

Faith Is Action

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THE SECRET PLACE



the secret place

by r.g.hardy

Our Dwelling Place

In the first book of the Bible, *Genesis*, the very first question that God put to man was to Adam in the Garden:

*“And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, **Where art thou?**”* (Genesis 3:9).

And I believe that the Holy Spirit will ask each of us today through this message, *“Child of God, **Where art thou?**”*

Where is your dwelling place? If you are child of God, then your dwelling place is *in God’s perfect love*: *“...God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him”* (1 John 4:16).

Love is your dwelling place, and in this dwelling place there is nothing to fear; for there is no fear in love: *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love”* (1John 4:18).

The child of God who is dwelling in the perfect love of God has nothing to fear. In his house of divine love, he dwells in safety, security, peace, joy, and victory. If one is a “believer” and he is not dwelling in

these, he has allowed the enemy to invade his heart and soul with fear and torment. The thing is, *he has no basis for his fear!* If he has faith and confidence in God’s love for him, *His love will drive out—cast out—all fear!*

The Psalmist understood the nature of his dwelling place, and in Psalm 90:1, he declared:

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations...” This is a place of permanency, constancy, and stability where the children of God abide, reside, habitate, and dwell in security. To dwell in God is to dwell in His love and for His love to dwell in us. Paul described in Acts 17:28: *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being...”*

The Secret Place

In Colossians 3:3, Paul described the state of the believer as being *“hid with Christ in God.”* This suggests several things: It is *a place of secrecy* where the believer is nurtured by secret spiritual springs. It is *a place of safety*, and the clause *“with Christ in God”* signifies *a double safety and protection*. This is brought out by our

Lord in John 10: 28-29:

“And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

Now most of the time, at this point in preaching this message, I pause and humorously tell the congregation: “I’m not afraid of the devil or what he says he can do to me—*Why, he can’t even find me!—I am hid with Christ in God!*” Saints, as trite as this may sound, it is the truth! I am dwelling in *the secret place*, and it is a place that *“no vulture’s eye has seen, and the lion has not trodden it”* (Job 28:7).

I am not afraid of what that old vulture, Satan, can do to me when I am dwelling in the secret place of protection and safety. Sometimes he tries to *psyche me out* by saying that Jesus has left me, but I know He hasn’t, because I can see His shadow and it assures me of his presence in my secret place:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (EL SHADDAI). I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust” (Psalm 91:1-2).

A *refuge* is a place of safety, a sanctuary when danger and destruction are in the land, or when you are being pursued by an enemy. In ancient Israel, there were certain cit-

ies of refuge where the enemy could not enter. Even if someone was worthy of death and the avenger of death was after him, if he fled to a city of refuge, the avenger could not enter in to kill him as long as he remained in that city. (Ref. Num. 35:6-32).

When the enemy comes in like a flood, I run to my place of refuge, and in that nest of God’s protective care and love, I settle down. I have no fear of the enemy, because I can see the shadow of *EL SHADDAI*, and I am hidden in His all-protecting love. He is so close to me that I can see His shadow. In fact, David speaking of his *Divine Shepherd*, confided:

“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).

There is such a valley in Palestine which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. It is a very narrow and dangerous pathway through the mountain range. There is an ever-present danger that a sheep could fall to his death, and yet the sheep are not afraid as they travel through this treacherous passage. Why? *Because the shepherd is with them!* He knows the way, and if one should stumble onto a ledge or into a crevice, with his *rod and staff* he will rescue it. There is *comfort* in this for the sheep. Note that he did not say “I will *face* no evil”—but “I will *fear* no evil”

I Will Say of the Lord

“I will say of the LORD, he is my

refuge...” The title **the LORD** is the same that God spoke to Moses at the burning bush. For forty years Moses had been keeping his father-in-law’s sheep on the back side of the mountain. I wouldn’t be afraid to say that he knew every bush and every blade of grass on that mountain, but on that day something happened in those bushes that he had never seen before!

Moses said to himself, *“I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.”* The bush was on fire, but it was not being consumed. God got in that bush, and whatever God gets into is going to get on fire, because He is the *“Spirit of burning and holiness”*! (And if He is in you and me, we will be on fire for God and holy with His righteousness!)

When Moses turned to see the bush on fire, a voice spoke out of it saying, *“I AM the God of thy father, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”*

God said that He had heard the cries of despair of His people in Egypt, and He was going to send Moses to deliver them. After his initial shock and arguing with God that he was not the right man for the job, because the people wouldn’t receive him, Moses questioned:

“WHO should I say sent me? If I tell them, ‘The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’, they are going to say ‘What is his name?’”

God answered Moses, **“I AM THAT I AM”** (Exodus 3:14).

This is equivalent to **“Jehovah, the Eternal One.”** Jehovah (YAH-

WEH) is difficult to translate into English, but the Hebrews understood it well. The sense of its meaning is: *“I will be what I was, because I AM: I AM whatever you need Me to be whenever you need Me: Thus, I place Myself in your hands.”*

This was God’s very special covenant-relationship with His people Israel. And this covenant was based on *His mercy and everlasting love*. When David declared, *“I will say of the Lord, He is...”* he was using this very same term with all the implications of God’s sure mercies to His children. Therefore, in reference to *Himself*, God declares: **I AM!** In reference to Him, the children of God declare: **HE IS!**

This is the great concept of faith in Hebrews 11:6: *“For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

David said, *“He is my refuge and my fortress”* A *refuge* is a place of hidden safety, a sanctuary, and a *fortress* is fortified against enemy attack. It is not only a secret place, but an arsenal of God’s mighty weapons of deliverance!

“...He is my God, in him will I trust.” The Hebrew word for God is **ELOHIM**, and means *“champion warrior.”* God showed Himself as the Champion Warrior to Joshua. Joshua was so startled when he saw Him with His sword drawn in His hand, that he questioned, *“Are you for us or against us?”* God answered, *“I Am the Captain of the LORD’S host.”*

It is clear that He was not an angel, because He told Joshua that he was standing on holy ground, just as He had told Moses when He appeared unto him in the burning bush. Joshua fell down and worshipped Him (Josh. 5:13-15).

He Shall Deliver

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler...” (verse 3).

Being the fox that he is, Satan is always trying to *psyche out the child of God to put fear in his heart*. Once someone opens up his heart to fear, the devil knows he’s got a foothold in the door of his heart, and he keeps pressing in with his lies and doubts, and we have already seen that *fear hath torment*. It gnaws away at your faith and fills you with despair and even dread of what might befall you. This causes your trust in God’s deliverance to waver. This is exactly what the enemy intends.

The remedy is to slap fear in the face with faith that is based on the Word of God. Somebody aptly said: **“Fear** knocked at the door. **Faith** answered: ***There was nobody there!*”**

When the disciples told Jesus that He had better not go to Jerusalem or Herod would kill Him, He replied: *“Today I am going to heal the sick, and tomorrow I am going to heal the sick, and on the third day I am going to be perfected! Now go tell that fox that I cast out devils!”* (Lk. 13:32).

David boasted of His God in time of danger and distress: *Surely he will deliver thee!* These are not just wist-

ful words of hope that David speaks, but he declares, *“Surely... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...”* (Ps. 23:6).

When I was a kid I used to go to my grandmother’s house in the country, and she had chickens in the back yard. I liked to feed them, and they would come running out all over the place to eat the seed. But that ole rooster she had didn’t like me, and he came after me the first chance he got. I was scared of him, and would take off running and hollering for my grandmother, with the rooster in hot pursuit. Now if anyone should have been scared, it should have been the rooster, because I was twice as big as he was! But he knew that I was scared of him and he would chase me all over the yard. I know now that if I had just turned around *and went after him*, he would have run for cover! It may be a simple illustration, but this is exactly how the enemy keeps some Christians bound by fear.

“The Big Bad Wolf”

Years later when God called me into the ministry, He gave me a dream along these same lines. I was out sowing the seed like I did when I was a kid, but instead of chickens, I was feeding *lambs*. He was showing me that He was going to put me into the ministry as a pastor and was going to give me some lambs and sheep to feed, *and He was going to give me something to feed them!*

(This is one confirmation that God has called someone into the min-

istry: He gives him something to minister and someone to minister to. Many who think that they are called to be pastors and teachers can't do anymore than show the people the menu and get their appetites whet, but then they can't feed them!)

I was sowing the seed (the Word), to these little lambs when all of a sudden, I became aware of an enemy intruder. When I turned to see, I saw the biggest wolf I'd ever seen, literal or imaginative. He was just as big as a grizzly and just as furious, and right away he darted after those young lambs. (And if I know the nature of the devil, and I believe I do, he is a coward who picks on the defenseless, little babies and little lambs who don't know how to quote the Scriptures and fight.)

I watched in apprehension as he made a lunge for "lamb chops", but just when he got close to them, suddenly out of no where, an electric fence came up between him and the lambs! But that ole wolf was in full motion and he couldn't stop in time. He hit that fence with full speed head first, and it was electrified. He stopped dead in his tracks as that electrical force shot through him. Drained and helpless, he looked at me in defeat while the little lambs, unaware of his presence, ate and frolicked peacefully in the grass undisturbed.

From then on I knew God has His sheep all hedged-up—all fenced-up, and they do not have to fear the big bad wolf, *but surely He will*

deliver thee from the fowler! I've seen that ole wolf come around many times shaking his head and licking his chops, but the sheep are behind the fence. Though they might not see it, it's hooked up to the Holy Ghost power plant on high, and the invisible force of Jehovah is their protector!

The dream continued: After that ole wolf cleared his head, he was so mad that he couldn't get to those sheep that he got up and *came running after me!* God had protected the sheep behind the fence, but He had left me outside of it, and the wolf saw it. He got right up to my face and opened his mouth, the biggest mouth I'd ever seen! When he did, almost instinctively, without thinking, I reached out and grabbed him by his powerful lower jaw.

Just at that time, I saw that God had put a thick, padded glove on my hand, and that wolf clamped down on it. What he didn't know was I had a hold on him and he couldn't get away! I could feel the pressure of his jaw and teeth against my hand, but the glove was so thick that he couldn't pierce it, and I felt no pain!

Then God gave me supernatural power, and I grew as big as the wolf. I picked him up like nothing. At the same time I saw a huge rough stone wall come up in front of me. I walked over to the wall, still holding that wolf by the jaw in my padded glove, and began to beat him to pieces against the rocky wall! The sheep were safe inside, and I was victorious

on the outside, kept by the power of God through faith!

God showed me that the sheep are hedged-up and He will empower His shepherds and ministers to fight the enemy. Part of the shepherd's job is to defend and protect the sheep. David testified, *"By my God I was able to deliver the sheep from the mouth of the lion and from the paw of the bear!"* And when it came time to defend Israel and fight Goliath, he didn't run in terror like his older brothers who were trained soldiers, or even Saul, head and shoulders above all.

If your trust is in God, He is going to deliver you from the snare of the fowler. This refers to the trap that the devil cunningly devises. *The fowler is a hunter who lays a snare for his prey*, but the Lord knows where the enemy lies in wait, and He will surely deliver those who have made Him their secret place!

From the Noisome Pestilence

"...And from the noisome pestilence" (vs. 3). The term for *noisome* refers to a *calamity*, and *pestilence* refers to a *plague*. God has declared and even prophesied through this vessel for many years that He would send His judgments upon the land for the sins and disobedience of the people, and He has on many levels. I especially remember almost 40 years ago when God spoke through me saying that He was going to send forth *new diseases* for which there were no known cures. It was only a

matter of weeks when the first outbreaks of what came to be known as *Legionnaires disease* broke out in Philadelphia, just 90 miles away. Then there was the discovery of the sexually-transmitted and incurable *Herpes virus*, followed by the horrible, devastating and fatal *AIDS virus*.

This is pestilence! A terrible calamity stalking the earth, especially large American cities, and what is even more catastrophic, whole regions of Africa. There are nations in Africa today that are becoming countries of orphans, because a whole generation of parents has been wiped out from this terrible disease.

David assured: *"Surely he will deliver thee from the noisome pestilence."* You see, I serve a God Who not only can keep you *out* of the lion's den, but He can stick you right in the lion's den and keep you! He not only can keep me *out* of the fiery furnace, but He can keep me if I get thrown into the fiery furnace!

He Shall Cover Thee

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler" (verse 4).

I'm not afraid of the big bad wolf or the foxy devil or the ole buzzard either! My God is like *Mamma Eagle* when she covers her little eaglets with her massive wings, and they all snuggle close to her breast where they are safe from predators and from storms that rage.

The eagle's nest is far above

where any predators can survive. No snakes, scorpions, or even any other birds live in the thick atmosphere where eagles make their nests. *They live above the snake line.* This is where the child of God lives when we are abiding under the shadow of the **EL SHADDAI!**

God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness journey stating, *"I carried you on eagle's wings"* (Ex. 19:4).

A second interpretation of the metaphor *"under His wings shalt thou trust"* (which is used often in the Psalms) refers to the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy Place. It was here that the cherubim spread their wings over the lid of atonement—the mercy seat—where God's presence was manifest. The one who puts his trust "under these wings" is putting his trust in God's presence and glory to deliver him. Truly, this is the secret place where no enemy can tread! No one can trespass the blood of Jesus which has been sprinkled on the mercy seat in Heaven! Romans 5:9 declares: *"Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

Under His feathers and pinions I am protected from all wrath: What or whom shall I fear?

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shall thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (vv. 5-8).

These four verses cover every possible calamity and threat to the child of God: Even the deadliest of enemies and misfortunes; whether at night, when many evils are operating and sickness often becomes acute, or by the assassins at work in the day, pestilence or destruction: None of these should bring fear to our hearts! Though these occur all around us, and we walk in the midst of them everyday, they will not come nigh us. The only thing we will see are the effects of these troubles upon the wicked. There is no terror for those who are abiding in the secret place of the Almighty. Regardless of what is going on around us: *"a thousand may fall on our left and ten thousand on our right, but the evil shall not come nigh our dwelling!"*

Because Thou Hast Made

Why is the child of God not afraid of these terrors and calamities? Why are we protected from the retribution of the wicked?

"...Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (vv. 9-10).

The secret is dwelling in the Secret Place! None of these things

can touch the one who has made the Lord his God and is dwelling in Him in His house of love. How can it, when he is dwelling in God? There's no sickness in God. There are no plagues in God. If we have made the Lord our habitation and our dwelling, no plague can come nigh us: It might come up to the door, but the Blood of Jesus will chase it away!

That ole wolf, Satan, *can huff and puff all he wants*: But he can't blow my house down, because I am not dwelling in this world's *straw house*, and I'm not dwelling in its *stick house*, but I am dwelling in the *Rock House*, the *secret place of the Most High*!

In Psalm 27:1 David said, "*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*" Then in verse 5 he confided: "*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me...*"

David was talking about being in the secret place—God's presence! This is the secret place of those who trust in God: "*Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence... thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion...*" (Ps. 31:20).

And in God's presence there are more blessings: "*Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance*" (Ps. 32:7).

If your trust is in the Lord and He is your refuge, there is nothing to fear and no reason for alarm. I am not going to trust in the good old

USA, and I thank God for this wonderful country! But I am not going to put my trust in government programs, its money system or shaky economy. I am keeping my faith in Jesus and His Word: *All other ground is sinking sand!*

God assures us in His Word that because we make Him our refuge and habitation: "*...He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against the stone*" (vv. 11-12).

In Psalm 34:7, we are told, "*The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*" In another verse, the Psalmist is praying for the Lord to fight against his enemies, and he cries, "*...Let the angel of the LORD chase them!*" (Ps. 35:5).

Satan Stomping Shoes

Other times, God will allow us to use His weaponry to bring the victory: "*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and adder shall thou trample under feet*" (verse 13).

Not only is God going to keep His children safe in the secret place, He is going to empower us to tread on the lion and the adder and the dragon, and give us power over all the satanic powers that these symbolize. Jesus proclaimed: "*Behold, I give you power to tread on scorpions and serpents (symbolic of Satan's deadliest form), and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing,*

shall by any means, hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Paul boldly assured in Rom. 16:20: "*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...*" Hallelujah! Our feet are "*shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*" (Eph. 6:15), and the Gospel "*is the power of God unto salvation!*" (Rom. 1:16).

This is God's promise to those who have made Him their dwelling place and who have placed their unconditional trust in Him, and who keep themselves in the love of God:

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I shall answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation" (verses 14-16).

God is going to show me His salvation in His secret place. When trouble comes, He will be with me, because when I call Him, He will answer me! Not only this, but If I honor Him and revere His Name, He

will honor me and set me on high, just like He did Mordecai when the enemy set the snare to take his life. God not only delivered Mordecai from death, but He made his enemy Haman clothe him with the king's robes and ring, and lead him through the city in royal procession and honor. *Then in true Bible irony, He hung Haman on his own scaffold!*

God has promised to satisfy His children with a *long life of victory, health, security, deliverance, and salvation: **What a retirement plan!*** A lot of folks today are looking for "*a piece of the rock*" for security. Friend, **I am dwelling in the Rock!** He is my permanent dwelling place; not the beggarly elements of this passing world! I am hid with Him in *the Secret Place*, and no matter where I am, He is there; for He is my habitation—my house, and I am like a turtle: **I take my house with me wherever I go!**

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, even forevermore" (Psalm 121:8). **Psalm 91** is not only a favorite of mine, but has become a petition I

HEBRAISMS IN THE PSALMS

By Sharon Hardy Knotts

offer to the Lord daily on behalf of my family. Closely linked to it is **Psalm 121**, which I also incorporate in my prayer.

Both Psalms utilize Hebrew figures of speech called *merisms*, which is the combining of two metaphors (comparisons) that convey opposite extremes. For instance Psalm 91:5 states:

*“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror **by night**; nor for the arrow that flieth **by day**.”*

By offering two extremes—*night and day*—it takes in everything in between! It “covers all bases,” so to speak, and so the totality of the circumstance is meant. The basic meaning we are given is, “*God has you covered night and day, and you do not have to fear anything at any time!*” Not the terrors, nightmares, sickness, loneliness, attacks that may confront us in the dark hours of the night—Nor the violence and attacks that may come in the course of daily life and our walk of faith day by day.

The *merism* is also employed in verse 6: “*Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day.*” Again we have the extremes of *dark-*

ness vs. *noon*, when the sun is at its highest. God’s assurance is that He will protect us 24/7! We see the same pattern in Psalm 121:

*“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. **The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.** The Lord shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve **thy going out and thy coming in** from this time forth, and even for evermore.”*

In verse 7 we have the summation of the whole Psalm: “*The Lord shall preserve thee from **all** evil!*”! Verses 6 & 8 contain the *merisms* that express this: Be it evil from the *sun by day or the moon by night*, or in *thy going out and thy coming in*—This means everything in between! At all times and in all places, He shall preserve thee—even forevermore!

So what you and I are to do when evil comes is to lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence comes our help! This

is a reference to the House of God situated on Mt. Zion, surrounded by the mountains of Jerusalem. In other words, we look to God, our Creator, knowing He never slumbers or sleeps! It doesn't matter to God. It's all the same to Him, and *He is our keeper 24/7!*

NIGHT TERRORS

It is in the night, however, that bad things seem more frightening, and when Satan often attacks through nightmares, fears, even physical pain, especially when you are battling a sickness or infirmity in your body. This is what Job experienced. He said, *"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up"* (Job 4:13-15).

This is *terror by night*, and I have experienced this many times, even from childhood. But after I injured my spine over 25 years ago, these incidents increased and became more overwhelming. (I share in more detail these experiences on my CD *Terror by Night*.) This took a heavy toll on my already weakened body and left me in more pain, shaken, and spiritually drained. Many times I would wake myself up yelling, *"The Blood of Jesus is against you! You can't trespass the Blood!"* Then the "thing" would be broken and the atmosphere would clear, and I would have peace. Once I woke up saying, *"I'm saved! I'm beautiful, and I'm full of the Holy Ghost!"* (I actually don't remember saying this,

but Benny heard me.)

Often I would lie awake the rest of the night afraid to go back to sleep. The next day I was tired and depressed—Just what Satan wanted. Sleep deprivation is a major cause of many sicknesses, and I was in a vicious cycle, because the enemy took advantage of my back injury. I was ruled by fear and did not take authority over the enemy like I should have. I finally realized that the devil does not fight fair—He attacks when you're most vulnerable, and this includes when you are sleeping. I began to fight back with boldness. As soon as I felt that presence, even half-asleep, I took authority over it in Jesus' Name. Sometimes the intensity would let up, but if I still felt an uneasiness in my spirit, I would continue to rebuke the enemy until it lifted. Then I would add, *"And don't come back!"*

Gradually, the attacks became less frequent and weaker. Now they are very infrequent, because I know I am guarded and protected by God's vigilant angelic ministers, and I take seriously God's watchfulness and the authority I have because of the blood of Jesus and the word of my testimony (Ref. Rev. 12:11). Now rather than being terrified, I become indignant that the enemy disrupted my sleep!

I encourage you. if you or anyone you know is experiencing a similar problem, this message is a great source of both inspiration and information on how to face and defeat *The Terror By Night*.