

**OUR REFUGE. OUR HIDING
PLACE.**

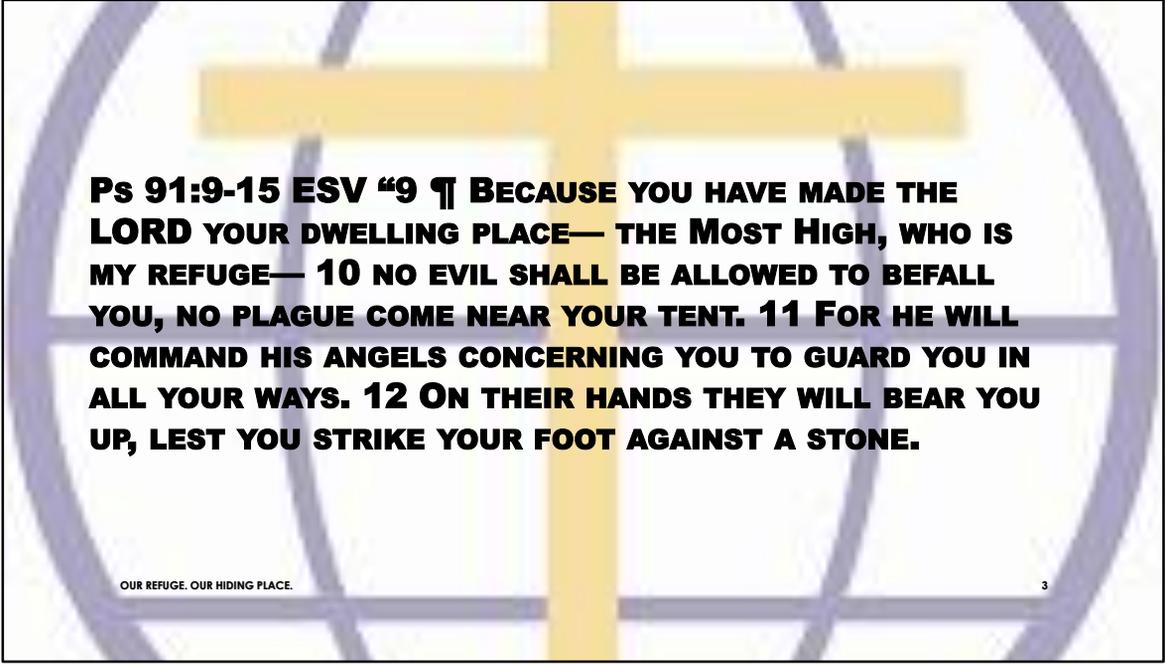
**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour
Date: March 10, 2019**



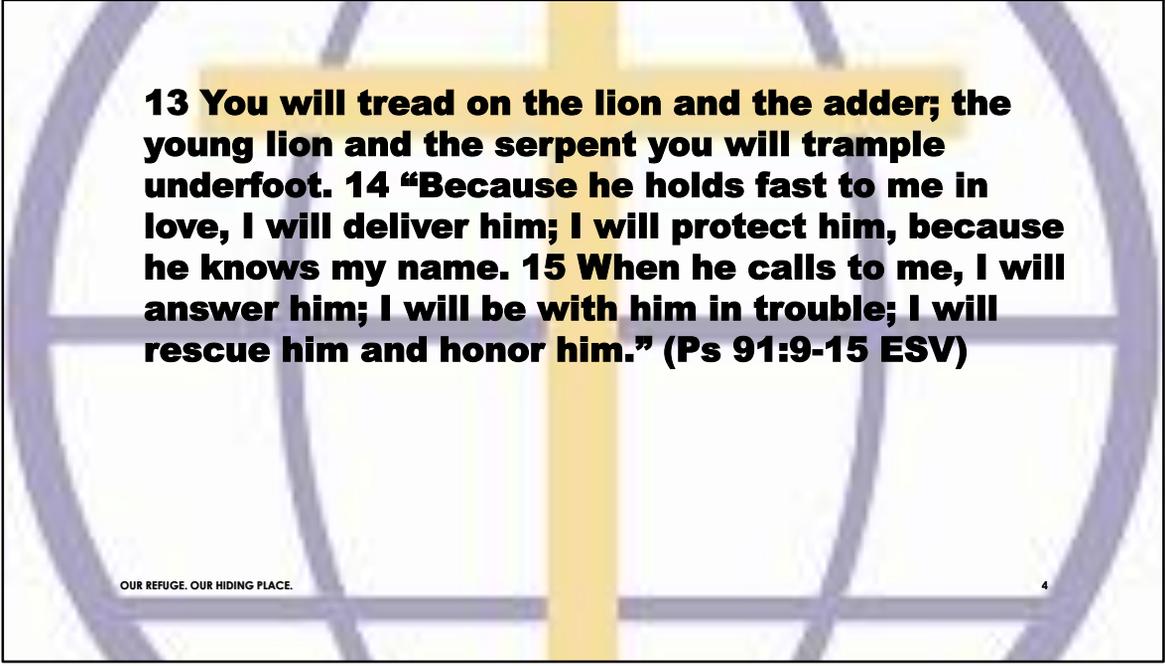
**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

**“1 ¶ HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SHELTER OF
THE MOST HIGH WILL ABIDE IN THE
SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY. 2 I WILL SAY
TO THE LORD, “MY REFUGE AND MY
FORTRESS, MY GOD, IN WHOM I TRUST.””
(Ps 91:1-2 ESV)**

LUKE 9:28-44



Ps 91:9-15 ESV “9 ¶ BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE THE LORD YOUR DWELLING PLACE— THE MOST HIGH, WHO IS MY REFUGE— 10 NO EVIL SHALL BE ALLOWED TO BEFALL YOU, NO PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR TENT. 11 FOR HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS. 12 ON THEIR HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.



13 You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. 14 “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. 15 When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.” (Ps 91:9-15 ESV)



The Old Testament is an important part of God's word.

The Bible begins with the book of Genesis, as we all know. The covenant with Israel was not yet in place as it only began at Mount Sinai after God delivered Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians.

Prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant with Israel, God's invisible hand was still involved in our world as he worked through such people as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to further his plan of salvation.

The Psalms are part of the Old Covenant. They pointed to Jesus. In fact Jesus was the member of the Trinity that the Israelites followed. **"and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they (the Israelites) drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ." (1Co 10:4 ESV).**

During today's sermon, we are going to consider where and who is our true home, where is our refuge, where is our hiding place.

As we go through some 91, it is important to realize that we do not read the book of

Psalm as an ordinary textbook. (Next slide)

How to read this book (from

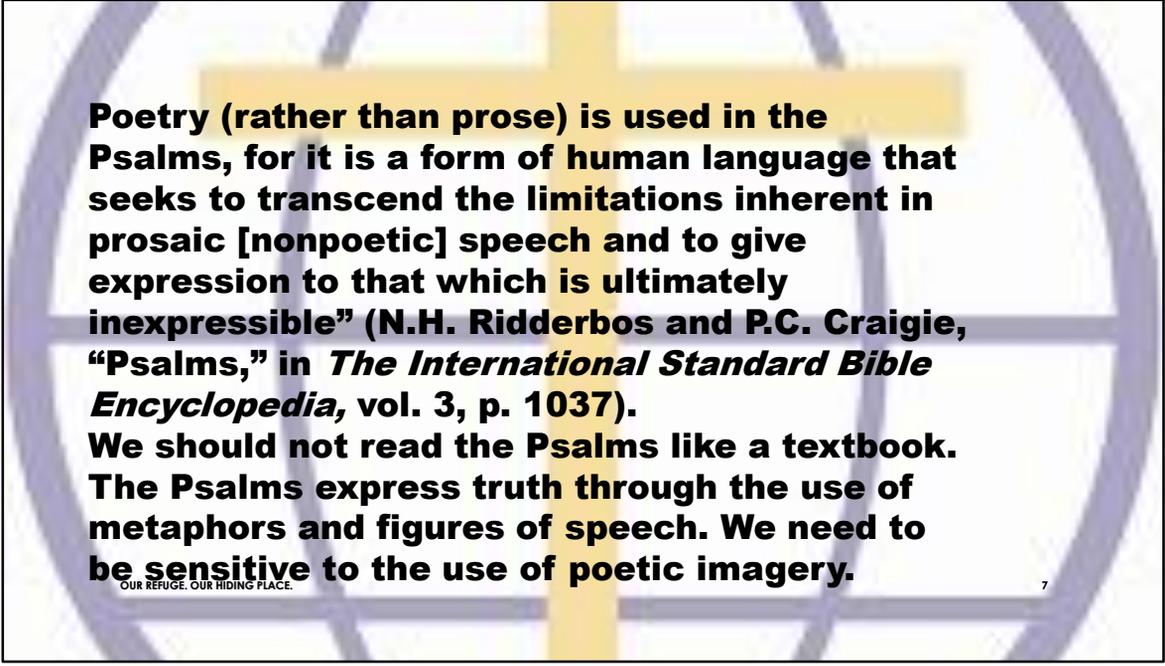
<https://www.gci.org/articles/exploring-psalms/>)

The Bible is God's revelation to humanity.

Within the Bible, God has chosen to reveal different aspects of his nature in a variety of ways — such as through law, history, proverbs and prophecy. The Psalms are part of God's revelation through poetry:

“The Psalms as a whole address the relationship between Israel (individually and collectively) and God. And yet by its very nature the relationship with God is not easily expressed within the limitations of human speech.

THE PLACE.



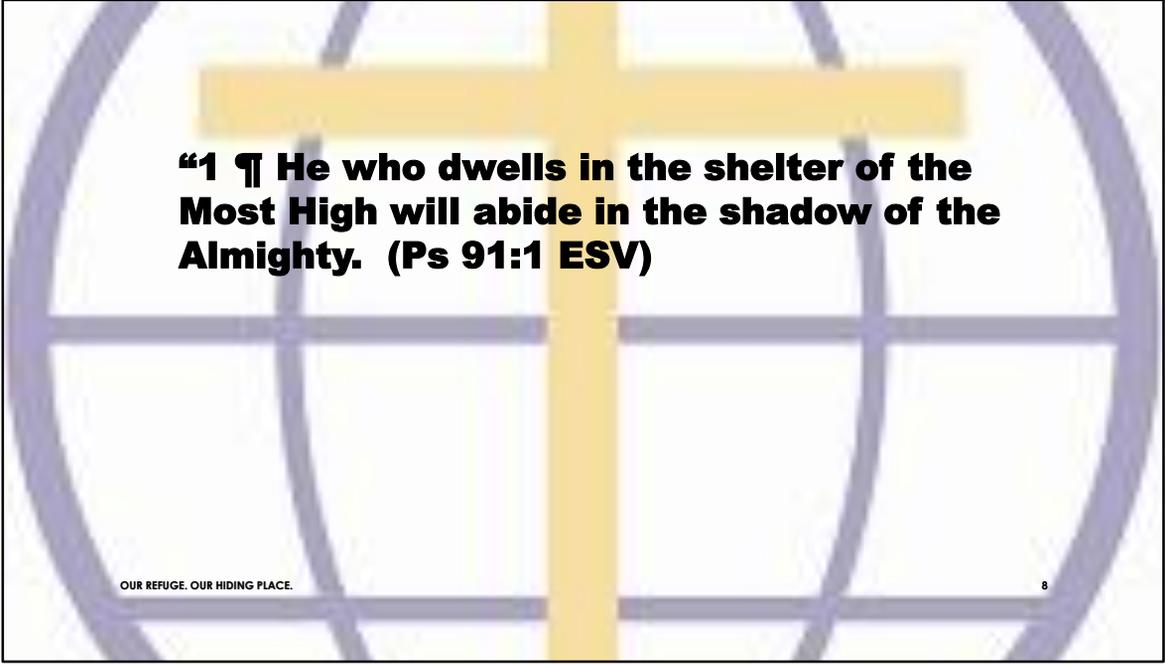
Poetry (rather than prose) is used in the Psalms, for it is a form of human language that seeks to transcend the limitations inherent in prosaic [nonpoetic] speech and to give expression to that which is ultimately inexpressible” (N.H. Ridderbos and P.C. Craigie, “Psalms,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 1037).

We should not read the Psalms like a textbook. The Psalms express truth through the use of metaphors and figures of speech. We need to be sensitive to the use of poetic imagery.

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Conscious about the style used by God in the Psalms, let us proceed.



“1 ¶ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (Ps 91:1 ESV)

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We can safely say that we not only dwell in the shadow of the most high God but we dwell in God himself as he abides in us and we in him.

The New Testament tells us in various places that our body is the temple of God. (2 Corinthians 6:16).

That we live in God and God in us was Jesus prayer before he died.

“20 ¶ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” (Joh 17:20-23 ESV)

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How can this be so?

It can only be so by voluntarily entering into the triune God relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is only possible through becoming united to Christ who is both God and man in his one nature. The miracle of entering into his godly relationship is a miracle and a privilege which is beyond our grasp to understand. We can only apprehend it, grasp it through faith in Christ.

We cannot enter this relationship on our own strength. The Father makes this relationship a possible through his Son.

We are talking about very lofty things. It is a relationship beyond what we humans have experienced. Whether we know it or not, we all long for this a perfect relationship of perfect outgoing love for one another in Christ. In this world, we unfortunately mess up. Human relationships are so fragile as witnessed by the numerous relationship problems and challenges we all face and experience.

The Old Testament was pointing to Jesus. Jesus is the substance. **““These (food, drink, festival, new moon, Sabbath as found in the Old Testament) are a shadow of the things**

to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” (Col 2:17 ESV).

What is the shelter as mentioned in this Psalm?

According to the Strong concordance, the word shelter means **“a covering, hiding place, secrecy”**

Who is our hiding place from the evil of this world?

God is our hiding place **“You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. \@Selah\@” (Ps 32:7 ESV)**

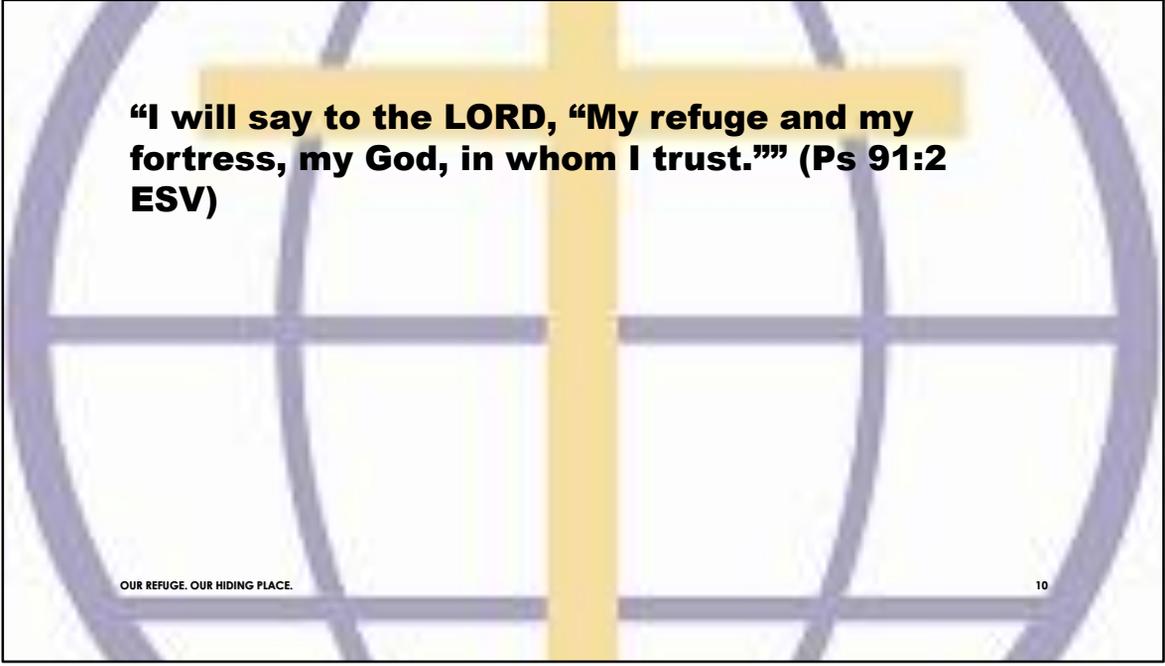
Jesus is our hiding place, our shelter. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are citizens of heaven united in Christ. **“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,” (Php 3:20 ESV)**

“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.” (Php 4:1 ESV)

In God's dwelling place, we are told that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. In fact, we are told that the law of the Spirit has set us free in Christ from the law of sin and death.

Jesus has condemned sin in the flesh for us. The Father sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. We have been called to walk according to the Spirit and not to walk according to our fleshly passion. In Christ, there is life and peace as we set our minds on the Spirit, as we read in Romans 8:1-6.

Entering the shelter of God is a voluntary action. God never forces his hiding place, his salvation upon us. It is a gift that we accept freely in his grace. God gives us the desire to enter this most holy place.



“I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”” (Ps 91:2 ESV)

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The author of this Psalm responded in faith.

Surely for the author of Psalm to say that God was his refuge and fortress reflects the fact that life must not have been easy for him. He must have experienced some dangers.

Whatever he was going through, he chose to place his trust in our loving God.

Thinking of this verse reminded me of Hebrews 11, the faith chapter where God’s faithful people trusted and put their lives in God’s hands in faith. When their situations appeared impossible, they trusted in God even without seeing the outcome.

We think of Noah who build an ark for the saving of his household when there was no evidence of a coming flood. Can we imagine the ridicule that he and his family must have faced.

Chapter 11 of Hebrews also tells us of many others who experienced horrendous experiences as well as victories. They were all waiting for a better life beyond this life. God was indeed their fortress and refuge. **39 And all these, though commended**

through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb 11:39-40 ESV)

None of these people were perfect in the flesh. God did not hide the sins and shortcomings of the heroes of the Bible.

We can certainly learn from this as none of us are perfect in the flesh. Not desiring to sin, all of us sin from time to time.

Yet having God as our refuge, placing our trust and in his faithfulness for us, we find the strength to go on, realizing we are not condemned because Jesus has already condemned sins in our flesh, as we read in Romans 8. When we fall down, with God's help, we get up again knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God.



As the Psalmist make the Almighty his refuge, here are some of the blessings that followed. Again, it is written from an Old Testament point of view. It is true for us today because God doesn't change. Circumstances change but the heart of God towards us does not. The promises of the New Covenant are superior to the promises of the Old Covenant.

What are some of the blessings identified?

1- Vs. 10-12 – **God's guidance.** In Genesis 31:1 we read about the angels of God meeting Jacob after a rather tense meeting with his father-in-law, Laban.

In the New Testament, we have the powerful example of Peter being miraculously freed from prison by angels. (Acts 12).

We also have personal examples. My wife was coming to an intersection when she heard a clear voice telling her not to go forward. If she had gone forward, she would have been hit by 1/2 ton truck who speedily went through a red light. Had she not been protected, we can only imagine what would have happened.

Many of you have such real life stories as well.

2 – **As the psalmist, in the Almighty, we can operate from a position of strength.** The lion represents every opposition of strength and the serpent/adder represents deceitfulness and the subtlety of deviousness, as evidenced in the Garden of Eden and expounded upon in the book of Revelation.

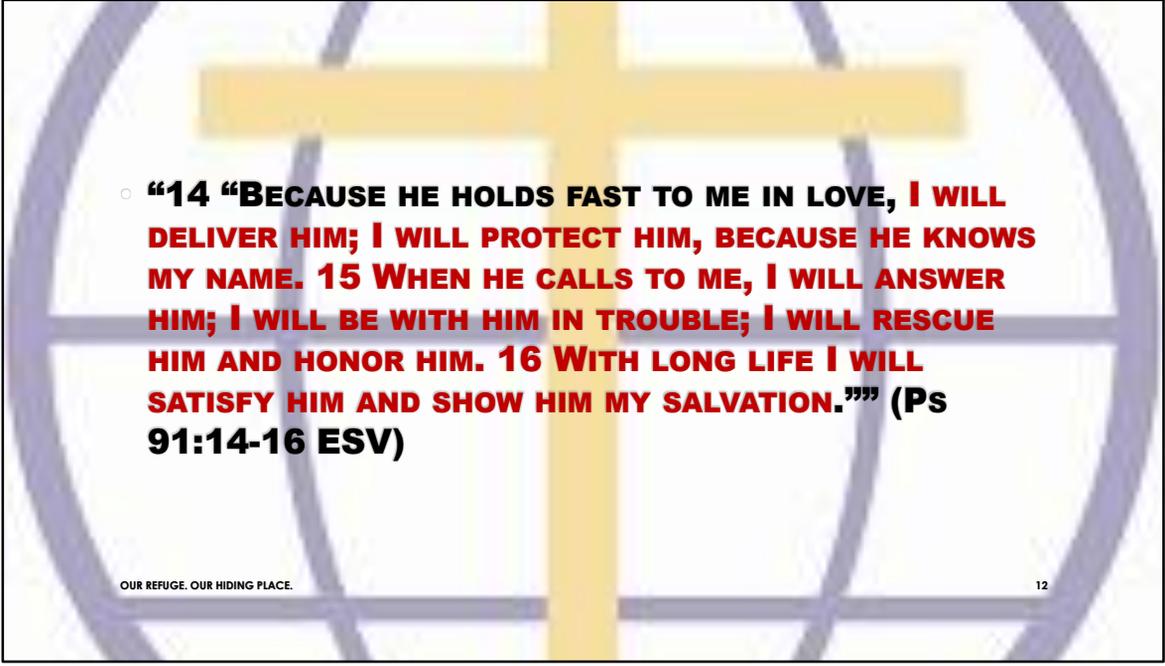
Jan tells us the following: **“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (Jas 4:7 ESV)**

“8 ¶ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 ¶ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” (1Pe 5:8-10 ESV)

These are sure and certain promises. God is not promising trouble-free life but when we make him our refuge in him, victory is assured. He is our victory because Jesus has defeated the enemies that stand against us – sin, death and the devil and his minions.

We are not to give up on God when things become more difficult. We are to trust him that he will walk with us and accompany us in those difficult moments in life.

3 – **Our response of love to God's love is found in verses 14-16.**



○ **“14 “BECAUSE HE HOLDS FAST TO ME IN LOVE, I WILL DELIVER HIM; I WILL PROTECT HIM, BECAUSE HE KNOWS MY NAME. 15 WHEN HE CALLS TO ME, I WILL ANSWER HIM; I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE; I WILL RESCUE HIM AND HONOR HIM. 16 WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION.”” (Ps 91:14-16 ESV)**

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What a promise this is as we turn to God as refuge in love.

The love that we have is empowered by God's Holy Spirit indwelling us producing the fruit of the Spirit - **“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Ga 5:22-23 ESV)**

Jesus came to the earth sent by the Father to give us eternal life through or by faith in him. God knows that our walk in this world is not always the easiest.

We face many trials such as:

- the severe illness of loved ones,
- death of loved ones,
- the weaknesses found in ourselves and in other Christians,
- injustices in the world,
- troubled governments,
- breakdown in relationships,
- financial instability,
- confusion in religions,

- the threats of violence, etc. We don't have to go very far as we read about the Russians ability to reach America in about 11 minutes with war machines which travel at supersonic speed,
- and the list goes on.

Whatever trouble we face, God promises to be with us in times of trouble. He promises to rescue and honor and to be shown God's great plan of salvation.

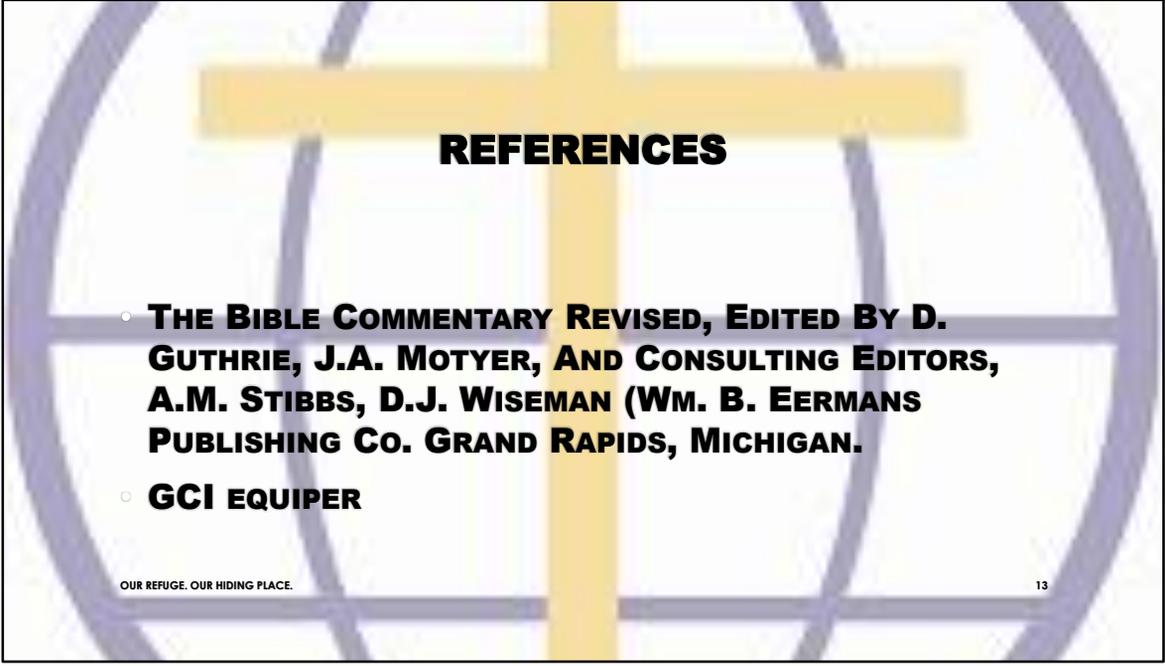
In this psalm, God is talking about everyone who makes him his refuge. The good news is that this refuge is available to everyone as God the Father has reconciled the whole world in Christ not counting our sin against us. His great gift is not only available to us but available to everyone who will accept God's reconciliation when he reveals himself to them.

We are told in second Corinthians 5 to be reconciled to God. He is already reconciled to us. Reconciliation is a gift of grace to be accepted in faith. We do not create the reconciliation. We accept the reconciliation.

This long life promised us is eternal life in Christ as perfected human beings!

God the Almighty is truly our refuge and hiding place!

Let us pray.



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