

# Psalm 91:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

## Analysis

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**There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.** This verse presents God's protective promise to those who dwell in His secret place (v.1). The absolute language—"no evil," "no plague"—expresses comprehensive divine protection for those abiding in covenant relationship with Him.

"There shall no evil befall thee" uses *ra'ah* (רָאַחַ), meaning calamity, adversity, or harm. The Hebrew construction emphasizes the certainty of the negative: "not will happen to you evil." This echoes God's promise to Israel: "I will put none of these diseases upon thee" (Exodus 15:26). The evil encompasses moral wickedness and its consequences, physical harm, and spiritual danger. Proverbs 12:21 declares: "There shall no evil happen to the just."

"Befall" is *anah* (אָנַחַ), meaning to meet, encounter, or happen to someone. The imperfect tense indicates ongoing protection: evil will not successfully overtake or meet those under God's shadow. This doesn't mean evil never approaches—the psalm mentions pestilence, arrows, and terror (v.5-6)—but that evil will not successfully strike or overwhelm the believer.

"Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" uses *nega'* (נֶגֶּאַ), meaning stroke, plague, or affliction—often divine judgment. The same word describes Egypt's plagues (Exodus 11:1) and leprosy (Leviticus 13). God promises that judgment-plagues targeting the wicked will not reach the righteous. Exodus 12:13

foreshadows this: the Passover blood ensured "the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you."

"Come nigh" is qarav (בָּאֵךְ), to approach or draw near. Even plague's approach is forbidden to the believer's "dwelling" (ohel, tent/home). Physical household protection extends the promise beyond personal safety to family and home. During Egypt's plagues, "against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue" (Exodus 11:7)—God distinguished His people from the surrounding judgment.

"Thy dwelling" (ohel, אֹהֶל) means tent, tabernacle, or home. This evokes the wilderness tabernacle—God's dwelling among His people—and promises reciprocal protection: as God dwells with us (v.1), He protects our dwelling. The righteous man's household becomes sanctuary, a "little sanctuary" (Ezekiel 11:16) where divine protection extends to all within.

## Historical Context

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Psalm 91:10 continues the protective promises begun in verse 1, forming part of the psalm's central section (v.3-13) that catalogs specific dangers and corresponding divine protections. Ancient Near Eastern life involved constant threats: plague, warfare, wild animals, bandits, natural disasters. This verse addresses two primary fears: personal calamity ("evil befall thee") and household disease ("plague come nigh thy dwelling").

Plague was particularly dreaded in the ancient world. Without modern medicine, epidemics decimated populations. Biblical history records numerous plagues: Egypt's plagues (Exodus 7-12), plague after David's census killing 70,000 (2 Samuel 24:15), plague in the wilderness killing 14,700 (Numbers 16:49). Psalm 91:10's promise that plague would not approach the dwelling offered profound comfort.

The household protection element reflects ancient family structure. The patriarch's faithfulness extended protective covering over the entire household—wife, children, servants. Abraham's covenant covered his household (Genesis 17:12-13).

Joshua declared: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). Rahab's faithfulness saved her entire family (Joshua 6:25).

Satan's temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11) notably skipped verse 10, quoting only verses 11-12 about angels bearing Jesus up. Why? Verse 10's condition—dwelling in God's secret place, walking in His ways—exposes presumption. The protection promises apply to those abiding in covenant obedience, not those testing God through deliberate foolishness.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does the promise that 'no evil shall befall thee' square with the reality that faithful believers throughout history have suffered persecution, disease, and martyrdom?
2. What is the relationship between personal faithfulness ('he that dwelleth in the secret place,' v.1) and household protection ('thy dwelling,' v.10)?
3. How do we distinguish between faith-filled confidence in God's protection (Psalm 91:10) and presumptuous testing of God (Luke 4:9-12)?
4. What does it mean that plague will not 'come nigh' our dwelling—does this promise physical immunity, spiritual protection, or something else?
5. How did God's protection of Israelite homes during the Passover (Exodus 12:13) prefigure the spiritual protection promised in Psalm 91:10?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא	יְהִי	תָּאֵן	הַ	לֹא	לֹא	יְהִי	תָּאֵן	הַ	לֹא
H3808	<b>befall</b>	H413	<b>There shall no evil</b>	H7451	<b>thee neither shall any plague</b>	H5061		H3808	
	H579								

בְּאַתָּלָבָה יְהִי כִּי  
come nigh thy dwelling

H7126 H168

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 12:21** (Evil): There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

**Psalms 121:7** (Evil): The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

**Deuteronomy 7:15** (Evil): And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

**Romans 8:25** (Parallel theme): But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

**Job 5:24** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.