



June 2013



June is your **LAST CHANCE** to sign up for the 2013 Mercy Mission to Israel. **PRAY** and call Regina at 1-800-33-MAURO.

Dearly Beloved in Messiah!

Psalm 91: NOW!

In early April, after writing the newsletter for May, we began to ponder what the Lord might want us to share with you in June. Immediately the thought came: "It is time for Psalm 91." A dear friend had given us Peggy Joyce Ruth's book, **Psalm 91: God's Shield of Protection**, before our February trip to MD Anderson. It was a source of great inspiration, comfort, and encouragement to us. Powerful. Faith-building. At that time, we assumed that the book was for our personal edification. But God was telling us that it was for our Jewish Jewels partners, at this specific time in history.

Then came April 15, 2013 and the Boston Marathon, where two bombs exploded near the finish line. The perpetrators of the terror may have been from Chechnya, but the one who filled the two brothers with hate, and the desire to murder, is the same one who would like to wipe out all true believers as we near the finish line: *hasatan*, the adversary. Yeshua, in John 8:44, defined satan as follows: "*He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*"

There is no truth in *hasatan*. The truth is in the Word of God. Specific anti-terror, anti-murder, anti-fear, and anti-death truths are found in one very special psalm of David: Psalm 91. The Lord wants this psalm to be in our hearts and on our lips as we finish the race, so that we might be able to say along with the Apostle Paul, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*" (2 Tim. 4:7).

Although we did not feel the need for confirmation, we received an email from the ministry of Cindy Jacobs, shortly after the tragedy in Boston, in which she strongly encouraged all believers to begin to pray Psalm 91 as their protective shield. To quote Cindy: "The enemy contends for our lives. It (Boston) is a strong, sobering reminder that we cannot—even for a moment—let down our guard spiritually. We must be vigilant to pray according to God's direction before the enemy strikes. We must all take our place to raise a shield of prayer over this nation and our families." We totally agree!

Psalm 91: NKJ Version

VERSES 1-4

*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.
He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

VERSES 5-8

*You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.*

VERSES 9-13

*Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample
underfoot.*

VERSES 14-16

*"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.
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 I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."*

Choosing the Protection of God (Verses 1-4)

Dwelling in the shelter or secret place of *Elyon*, the Most High God, does not just happen. We must choose by faith to dwell there. We must decide to make *Elyon* our hiding place. Secrets are not generally shared with strangers. Intimacy of relationship is involved. To dwell in the secret place of the Most High indicates abiding, closeness, trust, a personal relationship, and the fear of the Lord. (See Ps. 15:1-5, Ps. 27:4, Ps. 37:3.) Our confession to Elyon must be: "There is nothing, no one, higher or greater than You in all the earth." I choose You, as my place of shelter and safety. Then, we will abide under the shadow of *El Shaddai*, Almighty God. *Shaddai*, which primarily means "breasted" (*shad* is Hebrew for breast), indicates the powerful, all-bountifulness of God. To abide under the shadow of *El Shaddai* is to abide under the Giver of life, whose Almightyness is the God-equivalent of a loving, self-sacrificing, nurturing mother.

"I will say to the Lord (Adonai, יהוה), 'He is my refuge and my fortress.'" Refuge in Hebrew (מחסה), indicates a shelter, a place of hope and trust. Note that we must say what Adonai is to us. Thinking and believing it is not enough. Confession brings possession! Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Verbalizing our trust out loud calls forth faith and confidence in God's protection. Say with us out loud: "LORD, I trust You. You are my Refuge and my Fortress." Say it to Him, but also to yourself and to others. God's Word is alive, active, powerful, and personal. Note: my refuge, my fortress, my God.

When we choose Adonai as our Protector, He becomes our Deliverer. What is the snare of the fowler? This phrase indicates entrapment by a hunter. Psalm 124:7-8 gives further insight: *"Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers...Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."* The fowler in the spiritual realm is *hasatan*, who seeks to entrap us by deception and temptation, among other evil devices. But God! He will deliver us, set us free, from the enemy's attacks. This includes the "perilous pestilence." Pestilence in Hebrew is **דבר** *deber*, the same word we repeat at the Passover seder each year when referring to the fifth plague, diseased livestock. *Deber* means plague, and includes the idea of destruction. It is interesting to note that *deber* comes from the root *dabar* (**דבר**) which means to speak. God is promising in this verse to deliver us from both physical and spiritual plagues. The physical are obvious—diseases of all sorts. The spiritual are more subtle—the accusations of the enemy, his lying words, which often do more damage than his physical attacks!

The picture of security and safety in the LORD goes from secret places, shadow, refuge, and fortress to wings. He wants us to picture a mother bird, gathering her brood safely under her wings (*El Shaddai* again). The word for wings, **כנפיו** (k'na-fayv), is the same root word used in Malachi 4:2, *"But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings."* Wings also refer to the border of a garment. The four corners of a talit, or prayer shawl, are called "wings." Picture Yeshua covering you with His talit. Take refuge in Him!

"His truth shall be your shield and buckler." (Ps. 91:4) Truth, emet (אמת), is from a root meaning "faithful." That is our God! His truth shields us from the lies of the evil one. It is up to us to believe the truth—by faith in The Word of God, and the Living Word, Yeshua, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

Freedom from Fear (Verses 5-8)

Israel, unfortunately, is accustomed to acts of terrorism. America is still shocked by them. But this may be the new reality, and God has not been caught by surprise. He is, and will be our defense. He will deliver us from all fear, by night and by day.

Night, with its accompanying darkness, can be a fearful time in the natural. We can not see in the dark. We fear the unknown. We must remember that *"We walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5:7). God knows all! Night time can be especially difficult for little children. We remember a time when our son Jesse was afraid at bedtime. We reassured him that God was always with Him. His response: "He may be, but He doesn't have skin on." That's true—but His presence can be very real, especially through worship music. **Righteous Rhymes** and worship music set Jesse free from fear of the night.

As adults, we can claim the promise of Psalm 91:5, *"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday."* It seems that the enemy never sleeps. But neither does God! *"Hinay lo yanum v'lo yishan shomer Yisrael."* (Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.) Read all of Psalm 121 for extra assurance.

If we are hidden in God, in the cleft of the Rock, dwelling in the secret place of *Elyon*, abiding in His Love, fear can not enslave us. The Love of God will chase it away. *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."* (1 Jn. 4:18) Abba, we want to be made perfect (mature) in You—in Love.

Peggy Joyce Ruth makes some excellent points on fear: "God wants our faith in His Word to become more of a reality to us than what we see in the natural. For example, gravity is a fact. No one denies the existence of gravity, but just as the law of aerodynamics can supersede the law of gravity, satan's attacks can also be superseded by a higher law—the law of faith and obedience to God's Word." (Jamie read this on the plane ride to Houston as the law of aerodynamics was in operation!)

One more fear-conquering thought: Evil exists. Disease exists. Terror exists. Natural disasters exist. Pestilence exists. "Giants" exist. Fear has us compare the size of the "giant" to ourselves. Faith, on the other hand, had David compare the size of the giant to the size of his God. David's eyes saw the giant, but his faith saw the promises. (See 1 Sam. 17.)

Security and Angelic Care (Verses 9-13)

Psalm 91:9 continues with reassuring promises to those who have made *Elyon* their dwelling place and refuge. He is our deliverer from every possible type of affliction. Psalm 91:10 contains both a personal and family promise: *"No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling."* While we need to claim this promise by faith as protection for our entire household, sometimes what we see as evil is a blessing in disguise. As Joseph said to his brothers: Gen. 50:20, *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."*

We are in a war, and God has given us His Word as an offensive weapon. In the midst of the battle, we have *Elyon* as our security, our resting place, our Rock. *"Blessed be the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle—."* (Ps. 144:1)

The promise of angelic protection in verse eleven is very comforting. This verse can be translated in the following ways: *"For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways."* *"For He will order His angels to care for you and guard you wherever you go."* *"For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways,"* and *"For He will give His angels (especial) charge over you, to accompany and defend and preserve you in all your ways (of obedience and service)."*

Angels are God's messengers. That is the meaning of the Hebrew *malachim* (מַלְאָכִים). They do God's bidding. They obey His commands. They act on our behalf. Elyon has assigned angels to each one of us! As Jamie reminds the children on **Righteous Rhymes**, "They guard and protect you, when God does select you!" Believe it. Thank God for this angelic protection, as you drive, as you attend a concert, as you fly or ride a bus, as you shop in a mall—everywhere you go. We have no idea how many times angels have kept us from "falling," from accidents and other disasters.

Ps. 90:13 promises us that we will trample or tread upon the lion, the cobra (the viper), and the serpent. This is a promise of victory over evil. God has given us, through Yeshua, authority over the works of the enemy. In His name, we continue His mission: *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 Jn. 3:8). The Father of Glory has put all things under Messiah's feet (Eph. 1:22). As we abide in Him, the enemy is under our feet as well. *"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."* (Luke 10:19)

Powerful Promises (Verses 14-16)

In the final section of Psalm 91, the LORD lets us know exactly why He will deliver us: because we have set our love upon Him. That is the bottom line with God. He wants our love, our devotion, a personal relationship. We were created to have intimate fellowship with Him. It is His will, His intent, even His delight to deliver His children from every trial and affliction. A promise in the Book of Psalms reinforces this truth: *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all"* (Ps. 34:19). If you truly love God, and seek to obey Him, you can confidently say: "Because I love You, LORD, I know that You will deliver me."

God also promises to "set us on high" because we have known His name. We are seated with God in heavenly places through the Messiah Yeshua (Eph. 2:6). It is His Name that gives us direct access to our Heavenly Father. Many of us can identify with the psalmist who wrote, *"He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps"* (Ps. 40:2).

God says "I will" six times in verses 14-16: *"I will deliver him," "I will set him on high," "I will answer him," "I will be with him in trouble," "I will deliver him and honor him,"* and *"with long life I will satisfy him."* POWERFUL PROMISES from a POWERFUL GOD!

Our God promises to be with us in trouble. Peggy Joyce Ruth's book is filled with amazing true stories, especially from the military, of God supernaturally rescuing His children when they claimed the promises of Psalm 91. One example: During World War I there was a British regiment called the "miracle regiment" who went through some of the most intense and bloodiest battles without a single combat casualty. Every officer, as well as enlisted men, daily placed his trust in God by faithfully reciting Psalm 91 together.

God's Word is powerful. His promises are true. Psalm 91 is the only place in the Word where all of the protective promises are brought together in one collection. It ends with the key - *yeshuati* יְשׁוּעָתִי (My [God's] salvation)—that unlocks them: Yeshua, the Messiah (2 Cor. 1:20).

Under His wings,



P.S. We HIGHLY recommend **Psalm 91** by Peggy Joyce Ruth. A must for all those at war. (Who isn't?)

P.P.S. **Righteous Rhymes**, Jamie's two CD and coloring book set, for children up to age 7, is still touching little lives.