bloom.” These are words to the wise!

And, as for the SERPENT; it’s a dragon, or sea monster (Strong’s Concordance says there’s no such animal, it’s an unfounded phantom, mirage, a danger in the past that still frightens (maybe like PTSD)... fear of the unknown or of the future or of a loss or of death even claustrophobia, or spiritual attack

Such fantasy fears cause us to live in the past, or in the future preventing our enjoyment of the present. There are times to pray—and times to take authority. If you're a soldier or a cop or a "first responder," or even when you are just YOU, encountering some evil... that instant may not be the best time to start praying—you'd better be "prayed-up!" NOW is the time to take authority and action!

The devil in various Biblical references is called "a roaring lion," "the old serpent," and "the red dragon." And when the psalmist says "You will tread upon the lion and cobra, and the young lion and the serpent: you will prevail. In Rom 16:20, we're told: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet!"

Versus 14 – 16 involve a major dramatic shift in tone and change in "speaker" This is HUGE !

FROM: the psalmist talking to us about challenges and things we MIGHT face,

TO: God speaking to us personally and announcing seven promises... and He absolutely will deliver!

Here the Most High is confirming his protection ...simply because they loved Him and know His name! The Lord God says "I will save him in all troubles, temptations, and evils of every kind. True protection... involves closeness, understanding, intimacy, a "dwelling" relationship, "love." THAT's what Our Lord wants us to have with HIM... with His Son... and His Word. Can you imagine how astonished... and confused Peter must have felt when Jesus asked him, THREE TIMES, Peter, Do you love me? Well... according to John 14:15, if we love Him, we'll keep His commandments! And, if we love him and keep his commandments, He's got seven promises for you.

¹⁴ "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him *securely* on high, because he has known My name

Promise # 1: I will deliver him.

In the book of Joel 2:32, we're told: "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered." In the past several verses, we've been promised that God will deliver us from lions, young lions, cobras, dragons, terror by night, arrows by day, pestilence, and destruction. That's pretty much every evil known to man... in any country, on any mission, in any battle, in any corporate boardroom... What else is there? Verse 15 is similar to Matt. 7:7-8: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. In Capt Eddie Rickenbacker's autobiography, he details how he and seven other downed airmen lived adrift at sea in life rafts for 24 days... by the power of prayer... for food, for water, and for that last plane to turn and come back for another look!

Lt Carey Cash was a chaplain in Iraq... his book "A Table in the Presence" has firsthand accounts of incidents he saw in Iraq: On Apr 10, 2003, the 1st Btn, 5th Marine Regiment, marched into downtown Baghdad to seize Saddam Hussein's presidential palace, only to find ambushes by militants hiding in mosques, stores, and homes. Hundreds of troops came face-to-face with a blitz of RPGs, gunfire, sure defeat. But their reports tell an amazingly different story:

- A rocket spliced through an armored vehicle packed with marines-but it hit no one.
- A Marine found a bullet's entrance and exit holes in his helmet- but he had no injury.
- A squad of Marines watched as enemies were about to fire at point-blank range—but they turned and ran in terror.

- An RPG inexplicably swerved and missed its intended target.

What must the Godly servant do? Pray; all blessings must come in this way, when a believer calls, God will answer... and give him whatever is best for him... ~as soon as the trouble comes, He says, "I am there "I will glorify him." ... and load him with honor! That's an amazing "honor" that comes from God, as He shows other men how highly He prizes those who love Him.

Promise # 2: I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.

I believe we'll be taken UP ON HIGH where He is seated on high. Eph 1 and 2 tell us that God seated Jesus at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion... What a vantage point! And more... to "know" God here (according to Strong's Concordance) is "to stare at, discern clearly, experience, or to gaze with wide eyes as seeing something remarkable!" This is not simple, casual acquaintance as people "knew" who God was in the OT—t his is personal, intimate knowledge. Rewording verses 1-2 a bit: "Lord, You have promised to set me securely on high because I have known Your Name on a firsthand basis. I have experienced your covenant promises in Your different covenant names." Remember in verses 1-2, the psalmist referred to God by four progressively stronger-relationship names: the most high (highest!), Almighty (omnipotent), The Lord (~ ownership), and My God (personal). Now, here in verse 14, we're introduced to two conditions: Because 1, we loved Him, and Because 2, we know His name.

¹⁵ **"He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.**

Promise # 3: "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him....

In 1John 5:14-15 says:

¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

What does this mean?: it means that IF I pray... in line with God's Word and plan for me... He hears me! . . . AND I will have a response!

As powerful as an individual's prayers are... both the prayer and the answer pale in comparison to a nation praying. Recall how the British Army was trapped on the beach at Dunkirk In WWII ... British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the events in France "a colossal military disaster", saying "the whole root and core and brain of the British Army" was stranded at Dunkirk and seemed about to perish or be captured. Then everyone in the country went to their knees. With the Germans stalled, the British evacuated during the next 10 days: something like 800 floating vessel went to sea, piloted by fishermen, bank clerks, boy scouts, yachtsmen, college profs, and even the London fire brigade... and 380,000+ soldiers were rescued... in the midst of this effort, Churchill gave his famous We shall fight on the beaches speech, and he hailed their rescue as a "miracle of deliverance".

Earlier, I also talked about Capt Eddie Rickenbacker's crew and their rescue after 24-days at sea. This miraculous rescue actually followed Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's call for everyone in New York to pray for them... [BTW, all of those men became strong witnessing Christians after their rescue.] Closer to home... some of you may recall a few years ago when the City of Blanco went into a week of prayer for rain...

and the miraculous deluge that followed! The important thing: when individuals call upon God, He answers... when cities and nations pray... the results make headlines and history records it.

Promise # 4: “I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him ...

Have you ever been in battle? ... in prison?... in an auto accident? Yeah, me too—and what do we do in times of great stress? We usually call out to God in crisis situations. Even atheists call out to God (whom they don’t acknowledge) when they are extremely afraid!). These are “court of last resort” prayers, when we tend to run to the one we love and trust the most. Isa 43:2 says: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.

Promise # 5: I will honor him.

One way or another, we all like to be honored, appreciated, complimented, or recognized in public, for our good, hard work. Soldiers get awards and medals; civilians get awards and cash bonuses; live is good. BUT just imagine ... what if we get honored by GOD, HIMSELF??!! Now, that is something special, and really, that is what is promised here!

¹⁶ **“With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.”**

Promise # 6: I will give him a long life to satisfy him...

Lots of birthday parties, blessings, joy, happiness, satisfaction.

1Kings 1:1 notes that King David’s life was “full of days,” and included much stress, combat, assaults, adventures... and, it would appear he had a lot of satisfaction, making and listening to music, writing psalms, and he had that amazing relationship as “a man after God’s heart.” In the end, his head went down in peace, in old age. One day, on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus’ disciples were frightened that they might drown in a churning storm. But think: the Creator of the Universe had told them they must go to the other side of the lake. In similar language, Jonah had been told he must go to Nineveh. Consider this: When the Lord tells someone they are going to go somewhere, it ought to be clear, and it should give them some confidence that a simple storm or a few days in a fish won’t interfere with divine direction. These men HAD to live through that storm and that fish! In like manner, You and I have been in untenable circumstances... only to realize that *others have lived through THIS...* surely I will, too. When God promises to satisfy us with a long life; I believe we’ll make it through a lot of challenges. The question is: What will I do with this long life?

Well, here’s the ultimate reward! First, a full length of days: not a useless life, not death before one’s time—such a servant will live happy and die happy. And then the Lord says: “I will show him my salvation.” That’s a powerful statement with the added Hebrew meaning: “I will make him contemplate my salvation.” And: he shall discover infinite lengths, breadths, depths, and heights, in my salvation. He shall feel boundless desires, and find that I have provided boundless gratifications for them as he dwells in my glory, and throughout eternity! Thus shall it be done to the man whom the Lord delighteth to honor; and he delights to honor that man who places his love on him. In a word, he shall have a long life in this world, and an eternity of blessedness in the world to come.

This promise of a “long life” to the believer can’t, of course, be taken as a guarantee here on earth...

“Wisdom literature” acknowledges that, even among the righteous, our present life may be cut short; still, most agree that God’s purpose is served in allowing righteous men and women to live until their life’s purpose has been satisfied in God’s sight. As He will fulfill His promises and plans both in this life and in eternity (1Tim 4:8-9).

Promise # 7: I will . . . let him behold my salvation.

I’m sure you noticed the order here: This promise comes after six other wonderful promises, including a long satisfied life. Strong’s Concordance says, the word “Salvation” includes much more than a straight shot to heaven; it includes health, healing, rescue, deliverance, safety, protection, provision.... In a grander sense, this includes HIS health, HIS healing, HIS rescue, HIS deliverance, HIS safety, HIS protection, HIS provision.... Earlier I talked about “dwelling... with the Lord.” Think about this: verses 14 through 16 state:

14 “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. 15 “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.16 “With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.”

It’s great to have a friend... a best friend... someone you share secrets and promises with.... So, if God Himself is your best friend... don’t you think He can provide you with these promises? Me, too! Are you particularly anxious about anything these days? God is waiting on you to call his name, acknowledge your need, and appropriate HIS amazing promises!

A couple of final thoughts:

There are a number of promises scattered throughout the Bible; but in Psalm 91 you find them ALL laid out concisely. Can you believe them...??? I believe so. Consider this: In the last chapter of Luke’s Gospel, Luke wrote: 44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Make God your dwelling place, your refuge, your fortress, your shield: He’ll deliver you, cover you, provide refuge, remove any fears. Don’t we serve an awesome God?

Let us pray...