

Dig Deeper Psalm 91 for personal study and Life Groups...

v1 **Take Shelter in God
and you'll find Safety!**

v2 personal "I"

V3-13 practical "You"

v14 promise "He"

**Christ First!
Then us!**

Psalm 91 (songs of refuge)

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Start with a prayer and read the Psalm once or twice...

1. **What fears are you facing at this time? What do you think God can do about them?**
2. **How does this Psalm match (or not) with Jesus' experience? [Why do you think it is important to view this Psalm (and all the Psalms) through the lens of "Christ first, then us"? Read over for more about this when you have time.]**
3. **What sort of confidence does the Psalm give us as those "in Christ"?**
4. **IF TIME: How did Satan use this Psalm in Matthew 4? How does his response a) relate to situations you may face, b) help you in temptation and c) help you to bow down in wonder at Jesus?!**
5. **How might you pray this Psalm (or verse 1 or 2 of it) at the moment?**

Finish your time by saying the Psalm together out loud by way of commitment and prayer.

Resources...

- [Article](#) by John Piper on this Psalm which helps when facing extreme trials. "Your executioner may laugh you to scorn for quoting Psalm 91".
- [Article](#) by psychiatrist Pablo Martinez on this Psalm at the start of the Covid19 outbreak. See especially his point about Joseph facing trials.
- The [Bible Project](#) has put together an 8 minute video on how the Psalms flow together. For a deeper look at this, try a [talk](#) at St Helen's Bishopsgate by James Hely Hutchinson.

DIG EVEN DEEPER...

Reasons to think that this Psalm refers first to Jesus (without pulling a rabbit out of a hat)...

The NIV footnote v14 mentions “that is probably the king”, although no king is mentioned in the Psalm. Why should we think that the I (v2) YOU (v3-13) and HE (v14-16) of this Psalm speaks first of Jesus before it speaks of us?

Reasons in this Psalm...

1*) The Psalm speaks of an **individual** (even the general principle of v1 is literally “He who dwells” - see the ESV). And the “you” of v3-13 is singular all the way.

2*) The language of refuge/fortress throws us back to **David** (see Psalms in book 1 & 2) who was this anointed King of whom Jesus is the descendent and fulfilment.

3*) Some of the **specifics** in the Psalm speak of a victory that is greater than ours could be. “Great Lion” and “Cobra” victories look bigger than individual salvation (esp in Scripture- Satan as the Lion of [1 Peter 5:8](#), and Jesus as the [Gen 3:15](#) serpent crusher), other language like “honour” (v15) and with long life satisfied post suffering (see [also Isaiah 53:11](#)) suggests a bigger outcome than our own rescue. This should make us think of the King in David’s line, culminating in Jesus.

Reasons in the Psalms as a whole...

4*) The **gateway** to the Psalms (1 & 2) make us look for the individual King (“Anointed one” Ps2) who will find blessing (Ps 1) walking in the ways of God found in the law (torah). See [Bible Project video](#) to get a handle on how often King and Torah feature in the Psalms, so we should be expecting the theme of Kingship to touch most Psalms, even if tangentially.

5) The **local Psalms** around this part of book 4 in part answer the question “What about the covenant with David”? (See James Hely Hutchinson’s talk on the flow of the Psalms [here](#)).

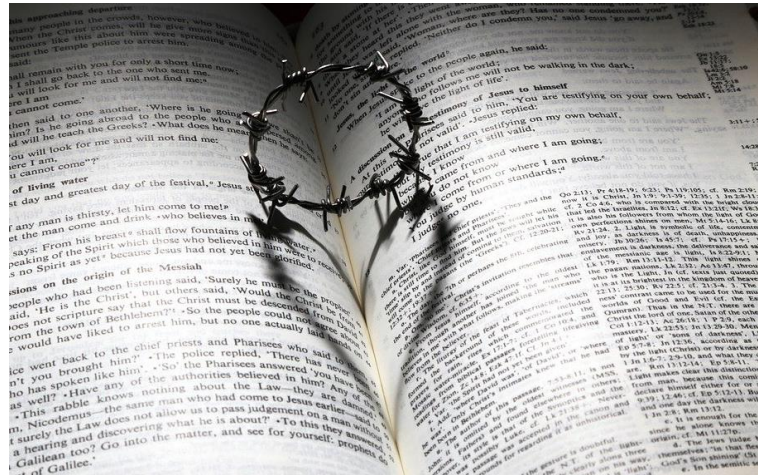
Reasons in the Bible...

6) This Psalm is quoted by Satan to Jesus at his temptations in a matter that is testing out Jesus’ qualifications for being the “Son of God”. See [Matthew 4:5-7](#). Satan misuses the Psalm (and that should warn us to be careful too! See the Piper article) but it was appropriate to use it to raise questions of Jesus’ Messiahship.

7) Jesus’ handling of Scripture on the Road to Emmaus should lead us to expect to find him in the OT ([Luke 24:27](#)) including the Psalms ([Luke 24:44](#)).

8) All Scripture is God breathed and useful for bringing us to salvation in Christ ([2 Tim 3:15,16](#)).

* These points I got from Christopher Ash’s 2020 book, “Psalms for you” (Good Book Company) which is well worth a read, and I can lend to anyone who would like to pursue this.



NB It is still right to apply the Psalms to us, they are corporate prayers and songs for Israel which we can take on our lips with great comfort as the NT people of God. But going to Jesus first, helps us understand them rightly in their relationship to Jesus. As his people we can now sing them “in Him”. This avoids us expecting too much (blessings and anointings that first were applicable to him) but also expecting too little (as Christians we share in his rescue and victory - as we saw last week from Ps2:9=Rev2:27).