

The LORD, the Most High God, is a protective, secure, strong Savior to the one who loves him, delivering victoriously from the threats of enemies, disease, and all other troubles. Dwell in the secret shelter of God and fearlessly hold fast to his name, that you might be satisfied and see his salvation.

Introduction – Recently a [video clip](#) from Australia went viral on the internet.

Background – Psalms 90 and 91 are introductory psalms for Book 4 of the Psalter. Book 4 is a collection about spiritual maturation. God’s people in exile, who are accepting their hardships ordained by God for their growth in grace, now express hope and joy in God’s good promises in the face of many dangers, toils, and snares. Even though this life is but a moment (Psalm 90), God’s kingdom benefits for this life and the next are in every way amazing grace (Psalm 91)! We are ready for some kingdom perspective.

I. Confession of Kingdom Faith

A. Ingredient 1: objective truth (v. 1)

Verse 1 can be read as the theme of the whole psalm from an objective perspective. He who draws near can have abiding peace in the LORD who is an ancient/everlasting shelter (cf. Psalm 90:1), no matter the circumstances (Psalm 32:7; 61:4). If you draw near to God to abide in his shelter (literally “in the secret place”), then you can find inner peace in any circumstance (Philippians 4:6-7). The shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai, an image of God’s mountainous wilderness where the faithful find shelter) compares to the common biblical term “the shadow of your wings” (Psalms 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 121:5).

B. Ingredient 2: subjective trust (v. 2)

Verse 2 makes personal the objective truth of verse 1. First, a refuge is a place of security, especially for noncombatants and one’s family members. It corresponds with the shadow of the Most High God in verse 1. Second, a fortress protects the vulnerable from attack, which matches the shelter in verse 1 where the believer dwells in safety. God is the “Most High” (v. 1a), rising above all other high towers that set themselves against the believer. And God is also the “Almighty” (v. 1b) who is most powerful to deflect all threats and shield the one he loves.

II. Benefits of Kingdom Faith

A. Deliverance from dangerous enemies (vv. 3-10)

“Do not be afraid” is not a guarantee of escape, but it does produce an expectation that God is good all the time. Verse 10 provides a clue for interpreting the psalm. The security described in Psalm 91 refers to the experience of the faithful in a time of God’s judgment, and that judgment can be physical dangers that surround and threaten to undo us. For example, on the battlefield against the flying arrow the body shield offers a defense. But flying arrows are also a symbol of life’s trials that can cut a person down during the day. The “terror of the night” envisions God’s people under attack when we are most fearful and vulnerable (v. 5; cf. Psalm 64:1). Psalm 91 is difficult to outline into clearly delineated topics—it jumps back and forth, weaving topics together in a poetic tapestry. That’s much the way we experience life—an assortment that is overall very good, with some evil mixed in.

B. Immunity from deadly plague (vv. 3-10)

1. In the Bible, the pestilence (or plague) and “destruction” are evident dangers, diseases that God sends on his enemies as punishment for their rebellion (Psalm 91:6; cf. Exodus 5:3; 9:15; Leviticus 26:25; Deuteronomy 32:24). Sometimes pestilence more broadly includes any disaster that God inflicts with fatal consequences (Jeremiah 27:13; Ezekiel 33:27). Hence pestilence is a covenant

curse (Deuteronomy 28:21; 1 Kings 8:37). The “terror of the night” may refer to deadly disease (spiking fever) that sweeps through a camp, killing people while they sleep, occasionally in epidemic proportions. Mention of the plague that will not come near your dwelling recalls the ten plagues that befell Egypt (cf. Genesis 12:17; Exodus 11:1). Here is another clue for interpreting the psalm. Those who love God and flee to him for shelter are saved and delivered through the storm, not from the storm of judgment.

2. Some commentators associate pestilences with demonic forces, which here fits with the imagery of a plague that stalks its victims. The darkness in which the plague lurks translates a Hebrew word (*ophel*) that can refer to the deep darkness of the underworld (Job 10:22; 28:3) and to spiritual darkness (Job 30:26; Isaiah 29:18). And the Hebrew word for pestilence and its synonym “plague” (*resheph*) are often associated with a word (*Rashaph*) that in ancient Near East texts is the name of a deity of pestilence, war, and the underworld (cf. Deuteronomy 32:24; Habakkuk 3:5). In the biblical worldview, all these evils (pestilence, war, and the underworld) were thought of as interrelated. That is why the devil used Psalm 91 to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, where the harsh realities of nature, spiritual warfare, and the hordes of hell all converged upon the Christ.

C. **Victory over diabolical spirits (vv. 11-13)**

Satan quoted these words to tempt Jesus to put God to the test (Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11). But Jesus denounced the devil by trusting God and his word in Psalm 91. Genuine trust does not put God to the test by demanding God prove himself. Real trust is content to rest in God’s divine care. Victory over the forces of darkness is not merely in what you trust, but in who you trust. Not a magical faith in the “power of faith,” but a kingdom faith that gains the victory because kingdom faith trusts in a God who gives that victory. Deliverance. Immunity. Victory. What do these actually look like in our lives?

III. **Confirmation of Kingdom Faith**

A. **“Because he holds me fast in love, and he calls to me by name” (vv. 14-15)**

God tells us the evidence (from his perspective) that we possess the objective and subjective ingredients of kingdom faith. First, with your *mind* you must know God’s name. In the NT God makes it easier for those who would know God’s name as Jesus (Philippians 2:9-11). To be more precise, we know God the Lord as the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, with your *will* you must call to this one God who is the Lord. If you call to him by name, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus for rescue from all your troubles, he will answer you. And third, with your *heart* hold fast to God in love. If your heart has any affection at all for Jesus, then muster all your affection and hold on tight in love and loyalty and trust to the Savior. If you know Jesus as Lord, and you call out to him for salvation, and you hold fast to your confession in love, then God confirms you have kingdom faith.

B. **“I will satisfy him with long life, and show him my salvation” (v. 16)**

If you have kingdom faith, then God’s promise, spoken from his mouth in verse 16, is for you. From the perspective of the kingdom, you will have a long life because you’ve been born again for eternity, and God will give you the kingdom perspective to see his salvation. All the longings of the psalmist in verses 1-13 are stamped with the divine approval at the end of Psalm 91. So cast off your doubts and drink deeply of God’s salvation until you are satisfied.

Conclusion –In Book 4, we rest in the promise of the gospel of Christ’s kingdom, looking at the real and tangible blessings of the kingdom now and the kingdom come. Alas, Book 4 is where we must pause. Please read ahead into Book 5, studying and singing the Psalms of Ascent, with eyes lifted up on pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem. Because when we ascend the summit of the heavenly Mount Zion, where the Lord Jesus reigns now and forevermore, then we will all sing together the climactic psalms of Book 5, in which every song begins with the word Hallelujah! And all God’s people said, “Amen.”