

DECEMBER 13, 2020

SHAKING OFF FEAR

PSALM 91:1-6, 9-16

Fear can be healthy. It can keep us from dangerous situations. The Bible tells us to fear God and possess a reverential awe of Him. Sometimes, however, we experience situations or times when we're afraid and we shouldn't be. Such fears can paralyze us and keep us from moving forward or living the life to which God calls us. The psalmist of Psalm 91 reminds us that walking in the fear of God means we can trust Him with all our other fears. When fear strikes, trust God's power. Psalm 91:1-6

From the very beginning of Psalm 91, the psalmist affirms the theme of the entire psalm (v.1). When fear strikes, we can **trust God's power**. The basis of security for the believer is found in God's character (vv.1-2); God's protection (vv.3-13), and God's love (vv.14-16).

The psalmist used several names in verses 1-2 to refer to security or protection. If all the names are taken together, they emphasize the fullness and completeness of God's protection. In his commentary, Dr. David Parks notes "six divine names used by the Hebrews: **Most High...Almighty...Lord...refuge...fortress...God**. All six names reveal God's character, power, and concern for His people."

- **Most High** (*Elyon*) depicts God's omnipotence, exalted nature and majesty. He is all powerful and cannot be conquered or defeated.
- **Almighty** (*Shaddai*) is Most Powerful. This divine title emphasizes God's sovereign, all-powerful, invincible attributes.
- **Lord** (*Yahweh*) is the name of promise, God's covenant name with the nation of Israel.
- **...refuge...** is a secure shelter from trouble or danger.
- **...fortress...** is a stronghold, a safe secure place that the enemy cannot reach.

● **God** is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. This is the name of full power. It is the name used in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Verses 3-13 focus on the Lord as the Rescuer of His people. Using rich imagery, the psalmist describes some of the ways God will protect us. For example, **rescue from the bird trap** indicates God’s protecting us from the deceptive wiles of evil. The second image portrays deliverance from **destructive plague**, i.e., pestilence, various evils. Then the psalmist reassures us that during these times God will cover and protect us under His wings of care when we stay close to Him, just as a bird gathers her young under her wings to protect them. God’s faithfulness will be a protective shield.

Other examples of dire circumstances from which God rescues us include **the terror of the night** and **the plague that stalks in darkness**. His rescuing extends to **the arrow that flies by day** and **the pestilence that ravages at noon**. In all the instances the psalmist **will not fear** because God is his sure protection. Night or day, the Lord is a capable and dependable refuge for whatever might try to bring harm or destruction. Therefore, we can and should trust him.

When Fear strikes, trust God’s protection. Psalm 91:9-13

Openly declaring his faith, the psalmist emphasizes God’s protective care over those who abide in His shelter, under the shadow of the Almighty. They are secure in the Lord. Their lives and homes are under His constant watch. Verses 11-12 tell us that God may use His heavenly resources (i.e., angels) on our behalf. However, God is ultimately the One who protects us. Therefore, we are not to regard His resources, even His angels, as superior to Him as those whom we worship, or as the focus of our concern.

Verse 13 tells us of the victory that belongs to the trusting child of God. The promises of protection belong to those who have met the condition set out in verse 9. Jesus referred to this passage when He warned His disciples of dangerous enemies that would oppose Him (Luke 10:19).

The New Testament confirms, however, that this passage does not promise no harm will come to those who trust God. Even when we trust God, we can — and do — encounter pain and suffering, and even death. However, we can be assured of ultimate victory (Romans 8:31-

39). One day we will dwell gloriously and securely in the immediate presence of the Lord forever.

When fear strikes, walk with God. Psalm 91:14-16

Verses 14-16 record God's response to the psalmist: when fear strikes, keep on walking with God. Verses 15-16 denote God's promises to those who trust Him:

- I will answer him.
- I will be with him in trouble.
- I will rescue him and give him honor.
- I will satisfy him with a long life and show him my salvation.

Psalm 91 is a magnificent Psalm of promise of protection made possible because God is present with us. We trust God. Trusting in God includes the conviction that we believe God is good and does all things well. He acts in a manner consistent with His righteous and holy character to do what brings glory to His name.

In his commentary, Dr. Parks shares the following story:

“There is an interesting story regarding the training techniques of some early Native American tribes. These early Native Americans placed a high value on training young braves, as the well-being of the tribe often depended on it.

On the night of a boy's thirteenth birthday, after learning hunting, scouting and fishing, he was put to a final test. The young brave boy would be blindfolded, taken miles away to unknown territory, and placed in a forest in the middle of the night. His task was to spend the remainder of the night in those thick woods.

Imagine how terrified the young man must have been. Not knowing where he was, the young warrior-to-be saw shadows and heard sounds in the darkness. After what surely would have seemed like an eternity, dawn broke, and the first rays of sunlight entered the forest. Looking around, to the boy's

absolute astonishment, he beheld the figure of a man standing just a few feet away—on guard—armed with bow and arrow.

His own father had been watching over him, silently, all night long. The young brave had never been alone at all. In a similar way, no matter our fears and no matter how dark it may get, we know from Scripture, God is always with us.”