

# The AGC Connection



## Finding AGC's Help Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear...." Psalm 46:1-2a*

AGC Church Members and Friends,

These days have been filled with surprise, uncertainty, and elements of fear for almost everyone in AGC as well as throughout Uganda and even the world. In February the AGC leaders called for a 40-Day Prayer Challenge for God to send revival to AGC Uganda. What a surprise it has been for all of us who have been praying, that the church doors have literally been closed in the midst of our prayer challenge. But while the church buildings are closed, the church people have not been shut up. Hallelujah!

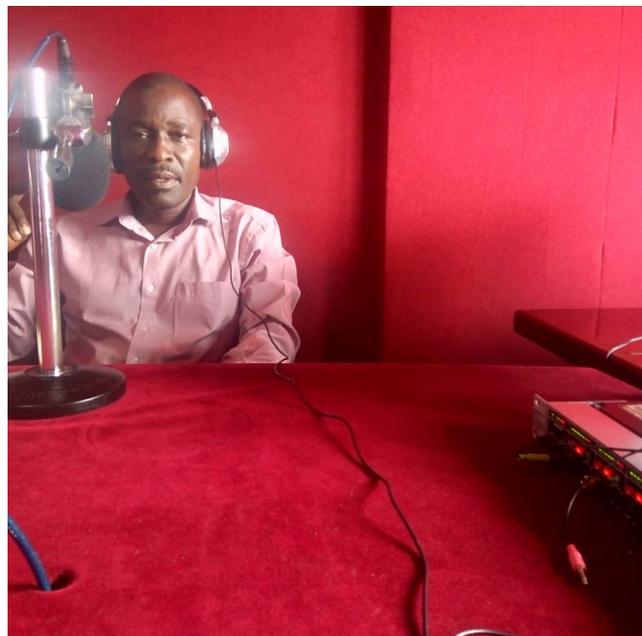
In these days of trouble and confusion, God has been AGC's refuge and help. One of the ways God has helped has been the opportunity for AGC's leaders to preach on various radio stations across central and eastern Uganda. We praise God for this new opportunity to connect on-air!

In addition AGC is slowly updating its website as a central place for information and resources during the covid-19 crisis.

<http://agcuganda.org>.

Please check out the **Bible Story Guide for Family Home Devotions** and the lessons on preventing the **Covid-19 virus**.

[AGC Bishop Joseph Ogweyo preaching on Radio 98.3FM]



## Psalm 91

<sup>1</sup>Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup>This I declare about the Lord:  
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.

<sup>3</sup>For he will rescue you from every trap  
and protect you from deadly disease.

<sup>4</sup>He will cover you with his feathers.  
He will shelter you with his wings.  
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

<sup>5</sup>Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies in the day.

<sup>6</sup>Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,  
nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

<sup>7</sup>Though a thousand fall at your side,  
though ten thousand are dying around you,  
these evils will not touch you.

<sup>8</sup>Just open your eyes,  
and see how the wicked are punished.

<sup>9</sup>If you make the Lord your refuge,  
if you make the Most High your shelter,

<sup>10</sup>no evil will conquer you;  
no plague will come near your home.

<sup>11</sup>For he will order his angels  
to protect you wherever you go.

<sup>12</sup>They will hold you up with their hands  
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.

<sup>13</sup>You will trample upon lions and cobras;  
you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!

<sup>14</sup>The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me.  
I will protect those who trust in my name.

<sup>15</sup>When they call on me, I will answer;  
I will be with them in trouble.  
I will rescue and honor them.

<sup>16</sup>I will reward them with a long life  
and give them my salvation." (New Living Translation)

## I. Structure:

### A. Introduction: v.1

The psalm opens with a beautiful thesis statement:

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

In many ways, the entire rest of the psalm is an elaboration on this reality. The question is, “How does one come to live and find rest in Almighty God’s shadow?” The rest of the psalm provides the answer.

### B. Psalmist’s Declaration of Trust: v.2

*This I declare about the Lord:  
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.*

Here is the psalmist’s declaration of putting his (or her) trust in God and in God alone. When He is my God above all other gods or loves, then He alone is my safe place, my refuge. Notice the “first person” language. The psalmist is testifying that he has found rest in the shadow of the Most High by trusting in God alone.

### C. Encouragement to Trust God: vs.3-13

*For he will rescue you from every trap  
and protect you from deadly disease.  
4 He will cover you with his feathers.  
He will shelter you with his wings.  
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.  
5 Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies in the day.  
6 Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,  
nor the disaster that strikes at midday.  
7 Though a thousand fall at your side,  
though ten thousand are dying around you,  
these evils will not touch you.  
8 Just open your eyes,  
and see how the wicked are punished.  
9 If you make the Lord your refuge,  
if you make the Most High your shelter,  
10 no evil will conquer you;*

*no plague will come near your home.*

<sup>11</sup> *For he will order his angels  
to protect you wherever you go.*

<sup>12</sup> *They will hold you up with their hands  
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.*

<sup>13</sup> *You will trample upon lions and cobras;  
you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!*

This section is the bulk of the psalm and the psalmist is following up his testimony of trusting in God alone by encouraging others – you – to trust in God alone. Notice the change in language from first person “I” to second person “you.” The word “**you**” is used fourteen times! The Lord, the Most High, the Almighty God who alone is God wants to do something for those willing to trust Him. But what would it be like to rest in the shadow of the Almighty?

Listen to vs. 3-4: This God, the LORD will rescue, will protect, will cover, and will shelter you. In addition to this, His promises are “your” armor and protection (see vs.4-8) and so you do not need to be afraid of night terrors, flying arrows, dreaded disease, or striking disaster. Even if everyone else is suffering, this Almighty God can keep all evil from touching you. This God promises to not only to take care of those who choose Him as their God, but also to punish those wicked people who refuse to trust in Him.

Notice the important key word “if” in v. 9 is repeated.

*IF you make the LORD your refuge, IF you make the Most High your shelter....*

This verse takes us right back to the opening theme: If we want to live in the Most High’s shelter, to rest in the Almighty’s shadow, then we have to make a choice. We have to choose the LORD as our God and make Him, not anyone or anything else our safe place. Experiencing the LORD’s protection and that of His angels from all evil, plagues, and other dangers (including fierce lions and cobras) requires the hard decision of choosing Him as our place of refuge and shelter.

D. Conclusion and Divine Reward of Human Trust: vs. 14-16

<sup>14</sup> *The Lord says, “I will rescue those who love me.  
I will protect those who trust in my name.*

<sup>15</sup> *When they call on me, I will answer;  
I will be with them in trouble.*

*I will rescue and honor them.*

<sup>16</sup> *I will reward them with a long life  
and give them my salvation.”*

In the psalm’s conclusion, the language changes again and the voice is no longer the psalmist but the LORD Himself. Here it is no longer the psalmist encouraging us that the LORD is trustworthy but God Himself makes promises: “I will rescue.... I will protect.... I will answer.... I will be with them in trouble.... I will rescue.... I will honour.... I will reward.... I will give my salvation.”

But notice these promises are reserved for who? “*I will rescue **those who love me**. I will protect **those who trust in my name**.” It is **those** people who choose to love God and **those** people who choose to trust in His name. That word “**Those**” returns us to the opening word of the psalm and its introductory thesis: “**Those** *who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*” Remember the question was who are “**those**” who get to experience the presence of God’s Almighty shadow? Now in the conclusion of the psalm we find the answer.*

The personal presence of the Highest Being, the Most Powerful One Himself is available to **those** who love Him and trust His name. In Hebrew culture, a name was a reflection of a person’s character, so to trust the Almighty’s name is to trust His character – that He will fulfill all the promises made throughout the psalm. Furthermore, note that “those” is plural – this is not for just an individual person. The psalmist is writing for the individual but also for any marriage, family, clan, community or nation, inviting any group that chooses to trust God to experience His presence and His promises.

## II. Lessons:

A. The psalm is a powerful invitation to make the Almighty God, the LORD Most High “my” God and put my trust in Him (vs. 2,14). When I choose to make Him my refuge, my safe place, then I can experience the blessing and protection that comes with a life that is hidden in God. To “find rest” is the idea of *remaining* or *abiding* in God, which has its ultimate expression in John 17. Jesus invites us to abide in Him as He abides in the Father! The psalmist is pointing towards an intimacy that Jesus develops where those who love and trust in the Almighty One can *abide, remain, dwell in,* and *experience* the personal presence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That is good news in our Covid-19 era!

B. A word of caution is necessary because if taken by itself, one could read the psalm and come to the conclusion that I can strike a bargain with God and nothing bad will

every happen to me. Such a conclusion is false and dangerous. Do bad things still happen to people that trust in God? Yes, suffering and hardship do happen to God's people. So then, we have to ask, is the psalmist making a false argument? This is a fair question and one that deserves careful understanding.

Can God keep me from Covid-19 and other diseases? Yes! Can He protect my family and me from other evils and difficulties? Yes! He can and even, at times, does send His angels to guard and keep His people. Does He *always* protect them? No, the short answer is that God does allow His people to experience suffering at times. Does this mean God is not trustworthy? No again for the Almighty One alone is God and we can trust that He will protect us *or* if we do experience suffering, He will be with us in the trouble (see v.15!).

The clearest example of this is the cross of Jesus. God did not rescue, protect, or shelter Jesus Christ from experiencing the suffering of the cross on our behalf; however, through that suffering, God brought redemption for the entire human race. Furthermore and ultimately, this Most High One is crushing and will crush Satan under our feet (read v.13 with Romans 16:20)! That is glorious news and worth remembering and sharing with others during these days.