



Pandemic, pandemonium, and Psalm 91: In search of ultimate protection and deliverance

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Abstract:

People used Psalm 91 during times of pandemic with the notion that its use will ultimately save them and their love ones. However, many get disappointed particularly when they lose their love ones despite using the Psalm. This had caused many to lose their faith in the word of God. But then, it is worthwhile for Christians to know that beyond the promise of deliverance as stated in Psalm 91, there is an everlasting protection promised by God. This is the ultimate deliverance that will ensure we escape the eternal separation that will come upon the world on the last day. This will count us worthy to reign forever with Christ in heaven where there is no sickness or diseases.

Key words: pandemic, Psalm 91, protection, deliverance, prayer

Introduction

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has moved many countries and organisations to adopt different approaches to understand the virus, survey its spread, and find safe and efficient treatments. Medical research is occupied with COVID-19 medication and clinical vaccine trials; technological tools such as contact tracing apps hold great promise. In addition to medical and technological interventions, Christians have found the scriptures to be a vital tool. Psalm 91 is one of the passages in the Bible to which people turn in times of pandemic. We have personally received hundreds of messages from family and friends with quotes from this scripture. No doubt the words of Psalm 91 are some of the most

beautiful and reassuring words in the Bible. Let's consider them for just a moment:

1. *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
2. *I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."*
3. *Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, And from the perilous pestilence.*
4. *He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*
5. *You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,*



6. *Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at
noonday.*
7. *A thousand may fall at your side, And ten
thousand at your right hand; But it shall
not come near you.*
8. *Only with your eyes shall you look, And see
the reward of the wicked.*
9. *Because you have made the Lord, who is my
refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling
place,*
10. *No evil shall befall you, nor shall any
plague come near your dwelling;*
11. *For He shall give His angels charge over
you, To keep you in all your ways.*
12. *In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest
you dash your foot against a stone.*
13. *You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
the young lion and the serpent you shall
trample underfoot.*
14. *“Because he has set his love upon Me,
therefore I will deliver him; I will set him
on high, because he has known My name.*
15. *He shall call upon Me, and I will answer
him; I will be with him in trouble; I will
deliver him and honor him.*
16. *With [f]long life I will satisfy him, And show
him My salvation.” (NKJV Bible)*

It is amazing how these are great words of comfort, speaking of God as the protector of those who trust in Him. They gave comfort and enhanced recovery for some, including Dr. Adaora Okoli-Igonoh, who was infected with Ebola virus while she was treating the index case in Nigeria in 2014. Adaora, while receiving the best medical treatment said, “Every morning, I began the day with reading and meditating on Psalm 91.”¹ However, the words which gave Adaora such comfort might seem less efficient or untrue to some who lost loved ones during this current pandemic. Suffering looms as a big question. If God promised protection from evil and satisfaction with long life, why do Christians who have meditated on the scriptures including Psalm 91 suffer, or even die? Are the words in the

Psalm or the entire Bible really true? Can we trust the Bible for comfort?

Yes, we can! Let’s take a walk where we can see that Psalm 91 can be a great comfort. That when we face life-threatening circumstances, such as a pandemic, we can be sure that God will deliver us, whether in life or in death. An example is when Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12 at the time of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. Satan challenged Jesus to throw himself from the top of a hill, trying to convince Jesus that he will get divine deliverance according to the Psalm. Jesus didn’t fall for the temptation because He knew that the promise of Psalm 91 had to be fulfilled in His life through his suffering and death on the cross of Calvary. Psalm 91 was not Jesus’ excuse for avoiding the cross; rather that scripture was His reason for going to the cross.

For background, the author of this Psalm emphasizes God’s protection for those who know Him personally. But God never promised in the New Testament that we will escape sickness, suffering, or even death. Rather, we are promised God’s grace and strength to face whatever comes our way (Luke 21:16-18). Paul demonstrated this in his own life. During his first imprisonment, he anticipated “deliverance” from prison (Philippians 1:18-21). However, when he wrote his second letter to Timothy, he knew he was facing potentially deadly treatment at the hands of the evil Roman emperor. At that time, he anticipated “ultimate deliverance” to be with Christ and looked forward to receiving “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:6-8).

The last 2 verses of Psalm 91 summarise the aim for God’s protection — to save us eternally. God has made provision for the greatest rescue and honour. There remains a sure guarantee to satisfy us with everlasting life and show us His salvation. While there are many testimonies of recitation and meditation on Psalm 91 and perhaps recovering from sickness, the Psalm applies to ultimate recovery: salvation. When we face life-threatening situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, we can rest assured that for those who dwell under the shadow

of the Almighty God, there will be deliverance and recovery whether in life or in death. The comfort in Psalm 91 is not a long, trouble-free, pandemic-free life on this present earth, but assurance that those who receive the lordship of Christ will escape the wrath of God which transcends our present experience.

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