

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Psalm 91 – Part 4

I. Exposition.

A. Verses 10-13 – “No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.”

1. “No evil shall befall you...” – The word “evil” means; “evil, misery, distress, injury”¹. The word “befall” means; “to make happen; have happen to”² It’s important to mention here that everyone experiences some level of “evil” in this world. Even the writer of this Psalm, whether it was David, Moses or some other person, experienced evil to some extent in their lives. But the overall theme of this Psalm, and even the whole of Scripture, is that, in the midst of evil, we can trust God for help! Stay close to Him, abide in Him and His Word – dwelling in the secret place and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty! We could also say that to the degree we meet the conditions is the degree we’ll reap the blessings.
2. “...Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling...” – The word “plague” means; “plague, blow (of various kinds): mildew, infection, sores, scourge, disaster”³ Here is another promise concerning protection from sickness (cf. vv. 3, 6).
3. “...He shall give His angels charge over you...” – Regarding the word “angels”, the basic meaning is; “messenger, one sent with a message.”⁴ Another definition is; “a supernatural being as a class creation that is God’s servant, esp. in informing or proclaiming a message from God”⁵

a. In both the Old and New Testaments there are accounts of angels ministering to the

people of God. Many Old Testament saints exhibited a belief in the existence of angels. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke often of the angels, and was also ministered to by them. (**Genesis 18, 19; Matthew 13:41; Mark 8:38; 13:32; John 1:51; II Thessalonians 1:7; Hebrews 12:22**).

b. The ministry and function of angels is primarily twofold: worship and service (**Revelation 4:11; Hebrews 1:13-14**). As messengers, an angel foretold the birth of John the Baptist (**Luke 1:11-19**). Angels foretold Jesus’ birth (**Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:26-38**). Angels announced Jesus’ birth (**Luke 2:8-20**). Angels announced Jesus Christ’s resurrection (**Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7 See also Luke 24:4-7,23; John 20:10-14**). The elect angels are ‘*ministering spirits sent forth to them who are the heirs of salvation*’ (**Hebrews 1:13-14; Psalm 103:20-21**). They minister to those who are the heirs of salvation (**John 1:51; Genesis 28:11-12; Matthew 18:10**). Angels sometimes are used by God to bring protection to God’s people (**Genesis 19:15; 48:16; Psalm 34:7; Daniel 3:28; 6:22; Matthew 18:10; Acts 27:23-24**). Angels also have been used by God to deliver God’s people (cf. **Acts 5:19; 26:11**).

c. “...His angels charge over you...” – The idea here is that God commands the angels with a charge to protect His people. “**For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.**” – English Standard Version (ESV).

4. “...To keep you in all your ways...” – The word “keep” here means; “to keep, watch, observe, guard”⁶ The idea is that wherever we go, His angels guard and watch over us. Jeffrey Johnson and Nicole Yoder write:

“**Ways** is the Hebrew word *derek* meaning one’s journey, manner of one’s course of life, or moral character, one’s walk. As evil attempts to persuade and dissuade our choices and our actions, angels will guard us as we walk. These divine bodyguards are protecting us from evil attack.⁷

¹ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 949.

² William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 896.

³ Ibid., 990.

⁴ Richard Whitaker et al., *The Abridged Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: From A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles Briggs, Based on the Lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius* (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906).

⁵ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁶ Mounce, 1058.

⁷ Jeffrey D. Johnson and Nicole Y. Yoder, *Behold, His Yeshua! Psalm 91* (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2020).

“For He will give His angels [especial] charge over you to accompany *defend and preserve you in all your ways [of obedience and service]*].” – Psalm 91:11 – Amplified Bible

5. **“...In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone...”** – The words “**bear you up**” mean; “**to be carried off, lifted up; to elevate, carry along**”⁸ The idea here is that as you walk along in your journey of life, angels will watch over your every step. We would probably be surprised how many times we were protected along the way without even realizing it.
6. It’s important to note that **verses 11-12** are partially quoted by Satan in the wilderness of temptation in order to get Jesus to intentionally place Himself in harms way. Jesus responded by saying, “**It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”** (Matthew 4:6-7).
7. **“You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra. The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.”** – Dr. Thomas Constable states:

“Jesus also referred to this verse when He sent the disciples out on a preaching mission (Luke 10:19). Again, it seems clear that His intention was to assure the disciples that Yahweh would take care of them (cf. Mark 16:17-18). He was not encouraging them to put their lives in danger deliberately.”⁹

- a. It’s understood that the metaphors of “**lion**”, “**cobra**”, “**young lion**” and “**serpent**” are all referring to Satan and his demonic cohorts. The lion is a large, predatory animal which is capable of being fierce. Peter refers to our “**...adversary the devil...**” who “**...walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**” (I Peter 5:8). Peter further states that we’re to be “**sober**” and “**vigilant**” because of this and “**Resist him steadfast in the faith...**” (verse 9). The word “**sober**” means; “**to be in control of one’s thought processes and thus not be in danger of irrational thinking—“to be sober-minded, to be well composed in mind.”**¹⁰ The word “**vigilant**” means; “**to be awake, to watch.”**¹¹ The meaning of the word “**resist**” is; “**to resist by actively opposing pressure or power**”¹² We need to resist the enemy actively and oppose him.

b. Strategies of our Enemy:

- 1) He’ll attempt to steal the Word which has been sown into our hearts. **Matthew 13:18-23.**
- 2) He accuses and slanders us - **Revelation 12:10.** Repeatedly coming against us with condemnation to shake our assurance and cripple our confidence before God. **(Romans 8:1)**
- 3) He attempts to plant doubt in our minds. **Genesis 3:1-5.**
- 4) He tempts us to sin. **Acts 5:3; I Corinthians 7:5.**
- 5) He incites persecution against us. **Revelation 2:10; 12:13.**
- 6) He tries to hinder our service to the Lord. **I Thessalonians 2:18.**
- 7) He tries to infiltrate the church with False teachers. **II Corinthians 11:13-15; II Peter 2:1-19.**
- 8) He promotes division. **II Corinthians 2:10,11.**
- 9) He tries to afflict us physically. **Luke 13:16.**

c. Jesus Christ defeated the Enemy!

1. Jesus spoiled principalities and powers. **Colossians 2:9-15.**
2. The devil’s works have been undone. **I John 3:8.** “**destroy**” means; “**to loosen; “set free”; “dissolve”.**
3. Jesus has paralyzed the devil. **Hebrews 2:14,15.** “**destroy**” means; “**to render entirely idle, unemployed, inoperative.”**
4. Jesus delegated authority over the enemy to the church. **Matthew 28:18,20; Mark 16:15-20; Ephesians 1 and 2; Luke 10:17-20.**

⁸ Mounce, 998.

⁹ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Psalms* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2025), 349.

¹⁰ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 352.

¹¹ Mounce, 1114.

¹² Louw and Nida, 494.