



## Psalm 91

Hello everybody. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” Today I thought I would do something a little different. A few months ago I decided to try to memorize some scripture. In particular there were several Psalms that I wanted to spend some time meditating on and the best way I know to accomplish this is to commit them to memory. The first one I decided to tackle was Psalm 91 although there have been several others since that time as well.

Psalm 91 has been dear to me for years. I have read it over and over and received a lot of comfort from it. There is a bit of everything in this Psalm. It was written by Moses and it is a Psalm of protection, guidance, and promise. However, there is one key thing that I love about this Psalm more than anything else - it is written to a person who is abiding in the presence of God. There are many different translations of this work but most of them direct the first few words to the person "dwelling in the secret place," "abiding under the shelter of God," "sitting in God's presence," or something similar. Because I am a person of the "presence," this has great significance for me. This Psalm is all about rest, trust, abiding, and safety coming out of the presence of God - simply stunning.

The first thing I needed to figure out when memorizing this Psalm was which translation I was going to use. I have over 30 different bible translations in my library and so I began taking them out and reading them. In the end, I ran across a most unusual and outside-the-box rendering that I decided to use. It was none other than the "Message" translation. Eugene Peterson is just crazy good when it comes to cutting through all of the traditional religious wording and capturing the raw delight and humour of the scriptures. I am going to write out this Psalm today by memory. Here it goes:

You who sit down in the High God's presence, spend the night in Shaddai's shadow, say this:

"God you're my refuge, I trust in You, and I am safe!"

That's right, He rescues you from hidden traps, shields you from deadly hazards.

His huge, outstretched arms protect you, under them you are perfectly safe. His arms fend off all harm.

Fear nothing - Not wild wolves in the night,

Not flying arrows in the day,

Not disease that prowls through the darkness,

Not disaster that erupts at high noon.

Even though others succumb all around, drop like flies right and left, no harm will even graze you.

You'll stand untouched, watch it all from a distance, watch the wicked turn into corpses.

Yes, because God is your refuge, the High God your very own home, evil can't get close to you, harm can't get through the door.

He ordered His angels to guard you wherever you go.

If you stumble, they will catch you.

Their job is to keep you from falling.

You'll walk unharmed among lions and snakes, and kick young lions and serpents from the path.

If you hold on to me for dear life, say God, I will get you out of any trouble.

I will give you the best of care if you only get to know and trust me.

Call me, and I'll answer, be at your side in hard times.

I'll rescue you, then throw you a PARTY!!

I'll give you a long life,

Give you a long drink of salvation.

OK, now I will go back and check the wording with bible gateway ... other than one contraction ("you are" rather than "you're") and a few small punctuation issues, I see that I only have one minor error. In the fourth line from the end rather than:

Call me, and I'll answer, be at your side in hard times ... it should be:

Call me, and I'll answer, be at your side in BAD times.

Not bad, I guess. OK, so the more I quote and meditate on this Psalm, the more I see in it. The boldness of the statements made in these verses is crazy. They leave no room for misinterpretation, they are spoken with authority, and resolve.

One time when my brother, Kent, and I were out ice fishing on a remote northern Alberta lake, our snowmobile broke down near dusk a couple of miles from shore and where our vehicle was parked. As we were struggling to get it going again, pulling the starter rope numerous times and trying every mechanical trick in the book we experienced a rare few minutes of terror. A pack of 8 or 9 timber wolves came out from the shore onto the lake only about 200 yards away from us. They were huge and wild and there are few times I remember being as afraid as I was at that moment. We, of course, had a whole new motivation to fix our broken ride and thankfully, soon thereafter, we got the snowmobile going enough to limp it to shore. Every time I recite the verse: "fear nothing, not wild wolves in the night," I think of that experience. And each time I recite this Psalm, sometimes a few times a day, I find strength and protection, and a new resolve to "stay in the High God's presence and in Shaddai's shadow."

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real - and He is our protector/gaurdian.