

Psalm 91

The promises in Psalm 91 seem almost too fantastic to be true. How in the world can we be guaranteed such protection? Today's Psalm is a marvelous place to demonstrate Christocentric interpretation. That is a big word that just means we interpret the Bible with Christ at the center. As we will see, without Christ, this passage cannot ultimately be fulfilled. There is a provision made for us that is ratified in the power of Jesus alone and it is through Jesus that our hope can rest in these beautiful realities.

1. The Promises of Protection

- a. This Psalm records some absolutely amazing promises
- b. We have promises of protection from pestilence, terror, and weapons
- c. Furthermore, we have a promise of triumph over enemies (both natural and supernatural) AND the protection of God
- d. These guarantees are the kinds of things that man longs for, and they are made here, but we must understand them

2. The Problem

- a. First, if we consider this Psalm in its literal sense, we need to ask how these promises were/are fulfilled?
 - i. Isn't it true that many believers have died of pestilence?
 - ii. Haven't Christians been persecuted and martyred?
 - iii. Hasn't the arrow taken the lives of others?
 - iv. What about the times in which the thousands didn't fall at a believer's right hand?
- b. Second, we must ask ourselves what makes us worth such a promise?
 - i. We are not worthy of such guarantees!
 - ii. Why and how would God give us such marvelous, gracious guarantees?

3. The Ultimate Meaning

- a. The promises of protection and the answer to our problems are all bound up in One Person, Jesus
- b. We see echoes of His work in many places in this Psalm but let's take just one for our study today
 - i. Notice these words in verse 13, "the serpent you will trample under foot"
 - ii. How does this lead us to Christ?
 - iii. The answer is that these words are loaded with biblical, messianic implications
- c. All the way back in Genesis 3:15, God prophesies that One would come to redeem mankind from the curse of the fall and to overpower and destroy the evil one, in the form of a serpent, who precipitated their sin
- d. Adam was unable to stand up against the wily devil but one would come from Eve, the seed of the woman, who would crush the head of the proverbial slimy snake
- e. This Person is Jesus! This Psalm then looks forward to Jesus and Jesus is the way that we make sense of its assertions

- f. The guarantees or promises are for those who look to God to overcome the enemy
 - g. The guarantee is for those who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, shelter that is afforded to us in the second member of the Trinity, Christ
 - h. Jesus' promises to us are not fulfilled, chiefly, in the moment
 - i. This Psalm is not to be understood as a guarantee of temporal and earthly safety
 - ii. We know this because:
 - 1. Christ predicted trouble and affliction and even death for us
 - 2. The rest of the Bible demonstrates the calamity that can befall a true believer
 - iii. Instead, Christ came to triumph over all of our foes for eternity
 - 1. While we will face trials and tribulations, we can rest in the shelter of the One who promises us eternal tranquility and security in His grasp which guides us from this fallen world to eternal peace and victory with Him (see Romans 8:35-39)
 - 2. It is undoubtedly true that believers have died of disease and persecution
 - 3. It is equally true that believers have not always triumphed over the thousands in the moment
 - 4. However, it is even more true (if that were possible!) that each person who believes in the power and work of Christ has found His promise of protection valid as they walked with Him to eternal glory and victory
 - i. Jesus' promises are available to all who would believe
 - i. How do we deserve these promises? We don't!
 - ii. They are a gift of God's grace and they are further reason to praise His name
 - iii. Christ did not come to give man what he deserves. We deserve the penalty of our sinful rebellion against God
 - iv. Christ came to provide a way of salvation that is grounded in free grace
 - v. The offer to these glorious treasures is not shrouded in merit or achievement, it is freely made to all who would understand their own inadequacy to triumph over evil and who would believe in the victory of Jesus on their behalf
4. The Good news is that One has come to disarm all of our enemies for all eternity. He is the way that this Psalm makes any sense and this is why we look to Him as the author and perfecter of our faith AND the ground and cause of our eternal hope