

Psalm 91:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings
shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Analysis

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust—This imagery draws from the Hebrew אֶבְרָה (evrah, pinions/feathers) and כָּנָף (kanaph, wings), depicting God as a protective mother bird sheltering her young. Jesus echoed this metaphor in Matthew 23:37, longing to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks. The tender imagery contrasts sharply with the military language that follows.

His truth shall be thy shield and buckler—The Hebrew תְּהֻןָּה (emet, truth/faithfulness) becomes defensive armor: תְּשִׁנָּה (tsinnah, large shield) and סְכָנָה (socherah, buckler/small shield). God's covenant faithfulness provides both comprehensive protection (large shield) and close-combat defense (buckler). Paul later spiritualized this in Ephesians 6:16 as the "shield of faith." The psalmist moves from nurturing imagery to battle imagery, showing God protects both tenderly and powerfully.

Historical Context

Psalm 91 is traditionally associated with Moses and the wilderness wandering, though authorship is uncertain. The imagery of divine protection would resonate with Israel's experience of God's sheltering presence during 40 years of desert vulnerability. The dual metaphors of bird and warrior reflect ancient Near Eastern royal imagery where kings were both nurturers and protectors of their people.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When have you experienced God's protection as both tender (feathers/wings) and strong (shield/buckler)?
2. How does God's *emet* (faithfulness) function as your shield in spiritual warfare today?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֶבֶרֶת וְיַ	שָׁרֵךְ	לְנֵ	וְתִמְתַּחַת	כָּנֶפֶת
thee with his feathers	He shall cover	H0	H8478	and under his wings
H84	H5526			H3671
תַּחַת הַ	אַתָּה	בְּנֵ	וְאַמְתָּהָ	
shalt thou trust	shall be thy shield	and buckler	his truth	
H2620	H6793	H5507	H571	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 57:1 (Faith): Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Psalms 61:4 (Faith): I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Psalms 17:8 (Parallel theme): Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Deuteronomy 32:11 (Parallel theme): As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

Psalms 35:2 (Parallel theme): Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

Genesis 15:1 (Parallel theme): After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Matthew 23:37 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Ruth 2:12 (Faith): The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Titus 1:2 (Parallel theme): In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Mark 13:31 (Parallel theme): Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.