

**[Day #23] Part 3: Survivor's Guide to Suffering – Staying Under His Wings\***  
**Read: Psalm 91**

*"Each new morn new widows howl, new orphans cry,  
new sorrows strike heaven on the face." – Wm Shakespeare*

It is strange to think of heaven being "struck on the face" by earthly suffering. Was this phrase a product of Shakespeare's poetic genius or his knowledge of God? Either way, it is accurate. In today's terms, this "strike" of heaven's face could be described as a gut punch to our Heavenly Father's love for his children.

The world is a dangerous place where people are killed every day from disease, accidents, war, and terrorists' murderous plots. The question is, how do we stay safe in such a place?

Jesus wants us to be safe. He mourned because Jerusalem refused His safe protection. "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing." (Matthew 23:37)

Jesus uses the metaphor of a mother hen covering her chicks from harm. The fire, the rain, hail, and cold all strike her, while the chicks under her wings are spared. This is what happened on the cross, when Jesus died in our place.

But does this protection extend beyond spiritual protection to physical protection? After all, we are presently living in a physical world and connected to physical bodies. While we long to be in our heavenly bodies, the transition into that body – death – is not usually anticipated with excitement.

Psalm 91 is another "under his wings" passage. While spiritual protection is included, this passage describes divine protection in graphically physical terms – protection from dangers such as pestilence, terror, arrows, plagues. While easily misinterpreted – such as Satan's twisted use of this passage when he tempted Jesus (Matthew 4) – this psalm clearly sets forth God's strong protection of our physical lives. Whatever the danger, God is our **place of safety** (verse 2), His **promises are armor** around us (verse 4), and He deploys **angels** to protect us (verse 11).

God is no bystander in the world's suffering; He is a participant in it. Our God, who wears skin and knows His way around the physical world, gives us this promise: "I will be with them in trouble." (verse 15)

**Survival tip:** Get under Jesus' wings and rest in active belief (i.e. trust). Don't refuse as the people of Jerusalem did.

*\* These thoughts were inspired by a Timothy Keller sermon.*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Agnostics and atheist's claim that the horrible suffering on this planet is proof that, if God exists, He cannot be both loving *and* all-powerful. How do you resolve this enigma in your own mind (i.e. what loving purpose could an all-powerful God be achieving through suffering)?

Do you think Shakespeare's anthropomorphic description of mankind's suffering "striking God on the face" is accurate? Explain.

Do you believe that God feels our pain? Why? Can you think of a Bible verse or passage that proves your belief?