

**God's Grace in the Secret Place**  
A Message from Psalm 91:11-13  
March 29, 2020  
Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio

**<sup>11</sup> For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. <sup>12</sup> They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. <sup>13</sup> Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.**

Psalm 91 is a beautiful poem about God's protection for His people. Those who abide in the secret place of the Most High God abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Those who do so are God's humble, submissive people. They look to the Lord for their protection at all times – especially in times of trouble. Today's text (vs. 11-13) is the "then" part of an "If /Then" statement. The "If" (or "because") part of the statement is in verse 9:

***Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge,  
Even the most High, thy habitation***

So these verses are for those who by faith have fled to the Lord as their place of refuge. They are at home in the shadow of the Most High God; they do not wander from His ways. For these believers, Psalm 91:11-13 describes God's providential provision for their protection.

Simply stated, the Lord's angels will guard those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High God. For those who abide there, verses 11-13 explain three aspects of this protection:

-  The Lord's angels will guard you in the ways of God. 11
-  The Lord's angels will guard you in physical dangers. 12
-  The Lord's angels will guard you in the midst of spiritual dangers. 13

**<sup>11</sup> For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.**

**I. The Lord's angels will guard you in the ways of God. 11**

Psalm 91 describes the Most High God who transcends all the creation. This includes everything in our universe. Yet this Almighty God offers His children a dwelling place. We can dwell under His shadow (v.1) and under His wings (v. 4). He offers us tender protection, like a mother bird. But God does even more for His children. He commands His angels to protect, deliver and care for believers. This is yet another aspect of God's provision for our protection.

**A. What are Angels?**

- Angels are created beings (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17). They were created without gender (Matthew 22:30).

- They apparently witnessed much of the creation. (They are referred to in the phrase “the morning stars sang together” Job 38:4-11.)
- They are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:7).
- Some God-honoring angels surround the throne of God, praising His holiness (Isaiah 6:1-3). Some angels have wings. They will appear with the Lord Jesus at His Second Coming (Matthew 25:31).
- Some God-honoring angels serve believers (Hebrews 1:14). These are the angels described in Psalm 91:11. The Bible does not teach that each believer has a guardian angel, although they do serve believers (Matthew 18:10). At times, an individual angel was assigned to a believer for a particular task (Matthew 1:20, Luke 1:11, 22:43, Acts 27:23). At times, whole groups of angels serve one person (Matthew 26:53, 2 Kings 6:17). At other times, one angel will protect whole groups of people (Daniel 12:1).
- These God-honoring angels are learning the grace of God at work in believers upon the earth (1 Peter 1:11-12, Ephesians 3:9-12)
- Fallen angels (also called “demons”) are wicked spirits; their leader is Satan (Jude 6, Luke 4:31-34, Revelation 12:9; 16:13). Some are already chained in hell. Others are at work upon the earth. They will stir up the nations to go to the valley of Jezreel for the battle of Armageddon.
- After mankind fell, angels (called cherubim) were placed to guard the Garden of Eden with flaming swords (Genesis 3:24).
- Two angels are named in the Bible: Michael (the Archangel) and Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; 10:13; Luke 1:19, 26; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7-9)
- Some angels are human-like in appearance (Luke 24:4, Acts 1:10) Genesis 18:2/Hebrews 13:2). Others are spectacular in appearance (Matthew 28:3)
- God-honoring angels and redeemed men were reconciled by the finished work of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:20). Already the Lord’s people who have passed through death, are with the angels today in Heaven (Hebrews 12:22-24).
- On occasion, angels act as messengers (Luke 2:13,14; Acts 10:1-3; Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, Daniel 10:11-12). Sometimes they act as protectors (2 Kings 6:8-17, Matthew 26:52). This last function is described in Psalm 91:11. Sometimes they act to deliver God’s people (Acts 12:1-19). At times these actions are a direct result of the prayers of God’s people.

If you were to see an angel, you might be tempted to worship him. Even Satan can transform himself to look like an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). But it is a mistake to worship angels. In the book of Revelation 22:8-9, we learn that the Apostle John fell down at the feet of an angel to worship him. But the angel stopped John and told him not to do that. The angel told him that he must not do it, because the angel was a fellow servant with John. After Christ’s resurrection, the soldiers who saw the angel were so awestruck that they became like dead men (Matthew 28:1-4). But be careful. Colossians 2:16-19 warns you that there are those who get preoccupied with discussions of angels. These people propagate error and do not really

exalt Jesus Christ, the Head of Church. We could easily be carried away and cheated of our rewards if we did this (c.f. Colossians 2:8). There are supposedly Christian books and religious television programs that do this very thing. In each case, the writer or contributor is insisting on something other than the authority of the Scriptures.

### **B. Angels will guard you in the ways of God.**

Picture those who are dwelling in the shadow of a mighty rock in a dry, weary land (Isaiah 32:2). They are safe and at home in the ways of the Most High God. There the angels guard and keep them as these believers keep to the ways of God. One author wrote, “We ought never to be out of the shadow of God. It is to dwellers, not to visitors, that the Lord promises His protection.”<sup>1</sup> This is God’s grace in the secret place.

#### **In Matthew 4**

Yet there are many adversaries, chief of which is Satan himself. That old deceiver will use his wiles to coax believers away from their delightful dwelling place. Satan will try to get you to serve yourself. He will promise you power, if you will depart from the Most High. He will coax you to be presumptuous: presuming upon God’s protection. We know all these things because the light of the Scripture shines brightly on his dark ways in Matthew 4:1-11. Turn to that passage for a moment to study the way Satan uses Scripture. Now that last sentence may be a surprise to some. Does Satan use Scripture? Yes, he will use any means to deceive God’s people – and his messengers do the same. What did Satan do with this beautiful psalm about submission to the Most High? How did he pervert the Lord’s commitment to protect His children? Look at the way Satan tested Jesus in Matthew 4:6-7.

*Satan said, “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. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”*

As he always does, Satan tried to create doubt: “if you are the Son of God.” Satan will try to twist the Scriptures: “for it is written . . .” But notice what Satan left out: “to keep you in all your ways.” In other words, the promised protection is for believers who abide in the ways of God. The Deceiver left that part out – because that’s exactly what he was trying to get Jesus to forget. He invited Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the temple. Satan wanted Him to act in a presumptuous manner: presuming upon God’s protection. It’s important to note that nothing in this psalm offers protection for foolish, presumptuous behavior. Jesus said, “You shall not test the Lord your God.”

#### **In Genesis 24**

Abraham's servant in Genesis 24 is a testimony to us all. God's angels kept him as he kept to the ways of God. About his remarkable success (in finding a bride for Isaac) he deflected the praise to God, "I being in the way, the Lord led me" (Genesis 24:27). In his earlier instruction to his servant, Abraham had assured him, that the Lord would send His angel before him (Genesis 24:7). And the Lord did so. This is God's grace in the secret place.

The Lord's angels will guard those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High. The Lord's angels will guard you in the ways of God.

**<sup>12</sup>They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

## **II. The Lord's angels will guard you in physical dangers. 12**

The Lord's angels guard His people; they also deliver God's people from physical harm. This is what the young man learned from Elisha in 2 Kings 6:8-17. When the enemy had surrounded the prophet, the angelic chariots of fire were there to protect them. If the Lord were to open our eyes to this, I think we would all be astounded to see the degree to which we are presently being protected by His angels.

### **In Acts 12**

In Acts 12:1-19, Peter was imprisoned by Herod for preaching the Gospel. According to Acts 12:5, God's people prayed without ceasing. Then the Lord sent His angel to deliver Peter from prison. His chains fell off, and Peter put on his sandals and followed the angel right out of the prison! Perhaps Peter thought about Psalm 91:12, as he followed the angel to freedom.

But Acts chapter 12 includes another reference to an angel. Herod went down to Caesarea (on the Mediterranean) to meet with citizens of Tyre and Sidon (Acts 12:20-25). It is likely that this meeting occurred in the theater that has been uncovered in Caesarea. You can visit there today. When Herod gave an oration, the people from Tyre and Sidon flattered him with the words, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Dr. Luke (whom the Lord used to write Acts) described what happened next: Immediately an angel of the Lord struck Herod because he did not give glory to God; Herod was eaten up with worms and died on the spot. The persecutor of Peter died at the hand of an angel of God.

Acts 12 explains exactly what happened in detail: God intervened directly through His angels. But for us, this may appear as God's providential care, rather than direct intervention through an angel. Perhaps when we get to heaven, we will find out just how often angels were involved in our deliverance. All we can say for now is "I being in the way, the Lord led me."

Think about Peter. Think about Herod. What do we learn? The highway to heaven is hidden in humility; but the path to punishment is paved with presumptuous pride. Herod was proud; Peter was humble. Look at the way God's angels were used to destroy or deliver. Humble your heart and trust in God's providential protection.

In both cases in Acts 12, we see that the Lord's angels will guard those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High God. The Lord's angels will guard you in physical dangers.

### **Spurgeon's Advice**

During this present pandemic in 2020, we might be tempted to think that believers from other ages have not faced these dangers. It was interesting to see these comments of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a pastor in London about the dangers his congregation faced in the 1880's:

*"When the cholera has been raging, or the fever has been making havoc; when science has been baffled to find out the cause or cure of some insidious disease that walketh in darkness, and wasteth at noonday; when those who were wont to jeer at religion and laugh at prayer, have uttered pious [statements], and said, "This is no doubt a visitation of God." Well, at such times has it not been good for you to seek the covert of his wings, and rely on the gracious promise, "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling"? In all times of public calamity, in any season of domestic grief, and on every occasion of personal danger, I beseech you, do not cast away your confidence which hath great recompense and reward, for if your faith will not bear up under such trials as these, what is it good for? What anchorage is there for your soul? If you cannot bear these little alarms, how will you do in the swellings of Jordan, when grim death appears in view?"<sup>ii</sup>*

### **In Romans 8**

You and I can trust the Lord for His provision of protection. There is no doubt that the dangers we face are real. But consider a few verses from Romans 8:

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. . . <sup>34</sup> Who *is* he that condemns? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

The same chapter that tells us that all things work together for good tells us that the dangers are very real. What are we trusting in? We are trusting in the God who sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Jesus faced very real dangers, and so shall we. But He died for our sins and rose again to show us His path of victory. In Psalm 31:15, the psalmist declared to the Lord, "My times are in Thy Hand." Until the Lord is ready to call us home, the Lord will protect us here. And rest assured: the Lord's angels will guard you in physical dangers. This is God's grace in the secret place.

**<sup>13</sup> Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.**

### III. The Lord's angels will guard you in the midst of spiritual dangers. 13

Verse 13 is a poetic description of the spiritual dangers that believers face as they follow the Lord. For instance, 1 Peter 5:8 warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour." Revelation 12:9 refers to Satan as the great dragon, that old serpent, the Devil. But here is what we see by faith in God's Word:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels" (Revelation 12:7)

About Psalm 91:13, Spurgeon wrote, "God often gives victories like these to His people so that Satan and all the powers of evil are trampled down by the holy childlike confidence of the man who is resolved to serve his God!"<sup>iii</sup> The Lord's angels will guard you in the midst of spiritual dangers.

From these three verses, it is clear that the Lord's angels will guard those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High God. Those who abide in the secret place of the Most High can use these verses to find rest for their souls in these troubling days:

- ✚ The Lord's angels will guard you in the ways of God. 11
- ✚ The Lord's angels will guard you in physical dangers. 12
- ✚ The Lord's angels will guard you in the midst of spiritual dangers. 13

This is God's grace in the secret place.

#### Applications:

This is God's provision for your protection; it is not God's provision for your proud presumption.

The highway to heaven is hidden in humility. You will find a home for the humble in the shadow of the Almighty.

Remember that your adversary the Devil wants to draw you away from God's shelter for you. Keep your heart in the ways of the Lord.

Angels who once guarded the Garden of Eden with flaming swords now guard you as a believer. Thank God for His angels.

*Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio*

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<sup>i</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "Under His Shadow," 1880 <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs3267.pdf>

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<sup>ii</sup> Charles Spurgeon "Safe Shelter" accessed at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/safe-shelter#flipbook/> (For the reference to the swelling of the Jordan, see Jeremiah chapter 12.)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs3267.pdf>