



# PSALM NINETY ONE: A STUDY IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS



with Dr. Bob Abramson


<p><i>Psalms 91 NKJV Verse 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.</i></p> <p><i>God's Word Translation {1} Whoever lives under the shelter of the Most High will remain in the shadow of the Almighty.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verses 1-8: God Is Our Refuge</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 1</b></p> <p>a. This verse speaks of the great nearness of God – a condition of God's promise, bringing special benefits to both the psalmist... and to us. (Mary Duncan, Writing in The Treasury of David, Spurgeon, p.96)</p> <p>b. Verse 1 does not speak of "He who visits." To dwell is not to visit from time to time. It is a condition of habitual residence.</p> <p>c. The Hebrew word for "dwell" is "yashov," which means: "to be quietly, constantly remaining in the same place – a place where rest is the distinguishing feature."</p> <p>d. The Hebrew word for "Most High" is "Elyon" which is a title meaning "The Loftiest." (See Isaiah 57:15)</p> <p>The Hebrew word for "Almighty" is "Shaddai," which simply means what it says – "Almighty."</p> <p>e. To "abide" means "to continually and comfortably lodge in a place, to tarry there, to be comfortably at home... to endure, sustain or withstand, to continue in a particular attitude or relationship... to stand." Combine this with the meanings for "dwell" (c. – above) and the significance of this passage becomes clear.</p> <p>Note: God is where His shadow falls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about the great nearness of God. What feelings does this bring to you?</li><li>• What does it mean to dwell?</li><li>• Whose secret place is it and what significance does that hold for the "dweller"?</li><li>• What do you think of when you picture being under God's shadow?</li><li>• The psalmist describes the LORD as his refuge and fortress. What do you think this meant to him... and to us today?</li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>READ PSALM 46:1-3</b></p>
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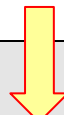


<p><b><u>Verse 2</u></b>  <b><i>I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>God’s Word Translation {2} I will say to the LORD, “&lt;You are&gt; my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.”</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 2</b></p> <p>a. The Hebrew word for “say,” used here is “amar.” Among its meanings are the following: “boast; certify... publish.” The word “LORD” is the Hebrew word “Ye ho vah (Yahweh),” which means the “Self-Existent Eternal One.”</p> <p>b. The psalmist is <u>not</u> trusting in the LORD’s shadow. His trust is in the Person of the LORD! It is from within an intimate, personal relationship that the psalmist trusts the Person – the LORD, who is Jesus Christ.</p> <p>c. It has been said: “Loving faith on man’s part shall be met by faithful love on God’s part” (source unknown).</p> <p>When the psalmist says: “I will say of the LORD,” he is really saying: “I will say <u>to</u> the LORD,” because the LORD is listening to every word out of our mouths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who do we tend to trust in besides God?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">READ ISAIAH 26:3, 4  ISAIAH 40:28-32</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What significance can you see in speaking directly to the LORD - that He is your Refuge and Fortress?</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Verse 3</u></b>  <b><i>Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>God’s Word Translation {3} He is the one who will rescue you from hunters’ traps and from deadly plagues.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 3</b></p> <p>a. Deliverance is sure (“Surely”).</p> <p>b. These verses promise deliverance from two specific things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The snare or trap of the one who hunts down your soul.  The Hebrew word for snare or trap is “pach” which describes the net a person used to catch birds.</li> <li>2. The “perilous pestilence.”  The Hebrew words: “havah deber” (perilous pestilence) mean: “A perverse calamity rushing upon a person as a destroying plague.”</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we reconcile the reality of bad things happening to good, praying people when this verse says “Surely” deliverance is coming?</li> <li>• It is easy to imagine these words to mean more than a physical plague. What about the plague of sin that has infected mankind?</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Verse 4</u></b>  <b><i>He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.</i></b></p>  <p><b><i>God's Word Translation</i></b>  <b><i>{4} He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge. His truth is your shield and armor.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 4</b></p> <p>a. The psalmist is using poetic language here to illustrate the saving intervention of the LORD with the protective actions of a mother bird keeping her babies from harm (from both the elements and from predators). We may amplify the expression “under His wings” to become “under His <u>unfailing</u> wings.” They can be described as “unfailing wings of His power and love.”</p> <p>b. God’s truth surrounds the “dweller” with protection. The image is of something worn as an article of fighting equipment. His truth is impenetrable armor, unfailing and totally capable of defending the wearer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who initiates the protection described in Verse 4?</li> <li>• Who has to respond to the protection offered? What is the response?</li> <li>• Why do you think truth is capable of protecting us?</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Verses 5, 6</u></b>  <b><i>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.</i></b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verses 5 and 6</b></p> <p>God’s promise – “You shall not be afraid of...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The terror by night – This phrase implies an enemy coming suddenly upon one’s dwelling or village with violent, evil intent.</li> <li>• The arrow that flies by day – This phrase could describe fiery darts, or demonic spiritual attacks upon God’s people. It could also simply be a compliment of the terror by night, extended to daylight.</li> <li>• The pestilence that walks in darkness – This phrase describes afflictions of all kinds that come as unseen visitors.</li> <li>• Destruction that operates openly as it destroys - This could be physical illness or any other spiritual attack. It can also be sin-inflicted consequences from our own actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we believe these promises in Verses 5 and 6? Again, why do bad things happen to God’s people?</li> <li>• Does the psalmist say “You shall not experience or come into combat with the terror by night, the arrow that flies by day etc.”?</li> <li>• What do these verses guarantee we will <u>not</u> have to experience within our minds?</li> </ul>

<p><b>God's Word Translation</b>  <i>{5} You do not need to fear terrors of the night, arrows that fly during the day, {6} plagues that roam the dark, epidemics that strike at noon.</i></p>	<p>READ PSALM 112:7  READ ISAIAH 59:19</p>	
<p><b>Verses 7, 8</b>  <i>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.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verses 7 and 8</b></p> <p>The psalmist seems to promise us that the things mentioned in Verses 5 and 6 will not touch us. He says that multitudes may fall and perish but those who trust in God will not. He says that we will stand and look with our own eyes at the wicked, as they fall prey to these traumatic events. The implication: They will be punished for their evil ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about as you digest Verses 7 and 8?</li> </ul> <p>READ ISAIAH 54:17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the prophetic elements of this psalm. Is it forthtelling (saying what is happening or will happen in the immediate context), or is it foretelling (saying what lies in some eschatological future – some distant day)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>God's Word Translation</b>  <i>{7} They will not come near you, even though a thousand may fall dead beside you or ten thousand at your right side. {8} You only have to look with your eyes to see the punishment of wicked people.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verses 9-13: Divine Intervention in a Crisis</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Please go to the next page)</p>	<p>READ PSALM 37:1-9</p>

<p><b><u>Verses 9, 10</u></b>  <b><i>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;</i></b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verses 9 and 10</b></p> <p>There is a cause and effect relationship within these verses: “Because...(therefore) no evil shall befall you.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. These verses refers to a particular position the believer takes.</li> <li>b. An uncompromising insistence to take this position is the cause of the believer’s victory. (i.e. “to continually and comfortably lodge in a place, to tarry there, to be comfortably at home... to endure, sustain or withstand, to continue in a particular attitude or relationship... to stand” for, with and under the shadow of the LORD)          (See Verse 1, comment “d”).</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READ PSALM 46:4-7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to make the LORD your “dwelling place”? (KJV-“habitation” - GWT-“home”)</li> <li>• What do the words: “The Most High” bring to mind as a description of God?</li> <li>• What comparisons can you make between Verses 1 and 9?</li> </ul>
<p><b>God’s Word Translation</b>  <b><i>{9} You, O LORD, are my refuge! You have made the Most High your home. {10} No harm will come to you. No sickness will come near your house.</i></b></p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READ ISAIAH 57:15</b></p>
<p><b><u>Verse11</u></b>  <b><i>{11} For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.</i></b></p>  <p><b>God’s Word Translation</b>  <b><i>{11} He will put his angels in charge of you to protect you in all your ways.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 11</b></p> <p>This verse explains how God puts into effect His promises (made in Verses 9 and 10). Angels are the agents God places in charge of your destiny. Their commission: To keep you in every one of your ways. It is a holy charge from God. A “charge” is a command given by a superior authority, in this case – the Most High God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a list of things angels keep you protected from, or keep you from walking in.</li> <li>• What would you begin with (the most important thing)?</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Verse 12</u></b>  <b><i>In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.</i></b></p>  <p><b><i>God's Word Translation</i></b>  <b><i>{12} They will carry you in their hands so that you never hit your foot against a rock.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 12</b></p> <p>This is another word picture that describes the protection the angels provide for the child of God, who makes the LORD his or her dwelling place. The Hebrew word for “bear” is “nasa.” It’s meaning here is: “carry” or “lift up.” The symbolism is obvious. Their actions keep you from stumbling and hurting yourself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we say about the child of God who does not make the LORD his or her dwelling place? Is that person necessarily disqualified from angelic help?</li> <li>• Describe what you think an angel might look like. What are angels capable of doing?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">READ PSALM 7:1-3</a></p>
<p><b><u>Verse 13</u></b>  <b><i>You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>God's Word Translation</i></b>  <b><i>{13} You will step on lions and cobras. You will trample young lions and snakes.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verse 13</b></p> <p>Verse 13 displays a classic use of Hebrew synthetic parallelism (which means repeating the same idea in a slightly different way to give it more emphasis or force). Hebrew writers often used this technique when they wanted to make an exceptionally strong emphasis on a particular idea.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This verse: another rich word picture depicting the believer stepping all over the evil that tried to step all over him or her.</li> <li>The lions and snakes represent evil.</li> <li>This verse reminds us that as we keep walking in faith, God will put the devil and his agents under our feet.</li> <li>The word “trample” means much more than just stepping on something. To “trample” is to inflict serious and even fatal damage.</li> </ol>	

<p><b><u>Verse 14</u></b>  <i>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.</i></p> 	<p><b>Verses 14-16: The Psalmist's Salvation Oracle</b></p> <p><b>Verse 14</b></p> <p>The psalmist takes on the prophetic mantle and speaks for God. These last 3 verses are God making promises to those dwelling in the secret place.</p> <p>a. This is another statement showing cause and effect: ("Because...therefore").</p> <p>b. 7 times in the last 3 God promises very specific promises. 7 times He says: "I will..." (the 7<sup>th</sup> time being implied).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will... deliver him.</li> <li>2. I will... set him on high</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the expression "he has known my name" mean to you?</li> <li>• What does the expression "set him on high" mean to you?</li> </ul>
<p><b>God's Word Translation</b>  <i>{14} Because you love me, I will rescue you. I will protect you because you know my name. {15} When you call to me, I will answer you. I will be with you when you are in trouble. I will save you and honor you. {16} I will satisfy you with a long life. I will show you how I will</i></p>   		
<p><b><u>Verses 15, 16</u></b>  <i>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.</i></p>	<p><b>Verses 15 and 16</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. I will... answer him.        God will not be silent when you call upon Him. His answer may not always be what you want or expect, but it will always be what you need.</li> <li>4. I will... be with him in trouble.        You will not walk through the valleys alone. You may, however, have some valleys to walk through.</li> <li>5. I will... deliver him.        He will deliver you out of the valleys to the high ground.</li> <li>6. I will... satisfy him with long life.</li> <li>7. I will... show him my salvation.</li> </ol>	<p>READ PSALM 46:8-11        PSALM 18:1-3</p> <p>ISAIAH 55:11        JEREMIAH 1:12, 19</p> <p>PSALM 95:1-7        PSALM 2</p> <p><i>God bless you as you study this magnificent psalm.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Bob Abramson</i></p>