

A Safe Place in the Midst of These Volatile Elections

Editor's Note: This is part one of a two-part article. Find part two at [this link](#).

No matter who wins today, Election Day 2024, of this we can be sure: America will be in turmoil, and emotions will run high. But for those who have a personal relationship with God, there is a place of refuge from the storm. It is God's hiding place—or secret place—and it is described in Psalm 91 (unless otherwise noted, the NIV is used below).

Verse 1: “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”

This first verse lays the foundation for everything that follows. The opening Hebrew word is *yoshev*, which is an active participle. This refers to continuous action, to life habit, to what one does all the time. Used as a noun, it can refer to someone who lives in a particular place, as in, “I’m an inhabitant of New York City.” So, Psalm 91 is giving promises to someone who lives in God's shelter and protection. Put another way, if I asked you, “Where do you live?” your answer would be, “I live in the shelter of the Most High.”

But there's more to that Hebrew word for shelter, which is *seter*. It is not just as a shelter; it is a hiding place; it is a covert; it is a secret refuge. It is found in verses like Isaiah 32:2, which says, “Each one will be like a *shelter* from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land” (Isa. 32:2, my emphasis). It is also found in verses like 2 Samuel 19:2 (ESV), when Saul is threatening to kill David, and which emphasize the aspect of “hiding place, secret place,” even more: “And Jonathan told David, ‘Saul my father seeks to

kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a *secret place* and hide yourself” (my emphasis).

This is where God is calling us to live: in that hiding place, that divine shelter, that secret place where no one can touch us and nothing can harm us. And, even though that place is spiritual rather than physical, it is even more than a physical shelter or hiding place. The Lord Himself is impregnable.

You see, this is not just the hiding place of any god or higher power. This is the hiding place of the Most High God, a term that is found dozens of times in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms (starting in Ps. 7:17) and Daniel (where the one true God is contrasted with the false gods of the nations, starting in Dan. 3:26). As expressed in the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:11 (NIV), “Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

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There may be other so-called gods and powers, but there is none like our God. He alone is eternal. He alone is immortal. He alone is omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent. He is the Most High God, the only one worthy of being called God. Even the demons understand this, crying out to Jesus in the New Testament, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” (Mark 5:7b; see also Acts 16:17). In fact, when Gabriel announces to Miriam (Mary) that she will give birth to the Messiah, he says, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,” (Luke 1:32) This psalm is for those who live in His divine shelter, in His hiding place.

The second half of verse 1 describes this person as someone

who regularly spends the night lodging in the shadow of Shaddai, normally translated "Almighty." And while scholars debate the exact meaning of the word, it seems that the aspects of power and provision are clearly associated with Shaddai. As for shadow, this image speaks of covering as well as refreshing, a place away from the heat of the day.

The obvious question is: "How do I live there? I can't pray and read the Bible and worship 24 hours a day. I have a job to work. I have kids to raise. I have responsibilities."

The answer is simple (but challenging). First, we take serious time, committed time to meet with God daily. We put our roots down deep, alone and with Him. This is the foundation. Second, we live in obedience to His commands, seeking to please Him in our daily conduct. Third,

Verse 2: "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"

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Now an unnamed individual speaks, but the intent is that it could be you or me. Let these be your words and mine! So, say this about Yahweh (Jehovah), the only true God. He is *your* refuge, the safe place to which you run and hide where the enemy cannot find you. He is *your* fortress, that impregnable place where the enemy cannot touch you. He is *your* God, and you place your trust in Him.

Verse 3 (ESV): "For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence."

This verse indicates that we are still living in a dangerous world, even while we live in God's hiding place. In other words, He doesn't take us out of the world but rather delivers us from evil and disaster. This is in harmony with the Lord's

prayer for the apostles in John 17:15 (NIV): “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.”

Just as a fowler puts out his snare (Hebrew *pakh* is a trapper’s net), the enemy will set traps for us, including destructive plagues. But our God will deliver us.

Verse 4 (ESV): “He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.”

Here the image changes to that of a protective bird—pointing to God’s personal and gentle care for us— with His faithfulness serving as a large shield and a small shield (or a shield and protective wall; see NET). We stand behind His truth, and we are safe.

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