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Dear missed friends at Riverside, for more than a month we have been forbidden our regular life-style because of this incredibly devastating *Pandemic*. But we'd like to share these encouraging thoughts from a Psalm I believe will become a theme for this year, 2020: Ps. 91

Easter is a celebration of Resurrection, but it is also an introduction to a new connection to the Savior's Redemption work on the Cross and His Being Raised from the Dead 3 Days later.

Nature introduces us each year to plants, flowers, and growing things starting completely new! God does this each year to remind us the bad things and harshness of winter is only seasonally an impact of our life. And so shall this virus reaching to the uttermost part of our planet. The original Garden of Eden had no seasons such as we live today. God foreknew such malady and we have Ps 91 to set the experience aright...

The Nature and Character of Our God Introduces Us of His Condition

Psa 91:1-16 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

1. The Character of Our God Cannot Be Known Apart from "Dwelling In Him!" The essence of *dwells* is best understood with the word, "sits" and pictures this: The idea is that of calm repose; of resting; of sitting down - as one does in his dwelling. Does this not bring us right down into this month's "stay safe- stay home" command of which we're really tired of doing now?

Let's deliberately take the time to dwell on some attributes like: endless, timeless, changeless, simple, solitary, sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing/wise, everywhere, just, loving/merciful-gracious-kind-forbearing-good, truthful, free, holy/separate from all other. This is a list from Adoration section of <https://aprayernotebook.net>

(3) Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *And* from the perilous pestilence. (4) He shall cover you with His feathers, *And* under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler.

2. The Character of Our God is to DELIVER FROM PESTILENCE and protect us using the imagery of a stately bird! Pictured here is "a fatal epidemic disease, especially bubonic plague."- Google dictionary. Perhaps we could picture an Eagle as the U.S. chose for it's emblem. American History inspires us. In these verses, thus, "God 'can' preserve us at such a time and that, as a great law, He will be thus the protector of those who trust Him."- A. Barnes

(5) You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, *Nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day, (6) *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness, *Nor* of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday.

3. The Expectation of Our God is to Be Shunning All Fears That Are Not 'of Him' - Terror, pestilence, destruction - these we have all experienced first hand in the last weeks especially both day and night, no? Scripture teaches our *perfected love* 'casts out' fear. 1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." *Dear Lord please perfect our love so fear will be taken away from us, in Jesus, Name!*

Page 1 of 2: "**2020d12-Ps-91's-Consolation.wpd**" is available at

<https://aprayernotebook.net/riverside/2020> with a PDF of a similar name. View it there with additional commentary as you study under universal quarantines now.

(7) A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; *But* it shall not come near you. (8) Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked.

4. The Protection of Our God is Not Limited (that is, Overwhelmed!) By Numbers, Nor *Minimized* by the Wicked in their God-Ordained Judgment. This clearly teaches that we'll experience justified satisfaction over the wrath God will pour out on the sinful. However this does not disqualify us from desiring their forgiveness up until their earthly end!

(9) Because you have made the LORD, *who is* my refuge, *Even* the Most High, your dwelling place, (10) No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; (11) For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. (12) In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. (13) You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

5. The Character of Our God's Amazing Protection Shines So Brightly Here That Satan Employs It for his Own Advantage. This is one of the most famous quotes in the NT which appears both in Matt. 4 and Luke 4 when Satan sought to disqualify Christ's earthly mission to "seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10) It also introduces us to the amazing ministry of Angels (See Hebrews 1:14; 2:1-18 NASV *Ryrie Study Bible Notes*)

Plague here absolutely reminds us of the justice occurring in our present global distress. But the Psalmist's word is not a repeat of *pestilence* above, and here's more from A. Barnes: "It is not the same word which is used in Psa 91:6, and translated 'pestilence;' and it does not refer to what is technically called the 'plague.' It may denote anything that would be expressive of the Divine displeasure, or that would be sent as a punishment. The word rendered 'dwelling' here means a tent; and the idea is, that no such mark of displeasure would abide with him, or enter his tent as its home. Of course, this also must be understood as a general promise, or as meaning that religion would constitute a general ground of security.

Ps 38:12 [Those also who seek my life lay snares *for me*; Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction, And plan deception all the day long.] "The idea here is that they sought this opportunity of ensnaring or entrapping him so as to ruin him. They took advantage of the fact that he was weak and helpless, and of the fact that he was forsaken or abandoned by his friends, to accomplish his ruin. how this was done is not stated. It might have been by their coming on him when he was thus helpless; or it might have been by endeavoring in his weak condition to extort confessions or promises from him that might be turned to his ruin. An enemy may hope to succeed much better when the one opposed is sick than when he is well, and may take advantage of his weak state of body and mind, and of the fact that he seems to be forsaken by all, to accomplish what could not be done if he were in the enjoyment of health, or sustained by powerful friends, or by a public opinion in his favor." -A. Barnes.

This interestingly brings into view the fact that, in reality, some of the suffering that is taking place in the world today is a direct judgment of God upon the world for evil.

(14) "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. (15) He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. (16) With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

6. The Rewards for Our God's Love Shown to Us When We Dwell Correctly

a. Deliverance; Exoneration (14) (the Second Promise!) Because of personal *knowledge of Him!*

b. Answers to Prayer & Assured Presence of God in Trials! (15)

c. Fruitfulness of a Long Life (Essentially the same promise of the fifth commandment, honoring parents assures one he will live long, or that he can hope to do so!

The following pages of this online PDF document are provided for you to study commentators reflections on this Psalm. Albert Barnes (pp. 1-6) is first on right side with an image of the actual Hebrew interlinear so you may view the Hebrew text. Matthew Henry follows. (pages 7-11) :-)

The author of this psalm, and the occasion on which it was composed, are alike unknown. The psalm has no title; and there are no internal marks by which we can ascertain when, or by whom, it was written. It is very general in its application, and may have been composed with no particular reference to any event occurring at the time, as it is evident that it had no special reference to the circumstances of the writer. Though it follows a psalm composed by Moses, yet there is no reason to suppose that it was written by him, nor is there any particular resemblance to that psalm.

From some things in the psalm, as Psalm 91:3-5, Psalm 91:9, Psalm 91:11; it would appear to be not improbable that the psalm was composed with reference to some individual who was exposed to temptation, or to danger, either from secret enemies or from pestilence, and that it was intended to assure such an one that there was nothing to be feared if he put his trust in God. There is no evidence that it was designed to refer particularly to the Saviour. It is, indeed, applied to him by Satan in the temptation in the wilderness Matthew 4:6; but there is, in that case, no such recognition of its applicability to himself on the part of the Saviour as to justify us in the

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the Almighty's shade. 2 I will say to Jehovah: My refuge and my fortress, my God; I will trust in Him. 3 For He delivers you from the fowler's trap, from destruction's plague. 4 With His feathers He will cover you, and under His wings you shall seek refuge; His truth is a shield and buckler. 5 You shall not fear the terror of night, of the arrow that flies by day; 6 of the plague that walks in darkness; of the destruction laying waste at noonday. 7 A thousand shall fall by your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; it shall not come near you. 8 Only with your eyes you shall look, and see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because You, O Jehovah, are my refuge; you make the Most High your habitation. 10 No evil shall happen to you, nor shall any plague come near Your tent. 11 For He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. 12 They shall bear You up in their palms, that You not dash Your foot on a stone. 13 You shall tread on the lion and adder; the young lion and the serpent You shall trample underfoot. 14 Because he has set his love on Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. 15 He shall call on Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in distress; I will rescue him and honor him. 16 I will satisfy him with length of days and will make him see My salvation.

1 4268 3068 559 3885 7706 16738 59145 5643 3427
שָׁכַח בְּסִתְרֵי עֲלֵיָי בְּצֵל שֹׁדֵי יְתוֹקֵי אִמְרֵי לַיהוָה מַחְסֵי
2 My to will I shall the shade Most the the in who He
refuge :Jehovah say .abide Almighty's High of covert dwells
3 3353 6341 15337 982 1430 4486
וּמִצֵּדֵי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִטָּחָבִי כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ מִפֶּשַׁח יָקוּשׁ
4 the from delivers He For in will I my my and
fowler's trap you .Him trust .God .fortress
5 2620 3671 8478 5526 84 1942 1698
מִדְּבַר הַיָּוֵט בְּאֲבָרֵתוֹ וְיִשָּׁךְ לְךָ וְתַחַת־כַּנְפָּיו תִּחְסֶה
6 shall you His and .you shall He His with de- from
;refuge seek wings under .cover feathers structions plague
7 5774 2971 3915 6343 3372 3808 571 5507 6793
בַּיּוֹם וְסוּרָה אִמְתּוֹ לֹא תִירָא מִפֶּשַׁח לַיְלָה מַחְסֵי יָעוֹד
8 (that) the of night the shall You not His buckler and a
flies arrow of terror fear .truth (is) shield
9 15307 6672 7736 6986 19180 1652 1698 3119
וַיָּמִים מִדְּבַר הָאֱלֹהִים יִשְׁלַמְתָּ רַשְׁעִים תִּרְאֶה אֵלֶיךָ מִקִּטְבְּ יְשׁוּעָתְךָ
10 shall .noon at (that) the of (that) in the of .day by
fall .waste lays destruction .walks darkness plague
11 5869 7835 5066 3808 3225 7233 505 6654
מִבְּרֵיתְךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְרַבְבָּה מִיּוֹמֵיךָ אֵלֶיךָ לֹא יָגֵשׁ רֶגֶל בְּעֵינֶיךָ
12 with Only shall it not you your at ten and A your by
eyes your .near come .hand right thousand .thousand side
13 4268 3068 3588 7200 7563 8011 5027
תִּבְטֵי יִשְׁלַמְתָּ רַשְׁעִים תִּרְאֶה אֵלֶיךָ מִקִּטְבְּ יְשׁוּעָתְךָ
14 my (are) O .You Because .see wicked the the and shall you
;refuge :Jehovah .look of reward
15 7123 3810 5066 7451 579 3808 4583 7760 59145
עֲלֵיָי שְׂמֵת מִעוֹנֶיךָ לֹא־תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְגִנְעֵ לֹא־יִקְרַב
16 shall not and .Evil you shall not habit your you Most the
near come plague .befall .ation make High
17 1870 13605 8104 6680 4397 168
בְּאֲוֵרֶיךָ כִּי מִלֹּאֲבָיו יִצִּילֵךְ לְשִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־דַּרְבְּכָךְ
18 your all in keep to for will He His For your your
ways you you order angels .tent
19 6620 7826 12722 68 5061 5375 3709
עַל־רַגְלֵיךָ יִשְׂאוּנֶיךָ פִּדְתֵנִי בְּאֲבָן נִקְדָּה עַל־שׁוֹל וּפְתִן
20 and the On your a on you lest shall They their on
adder lion .foot stone dash .up you bear palms
21 7682 6403 2836 8577 3715 7429 1869
תִּרְדֵּךְ תִּרְמָס כִּפְרֵי הַנֶּקֶן כִּי בִי הִשְׁקָא וְאֶפְלָטוּ אֲשֵׁנֵבּוֹ
22 set will I will I has he on Because the and the shall you shall you
high on him .him deliver .love set Me .snake cub lion trample .tread
23 2502 6864 6030 7121 8034 3045
כִּי־רָע שְׂמֵי קָדְאֵי וְאֶעֱנֶה עִמּוֹ אֲנִי בְּצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶה
24 will I in I with will I and shall He My he for
him rescue ;distress (be will him :him answer .Me on call .name known has
25 3444 7200 7646 3117 253 3513
וְאֶכְבְּדוֹ אֲדָךְ יָמִים אֲשִׁבְעֶה וְאֶרְאֶה בִּישׁוּעָתִי
26 My will and will I days (with) honor and
.salvation see him make him satisfy of length .him

conclusion that it originally referred to him. Its quotation by the tempter is no proof that this was the original reference of the psalm, and the quotation made is one which could be applied to him in the same way as any general premise in the Old Testament made to those who trusted in God might have been.

The most remarkable thing in the structure of the psalm is the frequent change of persons, leading some to suppose that it may have been composed with a view to its being sung by choirs in alternate responses, and Michaelis has suggested that there were probably two such choirs; the one - as in Psalm 91:1-2 - celebrating the praises of those who trusted in God; the other - as in Psalm 91:3-8 - exciting and encouraging the people to put their trust in God, and suggesting reasons why they should do it. Such a thing is, undoubtedly, possible; but the evidence that this was the intention of the author of the psalm is not clear.

Tholuck has divided the psalm, on the supposition that it was thus intended to be sung by alternate choirs, into portions arranged with that view: Psalm 91:1, the choir; Psalm 91:2, the response; Psalm 91:3-8, the choir; Psalm 91:9, the response; Psalm 91:10-13, the choir; Psalm 91:14-16, the response. This, however, is quite arbitrary, as it cannot be demonstrated to have been the original design.

This arrangement, however, suggests a good division of the psalm:

I. The general statement of the safety of those who put their trust in God, Psalm 91:1.

II. A responsive declaration of the author of the psalm, that he would make the Lord his refuge, and the Most High his habitation, Psalm 91:2.

III. A statement of the security or benefit of doing this, Psalm 91:3-8.

IV. A responsive declaration - repeated - by the author of the psalm that he would do this; that God "was" his refuge, Psalm 91:9 (part first).

V. A further statement of the benefit of this, Psalm 91:10-13.

VI. A general declaration embracing the sum of all that is said in the psalm, as coming from God himself, containing assurances of his protection to those who thus put their trust in him, and confide in him, Psalm 91:14-16.

This mode of division meets substantially all the changes of "persons" in the psalm, or arranges the different portions of it into parts belonging to the different speakers in the psalm. There is reason to believe that this was the line of thought in the mind of the psalmist, though it is not clear that this was designed to be so used in public responses in singing.

Verse 1

He that dwelleth - Everyone that so dwells. The proposition is universal, and is designed to embrace all who are in this condition. It is true of one; it is true of all. The word rendered "dwelleth" here is a participle from the verb to "sit," and here means "sitting;" literally, "sitting in the secret place," etc. The idea is that of calm repose; of resting; of sitting down - as one does in his dwelling.

In the secret place - On the meaning of this see the notes at Psalm 27:5. Compare Psalm 31:20; Psalm 32:7. Abiding where God abides. The idea is that of having one's home or residence in the most holy place in the tabernacle or the temple, and of sitting with him in that sacred place.

Of the Most High - Of God, represented as exalted above all; over all the universe.

Shall abide - Margin, as in Hebrew, "lodge." That is his home - his resting place - where he lodges, or passes the night. He takes up his lodging there; he makes it his home.

Under the shadow of the Almighty - Under his protection, as if under his wings. Compare the notes at Psalm 17:8. This is a general statement, and is designed as an introduction to the whole psalm, or as expressing what the psalm is intended to illustrate, "the blessedness" of the man who thus dwells with God; who makes him his friend; who makes the home of God his home.

Verse 2

I will say of the Lord - I, the psalmist; I will take this to myself; I will endeavor to secure this blessedness; I will thus abide with God. In view of the blessedness of this condition, and with the hope of securing it to myself; I will adopt this resolution as the purpose of my life. It is what I need; it is what my soul desires.

My refuge and my fortress - "I will say of Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress!" I will address him as such; I will regard him as such. On the meaning of these terms, see the notes at Psalm 18:2.

My God - I will address him as my God; as the God whom alone I worship; as the only being to whom the name "God" can properly be applied; as being to me all that is implied in the word God.

In him will I trust - I will repose that confidence in him which is evinced by making my home with him, and seeking permanently to dwell with him.

Verse 3

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler - The snare or gin set for catching birds; meaning, here, that God would save him from the purposes of wicked people; such purposes as might be compared with the devices employed to catch birds. On the meaning of the figure used here, see the notes at Psalm 18:5.

And from the noisome pestilence - The "fatal" pestilence; the pestilence that spreads death in its march. That is, he can prevent its coming upon you; or, he can save you from its ravages, while others are dying around you. This promise is not to be understood as absolute, or as meaning that no one who fears God will ever fall by the pestilence - for good people "do" die at such times as well as bad people; but the idea is, that God "can" preserve us at such a time and that, as a great law, he will be thus the protector of those who trust him. It is to be remembered that in times of pestilence (as was the case during the prevalence of the Asiatic cholera in 1832 and 1848), very many of the victims are the intemperate, the sensual, the debased, and that a life of this kind is a predisposing cause of death in such visitations of judgment. A large part of those who die are of that number. From the danger arising from this cause, of course the virtuous, the temperate, the pious are exempt; and this is one of the methods by which God saves those who trust in him from the "noisome pestilence." Religion, therefore, to a considerable extent, constitutes a ground of security at such times; nor is there any reason to doubt that, in many cases also, there may be a special interposition protecting the friends of God from danger, and sparing them for future usefulness. The promise here is substantially that general promise which we have in the Scriptures everywhere, that God is the Protector of his people, and that they may put their trust in him.

Verse 4

He shall cover thee with his feathers ... - As the parent bird protects its young. See the notes at Psalm 17:8. Compare Deuteronomy 32:11. "His truth." His unfailing promise; the certainty that what he has promised to do he will perform.

Shall be thy shield and buckler - literally, "Shield and buckler is his truth." The meaning is, that his pledge or promise would be unto them as the shield of the soldier is to him in battle. Compare Psalm 35:2. The word rendered "buckler" is derived from the verb "to surround," and is given to the defensive armor here referred to, because it "surrounds," and thus "protects" a person. It may apply to a coat of mail.

Verse 5

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night - That which usually causes alarm at night - a sudden attack; an unexpected incursion of enemies; sudden disease coming on by night; or the pestilence which seems to love night, and to "walk in darkness." Any one of these things seems to be aggravated by night and darkness; and hence, we most dread them then. We cannot see their approach; we cannot measure their outlines; we know not the extent of the danger, or what may be the calamity.

Nor for the arrow that flieth by day - Whether shot from the bow of God - as pestilence and disease; or from the hand of man in battle. The idea is, that he that trusts in God will be calm. Compare the notes at Psalm 56:3.

Verse 6

Nor for the pestilence - The plague or pestilence was common in Oriental countries.

That walketh in darkness - Not that it particularly comes in the night, but that it seems to creep along as if in the night; that is, where one cannot mark its progress, or anticipate when or whom it will strike. The laws of its movements are unknown, and it comes upon people as an enemy that suddenly attacks us in the night.

Nor for the destruction - The word used here - ??? qet?eb - means properly a cutting off, a destruction, as a destroying storm, Isaiah 28:2; and then, contagious pestilence, Deuteronomy 32:24. It may be applied here to anything that sweeps away people - whether storm, war, pestilence, or famine.

That wasteth at noonday - It lays waste, or produces desolation, at noon; that is, visibly, openly. The meaning is, that whenever, or in whatever form, calamity comes which sweeps away the race - whether at midnight or at noon - whether in the form of pestilence, war, or famine - he who trusts in God need not - will not - be afraid. He will feel either that he will be preserved from its ravages, or that if he is cut off he has nothing to fear. He is a friend of God, and he has a hope of a better life. In death, and in the future world, there is nothing of which he should be afraid. The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate render this, strangely enough, "Nor of mischance and the demon of noonday."

Verse 7

A thousand shall fall at thy side - Though a thousand should fall at thy side, or close to thee. This alludes to the manner in which the pestilence often moves among people.

And ten thousand at thy right hand - Compare Psalm 3:6. The word "myriad" would better represent the exact idea in the original, as the Hebrew word is different from that which is translated "a thousand." It is put here for any large number. No matter how many fall around thee, on the right hand and the left, you will have nothing to fear.

But it shall not come nigh thee - You will be safe. You may feel assured of the divine protection. Your mind may be calm through a sense of such guardianship, and your very calmness will conduce to your safety. This refers, as remarked above, to a "general" law in regard to the judgments of God. It is true that others, beside the dissipated, vicious, and debased, may be the victims; but the great law is that temperance, soberness, virtue, cleanliness, and that regard to comfort and health to which religion and virtue prompt, constitute a marked security - so marked as to illustrate the "general" law referred to in the psalm before us.

Verse 8

Only - That is, This is "all" that will occur to you. The only thing which you have to anticipate is, that you will see how God punishes sinners.

With thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked - Your own eyes shall see it. See the notes at Psalm 37:34. You will see the just punishment of the ungodly, the vicious, the profane, the sensual. You will see what is the proper fruit of their conduct; what is the just expression of the views which God takes of their character. This undoubtedly refers to the general principle that there is a moral government on earth; that vice is often punished as such; that the general course of the divine dealings is such as to show that God is favorable to virtue, and is opposed to vice. The system is not complete here, and there are many things which could not be reconciled with this, if the present world were all, and if there were no future state; but the course of events indicates the general character of the divine administration, and what is the tendency of things. The completion - the actual and perfect adjustment - is reserved for a future state. The facts as they occur on earth prove that there is an attribute of justice in God; the fact that his dealings here are not wholly and fully in accordance with what justice demands, proves that there will be a state where full justice will be done, and where the whole system will be adjusted.

Verse 9

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge - literally, "For thou, O Jehovah, (art) my refuge." The Chaldee Paraphrase regards this as the language of Solomon, who, according to that version, is one of the speakers in the psalm: "Solomon answered and said, <Since thou, O Lord, art my refuge," etc. Tholuck regards this as the response of the choir. But this is unnecessary. The idea is, that the psalmist "himself" had made Yahweh his refuge, or his defense. The language is an expression of his own feeling - of his own experience - in having made God his refuge, and is designed here to be a ground of exhortation to others to do the same thing. He could say that he had made God his refuge; he could say that God was now his refuge; and he could appeal to this - to his own experience - when he exhorted others to do the same, and gave them assurance of safety in doing it.

Even the Most High thy habitation - literally, "The Most High hast thou made thy habitation;" or, thy home. On the word habitation, see the notes at Psalm 90:1. The idea is, that he had, as it were, chosen to abide with God, or to dwell with him - to find his home with him as in a father's house. The consequence of this, or the security which would follow, he states in the following verses.

Verse 10

There shall no evil befall thee - The Chaldee Paraphrase has, "The Lord of the world answered and said, <There shall no evil befall thee," etc. The sentiment, however, is that the psalmist could assure such an one, from his own personal experience, that he would be safe. He had himself made Yahweh his refuge, and he could speak with confidence of the safety of doing so. This, of course, is to be understood as a general truth, in accordance with what has been said above.

Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling - On the word rendered "plague" here ??? nega? - see Psalm 38:12, note; Psalm 39:11, note. It is not the same word which is used in Psalm 91:6, and translated "pestilence;" and it does not refer to what is technically called the "plague." It may denote anything that would be expressive of the divine displeasure, or that would be sent as a punishment. The word rendered "dwelling" here means a tent; and the idea is, that no such mark of displeasure would abide with him, or enter his tent as its home. Of course, this also must be understood as a general promise, or as meaning that religion would constitute a general ground of security.

Verse 11

For he shall give his angels charge over thee - literally, "He will give <command to his angels." That is, he would instruct them, or appoint them for this purpose. This passage Psalm 91:11-12 was applied to the Saviour by the tempter. Matthew

4:6. See the notes at that passage. This, however, does not prove that it had an original reference to the Messiah, for even if we should suppose that Satan was a correct and reliable expounder of the Scriptures, all that the passage would prove as used by him would be, that the righteous, or those who were the friends of God, might rely confidently on his protection, and that Jesus, if he was of God, might do this as others might. On the sentiment in the passage, to wit, that God employs his angels to protect his people, see the notes at Psalm 34:7; compare the notes at Hebrews 1:14.

To keep thee in all thy ways - To preserve thee wheresoever thou goest.

Verse 12

They shall bear thee up ... - As if they took hold of thee, and held thee up, when about to fall.

Lest thou dash thy foot ... - Lest you should stumble and fall. They will protect you so that you may walk safely.

Verse 13

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder - Thou shalt be safe among dangers, as if the rage of the lion were restrained, and he became like a lamb, and as if the poisonous tooth of the serpent were extracted. Compare Mark 16:18. The word used here to denote the "lion" is a poetic term, not employed in prose. The word rendered "adder" is, in the margin, asp. The Hebrew word - ??? pethen - commonly means viper, asp, or adder. See Job 20:14, note; Job 20:16, note; compare Psalm 58:4; Isaiah 11:8. It may be applied to any venomous serpent.

The young lion - The "young" lion is mentioned as particularly fierce and violent. See Psalm 17:12.

And the dragon ... - Hebrew, ??? tanni^yn See Psalm 74:13, note; Job 7:12, note; Isaiah 27:1, note. In Exodus 7:9-10, Exodus 7:12, the word is rendered serpent (and serpents); in Genesis 1:21; and Job 7:12; whale (and whales); in Deuteronomy 32:33; Nehemiah 2:13; Psalm 74:13; Psalm 148:7; Isaiah 27:1; Isaiah 51:9; Jeremiah 51:34, as here, dragon (and dragons); in Lamentations 4:3, sea monsters. The word does not occur elsewhere. It would perhaps properly denote a sea monster; yet it may be applied to a serpent. Thus applied, it would denote a serpent of the largest and most dangerous kind; and the idea is, that he who trusted in God would be safe amidst the most fearful dangers, as if he should walk safely amidst venomous serpents.

Verse 14

Because he hath set his love upon me - Has become attached to me; has united himself with me; is my friend. The Hebrew word expresses the strongest attachment, and is equivalent to our expression - "to fall in love." It refers here to the fact that God is the object of supreme affection on the part of his people; and it also here implies, that this springs from their hearts; that they have seen such beauty in his character, and have such strong desire for him, that their hearts go out in warm affection toward him.

Therefore will I deliver him - I will save him from trouble and from danger.

I will set him on high - By acknowledging him as my own, and treating him accordingly.

Because he hath known my name - He has known me; that is, he understands my true character, and has learned to love me.

Verse 15

He shall call upon me - He shall have the privilege of calling on me in prayer; and he will do it.

And I will answer him - I will regard his supplications, and will grant his requests. There could be no greater privilege - no more precious promise - than this.

I will be with him in trouble - I will stand by him; I will not forsake him.

I will deliver him, and honor him - I will not only rescue him from danger, but I will exalt him to honor. I will recognize him as my friend, and will regard and treat him as such. On earth he shall be treated as my friend; in another world he shall be exalted to honor among the redeemed, and become the associate of holy beings forever.

Verse 16

With long life will I satisfy him - The margin here, is "length of days;" that is, days lengthened out or multiplied. The meaning is, I will give him length of days as he desires, or until he is satisfied with life; implying

(1) that it is natural to desire long life;

(2) that long life is to be regarded as a blessing (compare Proverbs 3:2, Proverbs 3:16; Exodus 20:12);

(3) that the tendency of religion is to lengthen out life; since virtue, temperance, regular industry, calmness of mind, moderation in all things, freedom from excesses in eating and in drinking - to all of which religion prompts - contribute to health, and to length of days (see Psalm 34:12-14, notes; Psalm 37:9, note; Psalm 55:23, note); and

(4) that a time will come, even under this promised blessing of length of days, when a man will be "satisfied" with living; when he will have no strong desire to live longer; when, under the infirmities of advanced years, and under his lonely feelings from the fact that his early friends have fallen, and under the influence of a bright hope of heaven, he will feel that he has had enough of life here, and that it is better to depart to another world.

And shew him my salvation - In another life, after he shall be "satisfied" with this life. The promise extends beyond the grave: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." See the notes at 1 Timothy 4:8. Thus, religion blesses man in this life, and blesses him forever. In possession of this, it is a great thing to him to live long; and then it is a great thing to die - to go to be forever with God.

Psalms 91:1-8

In these verses we have,

I. A great truth laid down in general, That all those who live a life of communion with God are constantly safe under his protection, and may therefore preserve a holy serenity and security of mind at all times (Psa 91:1): *He that dwells, that sits down, in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*; he that by faith chooses God for his guardian shall find all that in him which he needs or can desire. Note, 1. It is the character of a true believer that he *dwells in the secret place of the Most High*; he is at home in God, returns to God, and reposes in him as his rest; he acquaints himself with inward religion, and makes heart-work of the service of God, worships within the veil, and loves to be alone with God, to converse with him in solitude. 2. It is the privilege and comfort of those that do so that they *abide under the shadow of the Almighty*; he shelters them, and comes between them and every thing that would annoy them, whether storm or sunshine. They shall not only have an admittance, but a residence, under God's protection; he will be their rest and refuge for ever.

II. The psalmist's comfortable application of this to himself (Psa 91:2): *I will say of the Lord, whatever others say of him, "He is my refuge; I choose him as such, and confide in him. Others make idols their refuge, but I will say of Jehovah, the true and living God, He is my refuge: any other is a refuge of lies. He is a refuge that will not fail me; for he is my fortress and strong-hold."* Idolaters called their idols *Mahuzzim*, their *most strong-hold* (Dan 11:39), but therein they deceived themselves; those only secure themselves that make the Lord their God, their fortress. There being no reason to question his sufficiency, fitly does it follow, *In him will I trust*. If Jehovah be our God, our refuge, and our fortress, what can we desire which we may not be sure to find in him? He is neither fickle nor false, neither weak nor mortal; he is God and not man, and therefore there is no danger of being disappointed in him. *We know whom we have trusted*.

III. The great encouragement he gives to others to do likewise, not only from his own experience of the comfort of it (for in that there might possibly be a fallacy), but from the truth of God's promise, in which there neither is nor can be any deceit (Psa 91:3, Psa 91:4, etc.): *Surely he shall deliver thee*. Those who have themselves found the comfort of making God their refuge cannot but desire that others may do so. Now here it is promised,

1. That believers shall be kept from those mischiefs which they are in imminent danger of, and which would be fatal to them (Psa 91:3), *from the snare of the fowler*, which is laid unseen and catches the unwary prey on a sudden, and *from the noisome pestilence*, which seizes men unawares and against which there is no guard. This promise protects, (1.) The natural life, and is often fulfilled in our preservation from those dangers which are very threatening and very near, while yet we ourselves are not apprehensive of them, any more than the bird is of *the snare of the fowler*. We owe it, more than we are sensible, to the care of the divine Providence that we have been kept from infectious diseases and out of the hands of the wicked and unreasonable. (2.) The spiritual life, which is protected by divine grace from the temptations of Satan, which are as the *snares of the fowler*, and from the contagion of sin, which is the *noisome pestilence*. He that has given grace to be the glory of the soul will create a defence upon all that glory.

2. That God himself will be their protector; those must needs be safe who have him for their keeper, and successful for whom he undertakes (Psa 91:4): *He shall cover thee, shall keep thee secret* (Psa 31:20), and so keep thee safe, Psa 27:5. God protects believers, (1.) With the greatest tenderness and affection, which is intimated in that, *He shall cover thee with his feathers, under his wings*, which alludes to the hen *gathering her chickens under wings*, Mat 23:37. By natural instinct she not only protects them, but calls them under that protection when she sees them in danger, not only keeps them safe, but cherishes them and keeps them warm. To this the

great God is pleased to compare his care of his people, who are helpless as the chickens, and easily made a prey of, but are invited to trust under the shadow of the wings of the divine promise and providence, which is the periphrasis of a proselyte to the true religion, that he has come to *trust under the wings of the God of Israel*, Rth 2:12. (2.) With the greatest power and efficacy. Wings and feathers, though spread with the greatest tenderness, are yet weak, and easily broken through, and therefore it is added, *His truth shall be thy shield and buckler*, a strong defence. God is willing to guard his people as the hen is to guard the chickens, and as able as a man of war in armour.

3. That he will not only keep them from evil, but from the fear of evil, Psa 91:5, Psa 91:6. Here is, (1.) Great danger supposed; the mention of it is enough to frighten us; night and day we lie exposed, and those that are apt to be timorous will in neither period think themselves safe. When we are retired into our chambers, our beds, and have made all as safe as we can about us, yet there is terror by night, from thieves and robbers, winds and storms, besides those things that are the creatures of fancy and imagination, which are often most frightful of all. We read of *fear in the night*, Son 3:8. There is also a *pestilence that walketh in darkness*, as that was which slew the first-born of the Egyptians, and the army of the Assyrians. No locks nor bars can shut out diseases, while we carry about with us in our bodies the seeds of them. But surely in the day-time, when we can look about us, we are not so much in danger; yes, there is an *arrow that flieth by day* too, and yet flies unseen; there is a destruction that wasteth at high-noon, when we are awake and have all our friends about us; even then we cannot secure ourselves, nor can they secure us. It was in the day-time that that pestilence wasted which was sent to chastise David for numbering the people, on occasion of which some think this psalm was penned. But, (2.) Here is great security promised to believers in the midst of this danger: "*Thou shalt not be afraid*. God by his grace will keep thee from disquieting distrustful fear (that fear which hath torment) in the midst of the greatest dangers. Wisdom shall keep thee from being causelessly afraid, and faith shall keep thee from being inordinately afraid. Thou shalt not be afraid of the arrow, as knowing that though it may hit thee it cannot hurt thee; if it take away the natural life, yet it shall be so far from doing any prejudice to the spiritual life that it shall be its perfection." A believer *needs not fear*, and therefore *should not fear*, any arrow, because the point is off, the poison is out. *O death! where is thy sting?* It is also under divine direction, and will hit where God appoints and not otherwise. Every bullet has its commission. Whatever is done our heavenly Father's will is done; and we have no reason to be afraid of that.

4. That they shall be preserved in common calamities, in a distinguishing way (Psa 91:7): "When death rides in triumph, and diseases rage, so that *thousands and ten thousands* fall, fall by sickness, or fall by the sword in battle, *fall at thy side, at thy right hand*, and the sight of their fall is enough to frighten thee, and if they fall by the pestilence their falling so near thee may be likely to infect thee, *yet it shall not come nigh thee*, the death shall not, the fear of death shall not." Those that preserve their purity in times of general corruption may trust God with their safety in times of general desolation. When multitudes die round about us, though thereby we must be awakened to prepare for our own death, yet we must not be *afraid with any amazement*, nor make ourselves subject to bondage, as many do all their life-time, *through fear of death*, Heb 2:15. The sprinkling of blood secured the first-born of Israel when thousands fell. Nay, it is promised to God's people that they shall have the satisfaction of seeing, not only God's promises fulfilled to them, but his threatenings fulfilled upon those that hate them (Psa 91:8): *Only with thy eyes shalt thou behold and see the just reward of the wicked*, which perhaps refers to the destruction of the first-born of Egypt by the pestilence, which was both the punishment of the oppressors and the enlargement of the oppressed; this Israel saw when they saw themselves unhurt, untouched. As it will aggravate the damnation of sinners that with their eyes they shall behold and see the reward of the righteous (Luk 13:28), so it will magnify the salvation of the saints that with their eyes they shall behold and see the destruction of the wicked, Isa 66:24; Psa 58:10.

Psalms 91:9-16

Here are more promises to the same purport with those in the foregoing verses, and they are exceedingly great and precious, and sure to all the seed.

I. The psalmist assures believers of divine protection, from his own experience; and that which he says is the word of God, and what we may rely upon. Observe, 1. The character of those who shall have the benefit and comfort of these promises; it is much the same with that, Psa 91:1. They are such as make *the Most High their habitation* (Psa 91:9), as are continually with God and rest in him, as make his name both their temple and their strong tower, as dwell in love and so dwell in God. It is our duty to be at home in God, to make our choice of him, and then to live our life in him as our habitation, to converse with him, and delight in him, and depend upon him; and then it shall be our privilege to be at home in God; we shall be welcome to him as a man to his own habitation, without any let, hindrance, or molestation, from the arrests of the law or the clamours of conscience; then too we shall be safe in him, shall be kept in *perfect peace*, Isa 26:3. To encourage us to make the Lord our habitation, and to hope for safety and satisfaction in him, the psalmist intimates the comfort he had had in doing so: "He whom thou makest thy *habitation is my refuge*; and I have found him firm and faithful, and in him there is room enough, and shelter enough, both for thee and me." *In my father's house there are many mansions*, one needs not crowd another, much less crowd out another. 2. The promises that are sure to all those who have thus made *the Most High their habitation*. (1.) That, whatever happens to them, nothing shall hurt them (Psa 91:10): "*There shall no evil befall thee*; though trouble or affliction befall thee, yet there shall be no real evil in it, for it shall come from the love of God and shall be sanctified; it shall come, not for thy hurt, but for thy good; and though, for *the present, it be not joyous but grievous*, yet, in the end, it shall yield so well that thou thyself shalt own *no evil befel thee*. It is not an evil, an only evil, but there is a mixture of good in it and a product of good by it. Nay, not thy person only, but thy dwelling, shall be taken under the divine protection: *There shall no plague come nigh that, nothing to do thee or thine any damage*." *Nihil accidere bono viro mali potest - No evil can befall a good man*. Seneca *De Providentia*. (2.) That the angels of light shall be serviceable to them, Psa 91:11, Psa 91:12. This is a precious promise, and speaks a great deal both of honour and comfort to the saints, nor is it ever the worse for being quoted and abused by the devil in tempting Christ, Mat 4:6. Observe, [1.] The charge given to the angels concerning the saints. He who is the Lord of the angels, who gave them their being and gives laws to them, whose they are and whom they were made to serve, *he shall give his angels a charge over thee*, not only over the church in general, but over every particular believer. The angels *keep the charge of the Lord their God*; and this is the charge they receive from him. It denotes the great care God takes of the saints, in that the angels themselves shall be charged with them, and employed for them. The charge is *to keep thee in all thy ways*; here is a limitation of the promise: *They shall keep thee in thy ways*, that is, "as long as thou keepest in the way of thy duty;" those that go out of that way put themselves out of God's protection. This word the devil left out when he quoted the promise to enforce a temptation, knowing how much it made against him. But observe the extent of the promise; it is *to keep thee in all thy ways*: even where there is no apparent danger yet we need it, and where there is the most imminent danger we shall have it. Wherever the saints go the angels are charged with them, as the servants are with the children. [2.] The care which the angels take of the saints, pursuant to this charge: *They shall bear thee up in their hands*, which denotes both their great ability and their great affection. They are able to bear up the saints out of the reach of danger, and they do it with all the tenderness and affection wherewith the nurse carries the little child about in her arms; it speaks us helpless and them helpful. They are condescending in their ministrations; they keep the feet of the saints, lest they *dash them against a stone*, lest they stumble and fall into sin and into trouble. [3.] That the powers of darkness shall be triumphed over by them (Psa 91:13): *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder*. The devil is called a *roaring lion, the old serpent, the red dragon*; so that to this promise the apostle seems to refer in that (Rom 16:20), *The God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet*. Christ

has broken the serpent's head, spoiled our spiritual enemies (Col 2:15), and through him *we are more than conquerors*; for Christ calls us, as Joshua called the captains of Israel, to come and set our feet on the necks of vanquished enemies. Some think that this promise had its full accomplishment in Christ, and the miraculous power which he had over the whole creation, healing the sick, casting out devils, and particularly putting it into his disciples' commission that they should *take up serpents*, Mar 16:18. It may be applied to that care of the divine Providence by which we are preserved from ravenous noxious creatures (*the wild beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee*, Job 5:23); nay, and have ways and means of taming them, Jam 3:7.

II. He brings in God himself speaking words of comfort to the saints, and declaring the mercy he had in store for them, Psa 91:14-16. Some make this to be spoken to the angels as the reason of the charge given them concerning the saints, as if he had said, "Take care of them, for they are dear to me, and I have a tender concern for them." And now, as before, we must observe,

1. To whom these promises do belong; they are described by three characters: - (1.) They are such as know God's name. His nature we cannot fully know; but by his name he has made himself known, and with that we must acquaint ourselves. (2.) They are such as have set their love upon him; and those who rightly know him will love him, will place their love upon him as the only adequate object of it, will let out their love towards him with pleasure and enlargement, and will fix their love upon him with a resolution never to remove it to any rival. (3.) They are such as call upon him, as by prayer keep up a constant correspondence with him, and in every difficult case refer themselves to him.

2. What the promises are which God makes to the saints. (1.) That he will, in due time, deliver them out of trouble: *I will deliver him* (Psa 91:14 and again Psa 91:15), denoting a double deliverance, living and dying, a deliverance in trouble and a deliverance out of trouble. If God proportions the degree and continuance of our troubles to our strength, if he keeps us from offending him in our troubles, and makes our death our discharge, at length, from all our troubles, then this promise is fulfilled. See Psa 34:19; 2Ti 3:11; 2Ti 4:18. (2.) That he will, in the mean time, *be with them in trouble*, Psa 91:15. If he does not immediately put a period to their afflictions, yet they shall have his gracious presence with them in their troubles; he will take notice of their sorrows, and *know their souls in adversity*, will visit them graciously by his word and Spirit, and converse with them, will take their part, will support and comfort them, and sanctify their afflictions to them, which will be the surest token of his presence with them in their troubles. (3.) That herein he will answer their prayers: *He shall call upon me*; I will pour upon him the spirit of prayer, and then *I will answer*, answer by promises (Psa 85:8), answer by providences, bringing in seasonable relief, and answer by graces, *strengthening them with strength in their souls* (Psa 138:3); thus he answered Paul with *grace sufficient*, 2Co 12:9. (4.) That he will exalt and dignify them: *I will set him on high*, out of the reach of trouble, above the stormy region, on a rock *above the waves*, Isa 33:16. They shall be enabled, by the grace of God, to look down upon the things of this world with a holy contempt and indifference, to look up to the things of the other world with a holy ambition and concern; and then they are set on high. *I will honour him*; those are truly honourable whom God puts honour upon by taking them into covenant and communion with himself and designing them for his kingdom and glory, Joh 12:26. (5.) That they shall have a sufficiency of life in this world (Psa 91:16): *With length of days will I satisfy him*; that is, [1.] They shall live long enough: they shall be continued in this world till they have done the work they were sent into this world for and are ready for heaven, and that is long enough. Who would wish to live a day longer than God has some work to do, either by him or upon him? [2.] They shall think it long enough; for God by his grace shall wean them from the world and make them willing to leave it. A man may die young, and yet die full of days, *satur dierum - satisfied with living*. A wicked worldly man is not satisfied, no, not with long life; he still cries, *Give, give*. But he that has his treasure and heart in another world has soon enough of this; he would not live always. (6.) That they shall have an eternal life in the other world. This crowns the blessedness: *I will show him my salvation*,

show him *the Messiah* (so some); good old Simeon was then satisfied with long life when he could say, *My eyes have seen thy salvation*, nor was there any greater joy to the Old Testament saints than to see Christ's day, though at a distance. It is more probably that the word refers to the better country, that is, the heavenly, which the patriarchs desired and sought: he *will show him* that, bring him to that blessed state, the felicity of which consists so much in seeing that face to face which we here see through a glass darkly; and, in the mean time, he will give him a prospect of it. All these promises, some think, point primarily at Christ, and had their accomplishment in his resurrection and exaltation.