



"Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success."
—Henry Ford

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Moses, Psalmist (Part 2)

As we saw in the last issue, [Moses](#) was the Renaissance Man of his day: prince, general, freedom-fighter, shepherd, leader, prophet, law-giver, and psalmist. We focus on the last of these accomplishments, as it is the one least recognized by most students of the Bible.

Psalm 91, traditionally credited to Moses, follows the well-attested Psalm 90. Because the former has no title, commentators reason that the Psalms' editors want the reader to understand that Psalm 91 also came from Moses' pen. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary even terms it a "companion poem" to the previous psalm.

Its theme deals primarily with the safety and protection God's people can expect from Him. Verse 3 is typical: "Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence." Verse after verse presents positive, reassuring proof that our [God](#) will keep us from harm, illness, war, deceit, dangerous beasts, and evil in general. [Satan](#), in fact, quotes verses 11-12 out of context to Jesus during the Temptation in the Wilderness in an attempt to persuade Him that God will save Him even from an act of pride and foolishness ([Matthew 4:5-6](#)).

Our Savior's response teaches us that the promises found in this psalm are not automatic and unconditional. He quotes from [Deuteronomy 6:16](#): "You shall not tempt the LORD your God," meaning that God cannot be forced to act on our behalf. He does not take kindly to mere humans testing Him to see if He will respond ([Psalm 78:17-22](#), 40-41, 56-64; 95:7-11).

We can depend on His protection, but we must also remember that the law of cause and effect still exists. We will reap what we sow ([Galatians 6:7-8](#)). God is under no obligation to save us from the consequences of our own sinful or imprudent actions. He may from time to time deliver us from certain situations because He has more to teach us, but we do not have it guaranteed.

From the first words of the song, Moses wants to dissuade us of this notion of a guarantee. These promises fall upon the one "who dwells in the secret place of the Most High" ([Psalm 91:1](#)). What is this "secret place?" The most probable answer is that it refers to the Holy of Holies, the earthly type of God's throne in heaven. In the Tabernacle/Temple, the Holy of Holies, the innermost sanctuary, was closed to everyone except that high priest, and he could enter it only once a year on the Day of Atonement—and then only to discharge his mediatory duties!

How, then, can anyone "dwell in the secret place of the Most High?" Under the Old Covenant, it was nearly impossible, except for those few whom God called, like Moses and the other prophets, kings, and patriarchs. However, under the New Covenant, the blood of [Jesus Christ](#) has opened the way into the Holy of Holies ([Matthew 27:51](#); [Hebrews 9:8](#), 11-15, 24-28; 10:19-22). Converted Christians can dwell in God's secret place and rely on His protection!

A last point of note is that within Psalm 91 Moses provides us three observations on how we can enter the "secret place." These three are complementary rather than exclusive.

The first appears in verse 2: "I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.'" Essentially, this is [faith](#). We must

believe that God is faithful: What He says He will do. This leads us to [live by faith](#), not by the allurements and deceptions we see around us ([II Corinthians 5:7](#)).

The second we read in verse 9: "Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation." Today, we might say, "You have made the LORD your life"; in other words, total devotion to Him. Without getting into detail, this point covers obedience to God's laws and principles in all areas of life—in effect, to live with Him we must live as He does.

The third occurs in verse 14, where God is speaking: "Because he [the individual] has set his [love](#) upon Me, therefore I will deliver him." Obviously, loving God with all our heart, soul, might, and mind ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#); [Matthew 22:37](#)) is chief on the list of traits of God's children ([I Corinthians 13:13](#)). This, too, has a practical application in that Jesus Himself tells us that if we love Him, we must keep His commandments ([John 14:15](#)).

Even though God's promises are sure, He sets conditions. Our part is to meet them. Next time, we will tackle Moses' song of victory in Exodus 15.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Elements of Motivation \(Part Seven\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Eternal life, emphasizing a special intimate relationship with God the Father and Christ, is vastly different from immortality, connoting only endless existence. We have been called to a state of fellowship and a quality of life which has not been made available to the rest of mankind- a fellowship higher than the intimacy of marriage- a God-plane relationship we can

experience right now (John 5:24) if we seek His will and keep His commandments, loving the same things and hating the same things God does, constantly overcoming, and fellowshiping with His called-out saints.

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[Overcoming \(Part 3\): Self-Righteousness](#)

by Martin G. Collins

On the heels of self-deception and self-justification often comes self-righteousness. This obstacle to overcoming occurs when we set our own standards rather than God's.

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