



RCC Phoenix – 2.21.21 – Accepting God’s Protection

For Christians the equation is simple, pray to God and ask him for protection, have faith, and God will protect. If this is the simple truth then why does harm befall so many faithful people? Why do righteous men and women who have devoted themselves to God suffer many terrible tragedies? Is this a lack of faith? Is this a lack of God even hearing our cry for protection? Or have we simply lost sight of what protection is? In order to best understand his protection, we must look at what God wants for us on a less superficial level and understand exactly what he wants for our protection.

1. What are we being protected from?

The simple answer is _____. Satan masquerades himself in all different forms and prowls around us looking for occasion to strike at us.

1 Peter 5: 8 *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

The scripture does not accidentally use metaphors. A lion is chosen to represent Satan because of its ability to move silently, strike quickly, and kill with accuracy. Lions have the ability to disguise themselves in the tall grass, flatten their bodies to blend in with their surroundings and wait until their prey’s guard is completely down before attacking. This is how the devil moves in our lives and his tools and abilities of destruction are honed to _____.

In this scripture Peter is telling us that bad things can and will befall us such as they do to all believers but he quantifies this suffering by saying, “after you have suffered a little while,”

assuring us that this suffering will end and God will restore us. This scripture is not a promise that we won't hurt, it is a promise that Satan will not have the _____

2. What does God's protection look like?

God's protection does not just extend to the works of the devil and the works of the flesh. The scripture tells us that God is there protecting us throughout all we may experience.

Psalms 91 *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. 3 Surely, he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. 12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. 14 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. 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. 16 With long life will I satisfy him and shew him my salvation.*

This scripture shows us that God's protection is _____. God is our fortress, a quite literal place to hide. A fortress that does not deteriorate, that does not decompose. This scripture promises us a victory over our enemy if we remain within that fortress.

However, this entire scripture would seem to counter what Peter said about believers around the world going through suffering. Psalms 91 paints a picture of God protecting us through everything, not even stumbling over a rock, but If we look through the layers of Psalms 91 and 1

Peter 5, we will see they actually reinforce each other and the truth that God is protecting us. Peter states that the devil is as a lion looking for someone to devour and Psalms 91:13 says through God we will tread upon that lion and he will be crushed beneath our feet. Both scriptures confirm the existence of the lion (the devil) but through God's protection we will overcome him. That is the point of both scriptures.

Then Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

This question has been debated by theologians and biblical scholars since man's existence, and the most appropriate and evidence supported answer is, we don't know? Is our suffering a chance to strengthen our faith? Is it God teaching us a lesson in humility? Is it to teach us humility? Is it random acts of nature coinciding with the probability of an individual being in a particular place at a particular time? To question this is to question the intentions and design of God. According to Paul, he found comfort that his suffering was a chance to receive God's grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

This would certainly reinforce both the scriptures in Peter and Psalms as Paul admits he is suffering but also tells us that God's power is amplifying through that weakness and he is delivered through the power of God as is talked about in Psalms 91.

When we consider the question of why do bad things happen to good people, we have to stop looking at it through human mind and start considering what God's protection means as a

_____.

The deliverances that are talked about in Psalms 91 are not the protection from physical harm, though God can certainly provide that, but protection of our soul. Not allowing our enemies to set stumbling blocks in the way of our righteous walk, not allowing us to fall to the disease and pestilence of the world's influence, not being afraid of the arrows our enemies throw to try and kill our joy, the thousands that fall by our sides are the unbelievers that refused God but not us, not the protected. We are lifted up by the angels when we struggle, and God heals us with his

power and love. We must commit to our hearts that our _____ is of much more value than our _____.

Suffering can and will befall us. God hears our prayers; he sees our faith but does allow the suffering to come our way. It is this time that we must remember the promises of **1 Peter 5, 10** *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. This is the definition of God's protection.* When suffering will befall us, we can rest assured that if our love and faith is stored up in the fortress of God our very soul is protected against all things and God's grace will restore us to a stronger, better version than we were before.

Knowing these things, will you accept God's protection?

A Prayer for protection: *Dear Lord in heaven, we know you see us and hear us and that your protection is surrounding us right now. We thank you for being our protector. We know the devil is always in wait and his prize is our very soul. We pray you thwart the enemy and drive him beneath our feet. We pray you protect us from his deceit, his cunning, his attractiveness and his lies. We pray that your angels lift us up in times of discouragement and that the world lay not stumbling blocks before our feet. We pray for our physical protection that you keep us free from sickness, and suffering and from any harm that should seek us but as always through your will not ours, and may we remember that our soul is firmly protected in your fortress from this day to eternity. With our love and through Jesus's name, Amen.*