

Psalm 91:8-16

Introduction:

In Psalm 91 we are given the promises of protection, security, peace, refuge, joy, and peace to name just some of the benefits of GOD's people. This is the very essence of Blessing – to be in His presence, to live upon the Truth, to know His love so that we delight in, love, adore, enjoy, and live in awe of Him. It is to enjoy His favor. We are instructed in this Psalm the ever-present provision and GOD's future protection for His people.

Read Psalm 91:8-16

I wish to begin this week in verse 8 which is where we ended our last time in this Psalm. This verse points out to us the reality of GOD's Justice and His Mercy. In those that perish the severity of GOD is made manifest, and those that believe His Divine Goodness is apparent. GOD's judgement is not something we desire to see, but when we do it softens the heart and causes us to be awestruck at His Sovereignty and Majesty. It causes a sense of pity toward those outside of Christ that compels us to tell of Him and be an example of holiness for His Glory.

I want to encourage you by giving an account that Spurgeon tells of regarding an experience related to verses 9 and 10 which the Holy Spirit applied to him in a dire situation. "In the year 1854, when I had scarcely been in London twelve months, the neighbourhood in which I laboured was visited by Asiatic cholera, and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedside of the smitten, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. I gave myself up with youthful ardour to the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. My friends seemed falling one by one, and I felt or fancied that I was sickening like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low among the rest; I felt that my burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink under it. As GOD would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral, when my curiosity led me to read a paper which was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good bold handwriting these words: Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. The effect upon my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality. I

went on with my visitation of the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm. The providence which moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window I gratefully acknowledge, and in the remembrance of its marvellous power I adore the LORD my GOD. The psalmist in these verses assures the man who dwells in GOD that he shall be secure. Though faith claims no merit of its own, yet the Lord rewards it wherever he sees it. He who makes GOD His refuge shall find Him a refuge; he who dwells in GOD shall find his dwelling protected.”

Verses 11 & 12 are familiar to us from the account of Jesus being tempted by satan.

(Luke 4:1-13) It is important to understand that the enemy tempting Jesus was that of tempting Him to lay aside His humanity. The enemy began his tempting by saying “if you are the Son of GOD”. Our Great High Priest, GOD the Son, allowed Himself to be subjected to this temptation. It is here we see another aspect of Jesus being like His brethren. We see the depth and to the degree that Jesus condescended to redeem His people to the Glory of the Father. There are several ways in which Jesus could have responded to the enemy’s temptation, yet there is only one perfect response. He could have let the devil know that he was misinterpreting the Psalm. He could have said “I know what it means because I wrote it” – “It is My Word”. Jesus’ response to the tempter is just that – perfect because it His response. Jesus, again condescends to an unimaginable measure in His love for His people. He could have responded by way of His Deity, and yet He stayed within the confines of His Humanity. He responds in a way that teaches you and I the authority of the Scriptures by His example. He responds each time to the tempter, “it is written”, or “it is said” and so we learn that we are to compare Scripture to Scripture or interpret the Bible by the Bible. By the way, the Psalms are the most quoted Book in the New Testament. It is amazing that as we study the Psalms, we must go back to the OT and forward to the NT that we rightly understand. The Psalms are a link between prophesy and fulfillment. Our understanding of the Psalms would not be complete apart from Jesus and the Apostles quoting them and giving us the full meaning.

As Dr. Godfrey points out in his teaching “Learning to Love the Psalms”, it is intriguing that satan did not quote verse 13 - **You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.** This is exactly what the Lord Jesus had done and was doing. We are instructed in [Hebrews 2:14-15 NASB] **14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death**

were subject to slavery all their lives. Angels are mentioned in verse 11 as His protection and His protectors for His people. In Hebrews chapter 1 the Supremacy of Christ to the angels is taught. The Subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews is Christ and it is given to instruct and remind us that Christ is to be esteemed above the prophets, the angels, Moses, and anyone else – because He is GOD the Son, the second person in the Trinity. Christ is shown as superior to the angels because as we see in Hebrews 1:14 they are His creation and sent out for His purpose. **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?** GOD's protection and protectors should never be reduced to something superstitious or frivolous, which is what satan did in his tempting of our Lord. He reduced the promise of GOD to frivolity.

GOD's Word, particularly in the Psalms, we are mercifully instructed to remember GOD's Provision in the past when looking ahead seems so difficult. Remember that Psalm 89, which is the end of Book III, closes with the psalmist being in deep despair. The first half of the Psalm 89 is the psalmist recalling the covenant that David's descendant will be on the throne forever and rightfully praising the LORD GOD for His Faithfulness. The second half the psalmist confesses the difficulty in seeing this promise because David's son, as far as he could tell, was not on the throne. The next several Psalms then go from the Davidic times to Creation and the time of Moses to see GOD's Faithfulness and his Provision in the past. We are to remember by looking back. We need to be reminded often of GOD's Grace, especially that Saving Grace manifested in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the Hope that we cling to. And He has given us a means of Grace, that is His Word, that we may know Him and His Ways.

A man being saved in this day is no less of a miracle than GOD delivering His people from the bondage of Egypt. You see the Psalms is not just the heritage of the Israelites, but ours as well. We are commanded to look back that we may learn from the past. [1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 NASB] **6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. ... 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.....** and [Romans 15:4 NASB] **4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.** As believers, we are like the sons of Israel in that we have been delivered from bondage, just as they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt. We have been delivered from the bondage of the slavery of sin, guilt, and death. Our lives this side of

heaven is much like that of the Israelites in the wilderness. It is filled with trouble. It is filled with struggle. Just as the Israelites were under GOD's Pinions, He was their Refuge and Fortress, and their Deliverer; He is so for us. Just as He kept them from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence; He does so for us. These wonderful promises are not just an account of history, but speak of our Creator, our Sustainer and Redeemer's Provision for us now. He is holding us up in this wilderness journey until as Psalm 91 ends, He lets us see His Salvation. The flow of Psalm 91 is just that – His Provision in sustaining His people that we may live on this side of heaven with joy in the midst of trial; that we may enjoy Him, and be in awe of Him, and love Him, and worship Him. Then it moves to our great Hope which is for His Salvation to be made complete when we enter into His rest and we behold Him; when we finally see Him in all His Glory. We truly are invincible until the LORD has other plans.

In Isaiah 28:14-16, the LORD addresses the scoffers who had made falsehood their refuge. Then in verse 16 we have the promise of Jesus Christ - [Isaiah 28:16 NASB] **16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone [for] the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes [in it] will not be disturbed.** A refuge is where we may be to be protected from danger. As the Pastor made mention in a recent sermon, this is why men whom the LORD uses do not fear man and can speak boldly – because the Cornerstone, not falsehood is their refuge. It is a Work of the LORD. To look elsewhere other than Christ as our Refuge is a lie and will not support you in the whelming flood. May this by GODs Mercy and for His Glory be true of us, may our hope be built on nothing less than Him as our Refuge:

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

Amen