

## Psalm 91

The Targum says this psalm was written by David on the occasion of the pestilence that came on the people through his numbering of them, **2 Samuel 24:1**. That connects it to the first two chapters of Numbers in our Torah reading. The person spoken to is his son, Solomon - or possibly the Messiah (also called the "Son of David").

But the promises extend to anyone who trusts in God.

The title of the Syriac version adds "spiritually it is called the victory of the Messiah, and of everyone that is perfected by him"

Satan uses this psalm to tempt Jesus in the wilderness:

- **Matthew 4:6** - "And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

**Psalm 91:1** - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Rashi - He who takes shelter in the covert of the wings of the Shechinah, he will lodge in His shadow, for the Holy One, blessed be He, protects him.

Rashi then points to **Song of Solomon 2:3-4** - "...I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." - a direct link back to the rabbinic discussion of the Torah reading for Numbers Chapter 2.

See **Psalm 27:5** - "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

And **Psalm 32:7** - "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

- **Psalm 31:20** - "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

Since it later says, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings" in verse 4, this probably refers to the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant, where God's Shekinah glory dwells "between the wings of the cherubim."

See **Psalm 17:8** - "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings"

Ezekiel also refers to the Holy of Holies as the secret place:

- **Ezekiel 7:22** - "My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it."

The Targum calls the shadow of the Almighty the "shadow of the clouds of glory."

**Psalm 91:2** - "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

Targum: "David said, I will say to the Lord..."

See **Psalm 125:2** - "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever."

- **Psalm 9:9** - "The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

**Psalm 91:3** - "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence."

Literally, the pestilence of calamities

Rashi - ...from the snare that traps, from the devastating pestilence.

"snare" = net

"noisome" = fatal

- **Ecclesiastes 9:12** - "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

**Psalm 91:4** - "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

- **Psalm 57:1** - "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."

What is His truth?

- **Proverbs 30:5** - "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

- **John 14:6** - "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Rashi - "Shield and buckler"- This is a shield that encompasses a man closely on his four sides.

Psalm 91:5-6 - "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

Rashi sees all this as referring to evil spirits: "the arrow that flies by day": the demon that flies like an arrow. "Pestilence, etc., destruction": These are names of demons; one destroys at night, and one destroys at noon.

On the other hand, scripture applies the arrows to God:

- **Deuteronomy 32:23** - "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They will be weak from hunger, ravaged by pestilence and bitter plague; I will unleash on them wild beasts with fangs, as well as venomous snakes that slither in the dust."

The Targum interprets it of the arrow of the angel of death, which he sends out in the day, but also "thou shalt not be afraid for the fear of devils that walk in the night, nor of a company of devils that destroy at noon day"

The LXX says "nor from ruin and the demon of the midday."

Plague and Pestilence are personified either as destroying angels, or evil spirits bringing destruction only if God removes His protection.

**Psalm 91:7** - "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

Targum: "shall not come near to hurt"

This recalls the plague that killed the firstborn in Egypt, which was near the dwellings of the Israelites, but it did not enter into them (**Exodus 12:23**). They were protected by the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, which would correspond to the "truth" mentioned above.

**Psalm 91:8** - "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked."

Only = Only this one thing, All that you should anticipate should be that...

Israel in the land of Goshen "looked on," and saw the calamities of the Egyptians. On the opposite shore of the Red Sea they observed and celebrated the defeat and drowning of the Egyptian army.

"reward" = recompence

**Psalm 91:9** - "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;"

Targum: "Solomon answered, and thus he said, thou thyself, O Lord, art my confidence; in a high habitation thou hast put the house of thy majesty."

The Hebrew is muddy here regarding who's speaking. Could be a responsive reading: One voice says, "Thou, Lord! art my Refuge," and then another voice replies to that burst of confidence, "Thou hast made the Lord thy habitation. there shall no evil come nigh thy dwelling."

**Psalm 91:10** - "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

Evil in the form of sin, temptation, affliction as part of chastisement will certainly find us, but for our good, from God's hand. And even death, as part of our fallen human experience, will find us all. But evil as punishment or wrath does not touch those who take refuge in God.

- **Proverbs 3:33** - "The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

The word for plague here - *nega* - is different from the word for pestilence earlier. It denotes anything that would be expressive of divine displeasure or punishment. Also, "*nega*" is used for someone stricken with leprosy and signifies a "blow or a stroke." It's used in Isaiah 53 for the Messiah, who took the punishment on Himself:

- **Isaiah 53:8** - "...for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken (*nega*)."

Also **Psalm 89:32** - "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes (*nega*).

**Psalm 91:11-12** - "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

They bear them up in life, and at death carry their souls to Abraham's bosom.

"against a stone" - The Targum interprets it of the "evil inclination," or corruption of nature, which is like a stone:

- **Ezekiel 36:26** - "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

Verse used by Satan to tempt Jesus - **Matthew 4:6** and **Luke 4:10, 11**.

The faithful are under the constant care of angels:

- **Hebrews 1:14** - "Are not the angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

- **Psalm 34:7** - "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

**Psalm 91:13** - "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

"tread upon" = a victorious general would place his foot on the neck of the defeated enemy to display to all that he had been conquered.

- **Deuteronomy 8:15** - "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint."

"dragon" = *tanniyn* - a great serpent, dragon, crocodile, sea monster

- **Exodus 7:10** - Aaron's rod was changed into a serpent (*tanniyn*) before Pharaoh.

- **Isaiah 27:1** - "In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon (*tanniyn*) that is in the sea."

- **Isaiah 51:9** - "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon (*tanniyn*)?"

- **Ezekiel 29:3** - "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon (*tanniyn*) that lieth in the midst of his rivers"

Related to the promise of the Deliverer:

- **Genesis 3:15** - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

- **Romans 16:20** - "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

- **Luke 10:19** - "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."

- **Mark 1:13** - "And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

God now speaks:

**Psalm 91:14** - "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."

"set his love = *chashaq* - cling to with great love, desire, long for. To fall in love with.

- **Deuteronomy 6:5** - "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"

"because he hath known my name" - more than intellectual knowledge, rather by experience. Grow to understand His desires, His character, His nature, which comes through trusting in Him, speaking with and listening to Him.

God's "names" include Refuge, Fortress, Strength, Almighty, I Am, Lord, Abba Father, Creator, Most High, Healer, Peace, El Roi - the God Who Sees, The God who Provides, and the Lord Our Banner, Yeshua, the Deliverer and Savior.

- **Deuteronomy 28:58** - "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD, Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance."

**Psalm 91:15-16** - "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

"deliver" = lifting up out of a pit

"long life" - In the Old Covenant this meant a long natural life. There were hints of the Resurrection as well.

In the New Testament this is revealed to be the promise of eternal life.

- **1 John 5:11** - "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

"I will satisfy him" -

- **Psalm 17:15** - "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness."

"show him my salvation" - The rabbis say this refers to the Days of Messiah.