

Psalm 91:1-8

Introduction: This Psalm does not bear a title nor a writer. It is not revealed explicitly who penned Psalm 91, but some theologians attribute Psalm 91 to Moses. Some ascribe this Psalm to David upon the occasion of the pestilence which came about because of David's sin in taking a census. (**II Samuel 24**) Some say that this Psalm should be applied to Jesus and we can see this in the last portion. In the temptation of Christ, the enemy applied one of the promises to Him. (**Matthew 4:6**) John Gill is of the opinion that this Psalm is best understood in view of those who belong to the LORD. As we have seen in some of the Psalms, there is often a dual application. For example, in Psalm 89 there are verses that apply to David, but the greater application is their belonging to Christ. The covenant made with David that his descendant would be on the throne forever has the greater meaning that Christ is the King of an eternal Kingdom.

The Jewish tradition was that when the writer's name is not mentioned we may assign the Psalm to the last writer. Even though we can't be certain and should not be dogmatic regarding authorship, the most telling aspect that Psalm 91 could belong to Moses is that it has within it echoes of Deuteronomy 32 and 33 which is characterized by how it expresses the wonderful promises of GOD. This Psalm also could very well mark for us the faithfulness in abiding and trusting GOD of Joshua and Caleb when most of the sons of Israel would and did not. Much like the movement we have seen in the Psalter; this is the pattern from Deuteronomy 31, which promises GOD will come in judgement to His people due to their faithlessness. Then Deuteronomy 32 and 33 are the promises of GOD's return to His people for the purpose of deliverance, restoration, and blessing. Psalm 91 is a song of summary and a meditation upon the promise that after exile, suffering, and loss; will come days of Blessing. Psalm 91 is a celebration of those promises. Within Deuteronomy 32 is a song which Moses, by the appointment of GOD, delivers to Israel as an admonition to take heed that they not be guilty of forsaking GOD as in the past by their fathers. Deuteronomy 33 is Moses' farewell to the people in which he pronounces and dismisses them with a blessing just prior to his death. Looking back on our journey through the Psalms, we have a similar occurrence or movement. Psalm 89 is a crisis expressed by the psalmist in that it seems as GOD has spurned the covenant that David's Seed would be on the throne forever. Then in Psalm 90 there is a looking back from the Davidic time to that of Moses and Creation. In Psalm 90 our souls are instructed in GOD's Power in Creation and His Sovereignty over His Creation. GOD is revealed as faithful and as a covenant keeper in much of Book IV of the Psalter

(Psalms 90 – 106). So, there is a principle that when our souls are troubled to look back – to recount that we may see GOD as not only Sovereign and Powerful, but Faithful in His Lovingkindness and Mercy that we as His people be reassured, settled, and brought back to joy and peace that only He can give. Not only should we look back or recount in times of trouble, but in times when that is not our state.

This is one of the ways in which Book IV as a whole can be characterized – looking back on GOD’s faithfulness to be encouraged in the present. This development of moving from judgement to blessing as seen in Deuteronomy is present from Psalm 90 to 91. Psalm 90 speaks of man withering away beneath GOD’s anger against sin. Psalm 91 tells of a man that is blessed of the LORD GOD and is able to tread upon the lion and the cobra.

Read Psalm 91:1-8

Here is the suggested division that I have found to be helpful by Charles Spurgeon that I have modified slightly:

Psalm 91:1-2—The state of the godly.

Psalm 91:3-8—Our safety.

Psalm 91:9-10—Our habitation.

Psalm 91:11-13—Our protection and our protectors.

Psalm 91:14-16—Our salvation imparted by His Mercy.

The overarching theme of this Psalm is that the LORD GOD is near His people. He is our Refuge, Fortress, our Deliverer, Shield, and Bulwark – therefore we don’t need to fear. Notice this Psalm does not promise to His people an absence of difficulty, but deliverance from such so that His people will not be afraid. We will not be afraid of the terror by night, the arrow that flies by day, the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that lays waste at noon. Why? Not because we are braver than the next fellow, but because we are under the protection of the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe. His Protection for His people is intimately spoken of as we see in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 23. We are told of Jesus’ desire to gather Jerusalem to care for them by His proclaiming **“How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her**

chicks under her wings". We are protected by His covering us with His pinions and we are under His wings for refuge.

It is sometimes hard to figure out how we apply these Psalms to ourselves. Are we to read this Psalm and come away with the understanding that if we are good Christians we will not get sick or if we go off to war that we will not die. The answer is obviously "no". What we are given is a vision of GOD's Faithfulness, Protection, and His Provision to His people. We see that GOD is willing to go with His people and He is indeed near His people. We heard this past Wednesday evening Dr. Godfrey's account of a friend in whose funeral he attended as we are going through his series, "Learning to Love the Psalms". I want to encourage you to be a part of that as it is doing that which the title bears – we are learning the love the Psalms. Dr. Godfrey's friend was a top gun pilot and there were several Christians in that unit. Their motto was "Today I am invincible..... unless the LORD has other plans". And this is what we see in this Psalm – this principle that as His people we are in His Hands. [Romans 14:7-8] **7 For not one if us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself. 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the LORD; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.** That is our great Comfort, our great Hope, and the ever-present Reality that we as His people are walking in. Admittedly, we don't always live upon nor do we do this perfectly, but as GOD's people we will know the Protection and Provision of Christ Jesus.

It is one thing to say in general that the LORD is a refuge, but my prayer is that each soul can say by faith that, "He is my Refuge". Man is prone to cast suspicion and to proclaim their doubts and that should not be our testimony. We are not to pretend as if all is well when it is not or to go about with a smile on our face at all times as if that is how we are to uphold the side. The Psalms teach us how to approach GOD honestly and in humility and by faith when we do struggle and hurt. The Psalms teach us of GOD's Majesty, His Provision and Protection for His people. May we by His Grace dwell in the shelter of the Most High and abide in the Shadow of the Almighty. Whatever others may say of Him, may we say of Him "He is my Refuge and my Fortress, My GOD in whom I trust". Any other refuge is but an idol and a lie and cannot give the hope, peace, and joy that only GOD can give. May this be the message of our lips – that we by saying and by deed offer this Encouragement to others.

Amen