

**The Antidote to**  
**‘Fear of All Things Potentially Harmful’**  
**P91Ko and FI**  
**(Psalm 91 – Knowledge of and Faith In)**  
**‘Falling of 1,000 and 10,000 but Not the Believer’**  
An Exposition of Psalm 91  
Lesson 5

(Points I. through IV. and all sub points see previous notes)

- V. Putting Some **Puzzling** Pieces of Verses 7 and 8 Together to Determine the Most **Probable** Meaning
- A. There Are at Least **Eight Different** Interpretations Offered by Bible Scholars, Commentators and Teachers
1. Some Teachers Interpret the Verses as Being a: **Hypothetical Possibility**
    - a. **“Even if** - so the psalm intensifies its tone in vv. 7–8\* Thousands fall victim to this deadly war on the part of the demons of evil, that power of death cannot touch the petitioner (some authors see in vv. 7–8\* an independent image of war and defeat). On the contrary, the petitioner will merely behold this “mass slaughter” with his eyes and is to understand it as God’s righteous judgment on “the wicked” Psalms 2: a commentary on Psalms 51-100. F. L. Hossfeld & E. Zenger, K. Balzter, Ed., L.M. Maloney, Translator
    - b. “So terrible was the pestilence that it is stated as a **possibility**. 7. Though a thousand fall at thy side / And a myriad at thy right hand], and so the people of God were exposed to the utmost possible degree,—yet Unto thee it will not come nigh], resuming v. 3, 4c; safe in the protection of their God, the plague cannot approach them.” A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms, C.A. Briggs, & E.G. Briggs (1906-1907)
  2. The Verse Is to be Interpreted in an **Absolute** Sense and Literally Applies Only to **Jesus** : “The promise is of an absolute exemption from all that could endanger life. This was true of none but Jesus.” Psalms A Critical And Expository Commentary With Doctrinal and Practical Implications, William S. Plumer, D.D., LL.D.
  3. The Promises of Verses 7 and 8 Are **False** : “Some argue that the teachings of this psalm are simply not true. They think of someone who was not protected from or delivered from calamity and conclude on that basis that this psalm is mistaken.” Opening up Psalms, Roger Ellsworth (p. 40).

4. **Fear** Will Not Overtake the Believer: *“Trusting in God grants no exemption from the life-threatening and destructive forces which are part of human experience, but it **deprives** them of their sting and enables them to be faced without **fear**. It is in this light that we must seek to understand verses 7–8, whether the picture is that of slaughter on the field of battle or that of an army or community stricken by plague (cf. 2 Kgs. 19:35).”* The vitality of worship: a Commentary on the Book of Psalms R. Davidson (pp. 304–305).
5. The **Faith** of Genuine Believers Will Not **Falter** in the Face of Satanic Attack
6. **Spiritualized** the Sense of the Meaning in These Verses
7. “A **strength** that conquers all dark powers is promised to those who are entrusted to God’s protection.” Kraus, H.-J. (1993). A Continental Commentary: Psalms 60–150 (p. 224). <sup>1</sup>“This is the most distinguished promise and consolation: you will not only be secure, but you will go forth and conquer all evils ...” (Luther, WA 31, 1; 562, 12f.)
8. The Verse is to Be Interpreted in an **Absolute** and **Literal** and Applies to All Believers
  - a. “While others are dropping like flies (v. 7), the believer is **safe**. He only has to look at it (v. 8) and not actually **experience** it.” Opening up Psalms R. Ellsworth
  - b. “Verse 6 graphically personifies the dangers. The strong promise of verse 7 is **not** qualified, except in terms of verses 9, 14, and 15.” Psalms, G.W. Grogan (p. 160).
  - c. “He will protect believers from **every** conceivable danger (91:7–13).” Willmington’s Bible handbook (p. 319), H.L. Willmington
  - d. The 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm **Cannot** be **Interpreted** as a Blanket Guaranty to Believers from Immunity against All Disasters, Destruction or Death
    - 1) The Interpretation Would Be **Contrary** to the **Clear** Teaching of the Rest of the Scriptures cf Gen.4:8; 37:20-28; 39:1-20; Job 1:6- 2:10; Jer. 20:1-6; 37:11-16; Mt. 23:34-35; Lk. 11:47-51 Jn. 16:33; Acts 4:21; 5:40; 7:9-60; 8:1-3; 12:1-2; 14:19; 16:16-24 Acts 24:27; 28:16-20; Philipp. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:5-6; 2:14-16 2 Tim. 3:11-12; Heb. 10:32-34; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 4:12-16 Rev. 2:10
    - 2) The Interpretation Does Not Align with the **Reality** of **Life**
      - a) The 2018 World Watch List: “approximately **215 million** Christians experience high, very high or extreme persecution for following Jesus.”

- b) “Nearly one in every 12 Christians in the world lives in an area, or in a culture, in which Christianity is **illegal**, **forbidden** or **punished**.” Open Doors online 1/20/2018
- c) Once again, North Korea claims the #1 spot—for the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. With more than 50,000 Christians in **prison** or **labor** camps. . .” Open Doors online 1/20/2018
- d) “Every **day** **six** women are raped, sexually harassed or forced to marry a Muslim under the threat of death, due to their Christian faith.” Open Doors online 1/20/2018
- e) ACN Aid for the Church in Need estimates **300 million** Christians are suffering from persecution.
- f) More Than **75%** of All Religiously Motivated Violence and Oppression is Against Christians. *Pew Research Center*
- g) 4,305 people were murdered because of their faith in Christ During 2018 a **40%** Increase Over 2017

B. Four **Questions**

1. **How** Are We to Take the Numbers a Thousand and Ten Thousand / Myriad? The Numbers Are Not to be Taken Literally to Denote a Mathematical Value but Are Being Used to Express Spiritual Truth with *Symbolic Poetic Effect* to *Emphasize* the **Magnitude** of Deut. 32:36; 1 Sam. 18:7; 21:11; 29:5 Expressing That a **Colossal** Number Will Fall
2. **Who Are** The Ones Who Will Fall: They Are the **Wicked** of Verse 8 ‘The Wicked’ Translation of the Hebrew Plural Adjective (רָשָׁעִים) English Transliteration *rashayim* from the Singular Form (רָשָׁע) English Transliteration *rashah* = Connotes **Unrepentant** Human Beings Who Stand **Guilty** before God and Are the Enemies of God’s People and Have sought to Cause Harm, Affliction, Distress, Trouble, Calamity to Come upon Believers; and Will Be Declared **Guilty** and **Condemned** by the Lord to **Everlasting Punishment** of Gen. 18:25; Ex. 23:7; Nu. 35:31; Deut. 25:1-2; 2 Sam. 4:11; 1 Ki. 8:32; 2 Chr. 6:23, 37-39; Job 8:22; 11:20; 18:5, 16-21; 36:17; Psalm 1:5-6; 9:17-18; 11:2, Psalm 11:6; 17:9, 13; 34:21; 37:10; 12, 14, 20, 32, 34, 38, 40; 55:3; 71:4; 75:8; Psalm 82:4; 92:7; 94:13; 97:10; 104:35; Prv. 11:23, 31; 12:7; 13:9; 14:11, 32; Prv. 17:15; 24:16, 20; (Prv. 25:5 cf Mt. 24:36-41; 25:31-46) Prv. 28:4; Eccl. 3:17; Isa. 3:11; 53:9; 55:7; Jer. 5:26; 25:31; Ezk. 18:21, 23, 27; 21:29; 33:11-12 Ezk. 33:14-15, 19
3. **What** Does ‘the **Fall**’ of the Wicked in Psalm 91:7 Refer to?
  - a) the Word ‘Fall’ (נָפַל) English Transliteration *naphal* Literally Means to Fall Accidentally or Deliberately cf 1 Sam. 4:18; Psalm 37:24; the Word Has a Number of **Figurative** Nuances, Including Being Used to Express the Thought of Something or Someone Coming to **Ruin**,

Something or Someone Experiencing **Disaster**, **Calamity** cf 2 Ki 14:10  
2 Chr. 25:19; Est. 6:13; Psalm 5:11; 20:9; 27:2; Prv. 11:5, 14, 28; 13:17  
Prv. 27:20; 24:16, 17; 28:14, 18; Isa. 3:8; 8:15; 21:9, 31:3; 54:15; Jer.  
6:15; 8:12, 46:12; 49:21; 50:32; 51:8; Dan. 11:19; Hosea 7:7; Amos  
8:14; Micah 7:8

- b) In the Context of Psalm 91:7-8 '*the Fall*' Denotes the **Reward** /  
**Punishment** of the Wicked of Verse 8

4. **What** Is It That Will Definitely Not Come Near the Believer? It Is **NOT** the Plague  
of Verse 6 but the Everlasting **Punishment** of the Wicked of Verse 8

- a) The Hebrew Word Translated **Reward** / **Recompense** /  
**Punishment** in Verse 8 Is (שְׁלֻמָּה) English Transliteration  
*shellumah*; the Word Is **Not** Used Again in the Old Testament  
but It Is Used *The Dead Sea Scrolls* 1QLsaA Isa. 34:8; 4QXIIG  
Mich. 7:3; and Mur XII Mich. 7:3; the Use of (שְׁלֻמָּה) English  
Transliteration *shellumah* in *The Dead Sea Scrolls* in Isa. 34:8  
**Demonstrates** the Word Can Be Used to Denote ONE  
INDIVIDUAL OR PARTICULAR MANIFESTATION OF  
PUNISHMENT
- b) The Use of the Feminine Singular Noun (שְׁלֻמָּה) = *shellumah*)  
May Be Stressing, Placing Emphasis on **One Particular**  
Instance of Divine Punishment to be Meted Out Upon the  
'Wicked' Compare the Use of the Same Word in the *Dead Sea*  
*Scrolls* 1QLsaA Isa. 34:8
- c) The Punishment of the Wicked in Psalm 91:8 May Indicate a  
**Specific Punishment** and That *Could Be* the Punishment  
Given Out at the Time of the Great White Throne Judgment of  
Which Believers Will Not Experience but Will See cf 1 Cor. 6:2-3;  
Rev. 20:11-15

C. I Believe the Best Interpretation in the Context of Psalm 91:7-8 Is  
Probably '*Protection*' from **Everlasting Punishment**