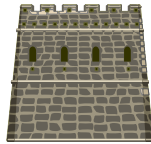


# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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## Psalm 91 — In God I Trust

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 91

- The author of Psalm 91 is anonymous (like 14 of the 17 psalms in Book 4).
- Psalm 91's background and setting is unknown.
  - ✓ Some (like Wilcock) associate it with Moses, who wrote Psalm 90.
- "My God, in whom I trust" (v. 2) is the theme of the psalm.

### 2.0 Reading Psalm 91 (NAU)

**91:1** He who dwells in the shelter of **the Most High**  
Will abide in the shadow of **the Almighty**.

**91:2** I will say to **the LORD**, "My refuge and my fortress,  
**My God, in whom I trust!**"

**91:3** For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper  
And from the deadly pestilence.

**91:4** He will cover you with His pinions,  
And under His wings you may seek refuge;  
His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

**91:5** You will not be afraid of the terror by night,  
Or of the arrow that flies by day;

**91:6** Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

**91:7** A thousand may fall at your side  
And ten thousand at your right hand,  
*But* it shall not approach you.

**91:8** You will only look on with your eyes  
And see the recompense of the wicked.

- 91:9** For you have made **the LORD**, my refuge,  
Even **the Most High**, your dwelling place.
- 91:10** No evil will befall you,  
Nor will any plague come near your tent.
- 91:11** For He will give His angels charge concerning you,  
To guard you in all your ways.
- 91:12** They will bear you up in their hands,  
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.
- 91:13** You will tread upon the lion and cobra,  
The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

- A** **91:14** “Because he has loved Me,  
**B** therefore I will deliver him;  
**B'** I will set him *securely* on high,  
**A'** because he has known My name.
- 91:15** “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.
- 91:16** “With a long life I will satisfy him  
And let him see My salvation.”

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 90

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. The Psalmist’s Trust (vv. 1-2)—“I”
- II. The Psalmist’s Teaching (vv. 3-13)—“you”
- III. The Lord’s Promise (vv. 14-16)—“I”



#### 3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “shelter . . . shadow”
  - Figures depicting protection and security dominate in this psalm.
  - God Himself protects those who trust Him.
- **vv. 1-2** Divine Titles
  - God (and God alone) is worthy of trust and only He can provide complete security.
    - ✓ “The Most High” (*Elyon*) focuses on divine sovereignty and majesty over the whole world.
    - ✓ “The Almighty” (*Shaddai*) emphasizes God’s omnipotence.
    - ✓ “LORD” (*Yahweh*) represents God as the covenant-keeping, eternal God.
    - ✓ “God” (*Elohim*) refers to the supreme God, who is the Creator.
- **v. 2** “my refuge and my fortress”
  - Note the psalmist’s personal appropriation “my.”

- God is the One to whom one must flee for refuge in dangerous and insecure circumstances.
- **vv. 3-13** “you”
  - Throughout this section of the psalm the pronoun “you” is singular, not plural.
  - The psalmist addresses individuals, focusing on personal trials and personal trust in God.
  - *Read verses 3-13, substituting your name for each “you.”*
- **v. 4** “pinions . . . wings . . . shield and bulwark”
  - The psalmist employs the figures of a bird protecting its young with its wings (cp. Pss 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; Ruth 2:12) and a warrior protected by a large, standing body shield (cp. Ps 5:12) and a surrounding fortress wall (the only use of the Hebrew word in the Old Testament).
  - Note Christ’s use of the first picture in Matthew 23:37. Unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem rejected His protection—they did not trust Him.
- **v. 5** “You will not be afraid”
  - Here the psalmist uses a strong prohibition (negative command) to emphasize that obedience is expected.
- **vv. 5-6** The Perils of the Faithful
  - The fourfold description of peril indicates dangers that include human enemies and disease.
  - “Night,” “day,” “darkness,” and “noon” are a merism expressing a totality meaning all the time.
- **v. 8** “You will only look on”
  - God will recompense the wicked while the believer merely stands back and watches.
- **v. 9** “For you”
  - Here the psalmist commences a new section of the psalm with this emphatic phraseology and repeats terms and divine titles with which he had begun the psalm.
    - ✓ An equivalent phrase occurs in verse 3 (“For it is He”).
- **vv. 11-12** New Testament Citations
  - In Matthew 4:5-7 (Luke 4:9-12) Satan cites these verses in his attempt to get Jesus to perform a miracle to sustain Himself in the wilderness.
  - Jesus responded with Deuteronomy 6:16, “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test.”



- **v. 13** Lions and serpents—O my!
  - These “deadly species serve to highlight the threatening nature of the psalmist’s opponents . . . As quintessential metaphors for the psalmist’s enemies, the serpent and the lion share a natural alliance.”—William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 139.
  
- **v. 14** “loved”
  - This word for love is not the usual Hebrew word. It occurs only 11 times. The meaning involves strong desire and passion. Here, it is a passion for God.
  - *Do you have a passion for God?—a strong desire to know Him, worship Him, and serve Him?*
  
- **v. 16** “a long life”
  - In much of the Old Testament, God blesses obedient and trusting believers with added years of life.
  - An extended life can be the result of a consuming passion for God (v. 14a), truly knowing (experiencing) God (v. 14b), and a fervent prayer life (v. 15).
  - God presented Israel with the choice of life or death (Deut 30:19; cp. Jer 21:8). The choice was theirs to make—they were responsible for the outcome. This is the same choice that wisdom writers depict by two paths: one of righteousness to life and the other of evil to death (Prov 11:19).
  - *Why is it that some faithful Christians die without living a long life?*

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 91

##### My God in Whom I Trust

(Tune: “Battle Hymn of the Republic” – “John Brown’s Body”)

**1** If you dwell beneath the shelter  
Of the Lord your God Most High,  
You will rest within the shadow of  
Almighty El Shaddai.  
He’ll deliver you from all your foes  
As you let loose the cry, “My God, in  
Whom I trust!”

**2** He will cover you with feathers,  
Give you refuge ’neath his wings.  
You will have no fear of darkest night  
Or what the daylight brings.  
His own faithfulness will be your shield  
because your spirit sings,  
“My God, in Whom I trust!”

**Refrain**

##### **Refrain**

*He’s my Refuge and my Fortress,  
My Salvation and my Stronghold,  
He’s my Rock and my Deliverer,  
My God, in Whom I trust!*

**3** Though a thousand at your left may fall,  
Ten thousand at your right,  
The disaster won’t come near your tent,  
But only pass your sight.  
If you make the Lord your dwelling place,  
He’ll save you from your plight, this God,  
in Whom you trust!

**Refrain**

**4** He'll command his angel hosts on high  
To guard you in your way.  
They will lift you up in mighty hands,  
So you'll not trip or stray.  
You will trample down the lion and the  
serpent while you say,  
"My God, in Whom I trust!"

**Refrain**

**5** It's because you love the Lord your God  
That he protects your frame.  
He has promised to deliver all who call  
upon his name.  
He will show you his salvation,  
For your word is e'er the same,  
"My God, in Whom I trust!"

**Refrain**

— Susan H. Peterson (1998)

## 5.0 Praying Psalm 91



- Father, I trust You to be my shelter in a time of trouble. [v. 2]
- Lord, remove my fear of circumstances and problems. [v. 5]
- Thank You, God, for protecting me with Your angels when it is necessary. [v. 11]
- Give me a consuming passion for You, Lord. [v. 14]

## 6.0 Applying Psalm 91

- We need to place our trust in God in times of danger and trouble.
- We must put fear from our hearts and minds, in obedience to God.
- We must possess a passion for God in order to experience His fullest blessing.

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 hand-writing 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 night 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 marvelous power I adore the Lord my God.

— C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols.  
(reprinted; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 2/2:92