

THE SECRET PLACE

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October 6, 2013

Sermon in a sentence: Abide in God's "secret place": i.e. His house, prayer and His word.

Scriptures: All KJV. Psalm 91; Psalm 27:5 (Heb. 10:25); Psalm 31:20; Psalm 81:7

Psalm 91 KJV He that dwelleth 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 will I trust. ³ Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. ⁴ He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. ⁵ Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day; ⁶ *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday. ⁷ A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee. ⁸ Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. ⁹ Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; ¹⁰ There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. ¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. ¹² They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. ¹³ Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. ¹⁴ Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath

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 honour him. ¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

When people are at war, there are many times they are forced to seek shelter from the attacks of their enemies. It is hard to be running at all times, fighting at all times, standing exposed in hostile territory. There have to be times set aside for rest, relaxation, re-charging and renewal.

One of the most enduring and enriching stories of World War II is that of the ten Boom family who gained a reputation in the Harleem district of Amsterdam for sheltering Jews from the German army. Over a 2 – 3 year period, before an informant revealed their secret, literally hundreds of Jews found shelter in a house they called “The Hiding Place”. The actual ‘hiding place’ was not much bigger than a walk-in closet, tucked away behind the wall of an upstairs bedroom. Many lives were saved because of this secret hide-away.

David was very familiar with running, fighting and trying to survive. As he ran for his life from King Saul, he found a number of caves, hills and ‘strongholds’ to hide in. He certainly understood the value of a “secret place” (see 1 Sam 23:19, 26:1).

As we read the text of Psalm 91, (which some believe is a three-way dialogue between David, Solomon and Jehovah)¹, a very important question presents itself in the

¹ <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/91-1.htm>, accessed Oct. 2, 2013. Clarke’s commentary refers to the Targum attributing v. 1, 3-13 to David, v. 2 to Solomon and v. 14-16 to Jehovah.

1st verse: “What and where is the “secret place” of the Most High?

First, by way of definition, the Hebrew word “ba-se-ter” translated “secret place” appears only seven times in the OT, five times in the Psalms. Along with “secret place” is also translated “hidden part”, “hidden place”, “shelter” and “covert” in other scriptures. So, God’s “secret place” is a hidden shelter His people can resort to and retreat into.



Psalm 27:5 KJV (A psalm of David) For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the **secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.**

One of God’s secret places is His house. There is a special significance to the place we have dedicated to the worship and praise of our God. We have invited His presence to dwell here, as Solomon did at the dedication of the Temple, and we have full assurance that in fact, He *does* abide in this space!

Those who feel they can walk this walk or fight this fight alone are sadly mistaken! We need each other. We need the Body of Christ. We need the shelter, strength, comfort and teaching of the Church. *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25 KJV).* We need the shelter of the Church more than ever before!



Psalm 31:20 KJV (A psalm of David) Thou shalt hide them in the **secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.**

The word translated “presence” has the literal and figurative meaning of “face”. The presence of God in this context speaks of our face-to-face interaction with Him. This is the awesome privilege of the child of God – to hide in the secret place of God’s presence, communing with Him in prayer – face-to-face.

Moses had such a close, personal, unrestrained relationship with God that God was able to speak to him plainly, without filters. His face even had a physical glow from his extended time in the presence of God!

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Psalm 81:7 KJV (A psalm of Asaph) Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the **secret place of thunder**: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

Exodus 17 tells the story of the children of Israel travelling through the wilderness in obedience to the word of God (v. 1). Along the way, times got very hard, as they had no water to drink. In response, God again sent His word, telling Moses how to procure water (v. 5-6). Their problem was solved.

During the following month, they came to Sinai and had the terrifying, awesome experience of God speaking to them with a thunderous voice (Ex. 19:19; 20:1,18-19,22). The word of God came into the “secret place of thunder”, teaching His people His law and commandments.

His Word continues to be a secret place for His children to resort to: a place where we receive God’s revelation of His mind, will and purpose for our lives, our families, our church, our nation and our world.

The good news is that once we're in His secret place, we never have to leave! We can dwell in the covert of His name - His strong tower - in total, permanent security. All the promises and assurances of Psalm 91 apply to us as we continue to dwell in His secret place.

When we come into the NT, there is a major new reality God has provided for our benefit - the gift of His indwelling Spirit. Now we are not just in His secret place - His secret place is in us!

1 Cor. 6:19 KJV What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

In this place, we understand, as the book of Job teaches us, that the enemy has absolutely no power to attack us without the direct permission of our Heavenly Father. We have the promise that He will never leave us or forsake us, but He will "be with [us] in trouble" (Ps. 91:15).

There is nothing that should keep us from continually dwelling in the secret place of the Most High.

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ADDENDUM:

Joshua desired, sought after, dwelt in the secret place.

Follow his life story:

Ex. 17:9-10 Joshua picked to fight the Amalekites

Ex. 24:13 Moses and Joshua went up into the mountain

Ex. 33:11 Joshua remained in the tabernacle after Moses left

Num. 11:28 One of only two spies with faith in God

Num. 14:6 One of only two over 20 yrs. old to make it

to the promised land

Num. 27:18 Moses anoints Joshua as the new leader

**Josh. 24:15 At the end of his life, he was still saying: As
for me and my house, we will serve the
Lord!**