

## Wednesday Night Live | November 18, 2020

### Refuge | Part 3 | God, The Lord

\*\*\*\*\*No Wednesday night activities next Wednesday due to Thanksgiving.

In week 1, we learned that God, the Most High, is our refuge. Therefore, we will not fear the fowler's snare, the stalking plague, the arrow by day, nor the terror by night. For the Most High covers us with His wings, and He is our shelter as a buckler and shield.

Last week, the list and dangers of our enemies grew. Yet, God, the Almighty, proved more than capable of defending those who abide in His long shadow. As such, we "shadow-dwellers" will bear witness as God's omnipotence is put to the test. We will see the wicked fall and the righteous protected. For no man is safer than he who takes shade behind the Almighty.

Tonight, we rest in the only name of God: Yahweh. In this name we have no small security, refuge, and safety. Yahweh is unbound by all and so nothing will harm us. We will bounce if we fall. We will walk atop hungry lions. We will saunter over venomous snakes. Because we know the name of our God, we will be delivered from all mischief.

But, before we get there, as we said last week, the Psalms are meant to be read as a whole and not pieced out bit by bit. Only when you read through a psalm in its entirety from beginning to end will the principles at the heart of a psalm reveal themselves.

#### **READ: Psalm 91 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."

<sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence.

<sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

<sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,

<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

- <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.
- <sup>8</sup> You will only look with your eyes  
and see the recompense of the wicked.
- <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge—
- <sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.
- <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.
- <sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
- <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder;  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.
- <sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
- <sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.
- <sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation.”

The Psalmist says, “I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

We’ll tackle the title God next week. Tonight, I want to focus on LORD.

LORD, or as its pronounced in Hebrew “YAHWEH,” is the personal name for God and it appears over 6,500 times in the OT.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, devout Jews whenever they come to YAHWEH in the Scriptures will abstain from speaking it altogether and will instead say, “Adonai.” And “Adonai” is the Hebrew word for “Lord.”<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, this tradition has carried through into our own English Bible so that every time you see “LORD,” in all capital letters, it is itself a translation of

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<sup>1</sup> General Editors, “Yahweh-LORD,” June 1, 2017, *The Bible Project*, <https://bibleproject.com/videos/yhwh-lord/>, [accessed, November 15, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the Hebrew, “Adonai,” which is itself a replacement of the actual divine name for God, “YAHWEH.”

Now, while YAHWEH first appears in Gen. 24:42, we won’t know the meaning of it until Exodus 3. There, Moses is communing with God via a burning bush about Moses’ mission to deliver the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. But Moses has a question:

**READ: Exodus 3:13-15 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Understand, names were important things during this time. They were far more important than they are today. Especially as they relate to God, names tell God’s story or what He wants to make known to us about Himself.<sup>3</sup> So, asking about someone’s name isn’t merely an inquiry about someone’s moniker, it was an inquiry into the person’s character. It was like asking, “What sort of God are you?”<sup>4</sup> And just as “God, The Most High” speaks about His uncontested superiority in all things and just as “God, The Almighty” speaks about His unparalleled ability, “God, The LORD” speaks about His unattached dependency. Meaning, when God told Moses that His name was “YAHWEH” He was making the point that He isn’t dependent upon anyone for anything. God’s existence stands on its own. He is not descended from another; He has always been and will always be.

Furthermore, though God has many titles, He only has one name and that name is YAHWEH.<sup>5</sup> I myself have wrongly said that God has many names. And while that is generally speaking true. Technically, He only has one name. Just as I am broadly called an “American”, or a “son,” “brother,” “husband,” “father,” “neighbor,” or a “pastor” but only have one name, “Ben,” so too does God. His one and only name is YAHWEH. The “I AM WHO I AM” being. This name means that everywhere, in everything, and at all times God *is*. He is active and alive. He is that vital

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<sup>3</sup> Motyer, J. A., *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, The Bible Speaks Today Series, (Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity Press Academic, 2005), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Mackay, John L., *Exodus*, A Mentor Commentary, (Geanies House, Fearn, Tain IV20 1TW, United Kingdom; Christian Focus Publications, 2001), p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Motyer (2005), p. 69.

component. He is intimately involved in all things (cf. Heb. 1:3). “In no situation is he an ornamental extra; in every situation he is the key active ingredient.”<sup>6</sup> He is “the One whose very being is existence itself.”<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, it is YAHWEH’s ever-presence which provides us comfort in everything. Before God told Moses that He was the “I AM,” He told him that, “I will be with you.” (cf. Ex. 3:12) God more than makes up for our deficiencies (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9-11). And throughout Psalms, “LORD” clocks in at a staggering 787 times. It was the most common way the Psalmist used to express his faith.<sup>8</sup>

However, embedded in YAHWEH is also the warning that He does not abide by any other laws or expectations other than His own. When I say that God has unattached dependency, I mean He does as He wants to do. As such, we ought to never presume to know how He will act but simply know He will act as He wills. This will become immensely practical in a moment. Suffice to say, it isn’t only that God exist somewhere it is that He exists everywhere. His presence is with us and will be with us in the future. How He will act is up for question but not *if* He will act. He always acts because He always *is*.

But, back to our Psalm. The Psalmist here in Psalm 91 uses YAHWEH as a form of address. When he talks about YAHWEH, he uses terms like “Most High” and “Almighty.” But when he talks directly to God, he uses God’s name, “YAHWEH.” The Psalmist casual use of the God’s name speaks of the Psalmist’ intimate and close-knit relationship with God. So close that...

**READ:** Psalm 91:9-10 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge—  
<sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.

No harm or plague will advance against us. The faceless evils of this world will not descend on, or “befall” us unawares. Nor will the indiscriminate diseases of this world creep near our homes. The Lord who is our dwelling place, the Most High, who is our refuge, will deliver us. His name, YAHWEH, secures us.

And he secures us through His agents, the Angels.

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<sup>6</sup> Motyer (2005), p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Mackay (2001), p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> Goldingay, John, *Psalms*, The Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, Volume 3, Tremper Longman III, Editor, (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2008), p. 42.

**READ: Psalm 91:11-13 (ESV)**

- <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.  
<sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.  
<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder;  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

When we think about angels protecting God's people, there are any number of places we could look to (cf. Gen. 19:15; Ex. 23:20; Ac. 27:23-24). Specifically, we're told we'd be saved from three things: falling, the lion and the snake.

Keep us from Falling – “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” We are sure-footed as a mountain goat. This is the image behind Psalm 18.

**READ: Psalm 18:31-33, 36 (ESV)**

- <sup>31</sup> For who is God, but the LORD?  
And who is a rock, except our God?—  
<sup>32</sup> the God who equipped me with strength  
and made my way blameless.  
<sup>33</sup> He made my feet like the feet of a deer  
and set me secure on the heights.  
...  
<sup>36</sup> You gave a wide place for my steps under me,  
and my feet did not slip.

Back in Psalm 91, the Psalmist says, “You will tread on the lion...the young lion you will trample underfoot.” When thinking about the lion, my mind instantly went to the story Daniel.

**READ: Daniel 6:19-23 (ESV)**

- <sup>19</sup> Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. <sup>20</sup> As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” <sup>21</sup> Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” <sup>23</sup> Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that

Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

But no creature was more hated and feared like the snake. Yet, even this foul creature we're told that, we "will tread on the adder, the serpent you will trample underfoot." Now, this more than anything evokes images from Genesis.

**READ:** Genesis 3:14-15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

And this is of course reference to Jesus Christ who will one day utterly defeat that old serpent, the Devil. But not just Him, so too will we. In fact, as a way of encouragement to the Roman church at the end of his letter, Paul says

**READ:** Romans 16:20 (ESV)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

But understand this, Angels bearing us up so we do not hit the stones, and keeping us from the mouth of lions or from the bite of serpents if dependent upon YAHWEH's will. Remember what I said just a few moments ago that embedded in the name YAHWEH is also the warning that He does not abide by any other laws or expectations other than His own. As such, we ought to never presume to know how He will act but simply know He will act as He wills. This is precisely the case when it comes to Satan's misuse of this passage in Luke 4.

**READ:** Luke 4:9-12 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' <sup>11</sup> and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Can God keep you from the lion, the serpent, or the fall? Can the Lord keep us from all harm? Yes. Yes, He most certainly can. But will He? Only YAHWEH can say. YAHWEH does as He wants to do. And we ought never to tempt the Lord with needlessly putting ourselves in danger. We presume too much to do so. We do not recklessly jump off a cliff, seek out the hungry lion nor handle an angry snake.

However, should we find ourselves falling due to no fault of our own, should the lion meet us in the middle of the night, or should the snake ambush us from the bushes, our trust is in YAHWEH. Our trust is in the Lord; that is, our confidence is in God's character and presence. We ought never to be overconfident in an outcome which keeps us from all harm.

Sometimes, the Christian is not saved from the fall. Sometimes, the follower of God is not delivered from the lion's den. Sometimes, the disciple is bitten by the snake and dies. But no matter what, our trust is in YAHWEH. Even death is a deliverance for the disciple (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8).

**So, what's the takeaway?**

**YAHWEH commands Angels to save us from the hard fall, the hungry lion, and the hateful snake.**