

GOD PROVIDES OUR PROTECTION

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God's promised Protection is a weapon which He has placed in our hands to use against all the stratagems of the devil. If a man went out to war and would forget to take his gun, he would not be of much use in the army.

Well, it is surprising how many Christians leave their weapon at home (the late Pastor said), and they endeavor to fight and win over the enemy without it. God has an armor for His people, and He says that if we will use that armor and do as He says with it, not one attack of the enemy will be able to reach us. If that is true and it certainly is, it surely is very important for us to use that armor.

God says that every fiery dart, every spiritual dart, every physical dart, every disease cough, or cold, every ache or pain will never get in, if we use the means that God has placed at our disposal.

Suppose one of our children would go out in the slush in the winter without overshoes, and you had warned them to wear boots, (assuring them that the boots would protect their shoes), but they persisted in going without them and got into a puddle and water over their shoe tops. Then they would call for someone to bring them the overshoes; but what good would the overshoes do at that time?

Think about how many Christians wait until they get into a spiritual, physical, or financial difficulty, before they call for a deliverance from God? But God has planned that each day we may put on His armor, so that Satan cannot lay the weight of his finger on us for that day. God has promised us one day's protection at a time; He does not promise to give us enough today to last through tomorrow (or through next week); but He does promise to give us one day's supply at a time

(and He wants us to turn in faith to Him each day, to receive of His Promise. It is as we are told in the book of Deuteronomy, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." A writer once wrote a poem, and in that poem, it says, "Lord, for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray, but keep me, Lord, just for today."

What a valuable lesson for us to learn--that we do not depend on the help and protection we had yesterday; neither can we depend on what we had last week, but we must depend on a living, resurrected Jesus Christ just for today! What wonderful deliverance that brings! And how close it brings us to God and the Blood of Christ; and, how clean that enables our lives to be!

Naturally speaking, we would like to have deliverance that could be stored up; and that we could once receive a touch of that, and then be packed up and prepared for Heaven; always being a kind of "goody-good" person and receive a through ticket for Heaven all at once. Then we could take it easy. But the person who realizes that they must depend each day on a present and living Christ, and that they must meet right up to the mark; they are the ones who will find themselves living a real Christian life. It is a valuable place in life to be compelled to live by faith and it has an Eternal Reward!

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that every righteous person would have to 'live by FAITH'. So, just what is faith? Faith simply means trusting in an unseen God through His written Word and depending on the Blood of Christ in the present moment. It means not to live one moment in the past nor one moment in the future, but just in the present moment in the presence of the living God. As a matter of fact, faith cannot be exercised in the past, because anything that is past has become past knowledge. Neither can faith be exercised in the future. That would be impossible, because where there is no risk, there can be no faith.

We could offer to lend a person one thousand dollars next week and it would not require any faith, because the time of need had not yet arrived. And we might have perfect confidence in their word to pay it back. However, when the next week arrived and they came and asked us for that one thousand dollars without security, then at that time we would have to have that much faith in them.

Then our faith would have to be exercised in the present moment. Therefore, people who say

they have faith to believe they are going to Heaven, because they have had a change of heart in the past, it is just a delusion.

The real questions are these: What am I today? What am I trusting in today? Am I trusting God today? What am I able to trust God for? If God calls me home or if Jesus comes, the matter of most importance will be, not what I trusted God for in the past—but what I am trusting Him for this day (spiritually, physically, financially, or otherwise). We need to understand the importance of our living 'one day at a time' (with our trust centered on God alone).

[A true Christian life of faith and trust can be expressed in one sentence, which is, "Where is my Place of Trust?" We do not want to hear Jesus say, "I never knew you: begone from me, you doers of wickedness."(He warned us, Matt.7:23).]

The reason God holds us to one day at a time, is that He knows if He stored us up with blessings, then He would never see us again until it was all gone (and perhaps not see us then). His object in this then, is to keep us close to Him, and our having to trust for one day at a time, would compel us to stay near Him, 'Who' is the source of our life. It is necessary to have that close union and contact with Him, because our supplies must come (moment by moment) from Him, just as we need them.

God's plan for our Protection is one of watchfulness and prayer. Watching and Praying ahead (in advance), which means we are to pray for our protection each day and in a very special manner (before we have any signs of attack). That would be especially so, when those of the world fear that there is an epidemic, or when a disease seems to be rampant and sweeping humanity into eternity (and with many people being unprepared for eternity). We are given an illustration of this in the book of Matthew, where it says that they 'consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him.'

Jesus knew what was going to happen. He knew that the powers of darkness were gathering around Him, also that He was to be arrested, and a crown of thorns placed on His head. And, that He was to be beaten, mocked, spit upon, ridiculed, and finally nailed to the Cross after an unjust trial. And then hung on a Cross for six hours alive, until His last drop of blood was spent. Jesus knew it

would take more than any human being could ever withstand, to go thru this ordeal.

As far as the disciples were concerned, He knew that when this would happen their faith would fail (as it were); that they would flee when their Leader would be killed, because their faith would not grasp that He was the real Son of God; hence, at this 'critical hour'. He told them to "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Again, God's plan for our Protection is one of watchfulness and prayer. Watching and Praying ahead (in advance) against Satan's plans.

Peter did not in the least way suspect, that Satan was within forty miles of them. He never dreamed that the 'hosts of darkness' were gathering so close to them and their Leader (to take Him from them). So, he answered that he, at least, would go thru with Jesus, and that nothing nor nobody would hinder him.

We all know it is very encouraging to speak about Daniel in the lion's den; or the Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace, and how God so miraculously delivered them; and Mordecai seeing his own gallows being built; but when one of us comes up against the power of Satan in this world, and our life is at stake, it is another and a different proposition than we have had to face before. So, Peter, when questioned at the trial, about his being a follower of this Nazarene (Jesus), he said: "I never knew Him." It takes a circumstance like that to prove what caliber or what brand, our own 'heart attitude' really is; whether it is only shallow, or whether it is the kind the people (true Christians) had in Bible times. If it is only shallow, we will run at the first attack of Satan; but if it is of the old, first-century Bible quality of Truth, we will stand true to God even at the cost of our lives. We will not be taken one inch out of God's will, whether it would mean life or death.

In their case, the disciples were entering a warfare without having put on the whole armor of God; thus, Jesus told them to watch and pray, lest they enter-into-temptation. And Jesus gave them an example to follow. He was out in the garden alone, with perspiration falling like drops of blood, as He wrestled with the powers of darkness; but He (watched and prayed ahead as He had told His disciples to do), as He had a heart-to-heart talk with God. And as a result, He was strengthened. He was enabled to go thru that great trial and to glorify His Father in answer to that prayer and

watchfulness (as He instructed each one of us to do). The angels of Heaven came down to strengthen and enable Him to go thru without a tremor; to be nailed to the Cross, and the only comment He made was: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It was the spiritual strength received in that garden from His Father (Who wants us to let Him be our Father) that enabled Him to go thru that distress and still pray for those who were crucifying Him to His death. The disciples were sleeping and taking it easy, according to the flesh. And when the test came, and a little maid accused Peter of being one of Jesus' followers, Peter denied Him three times. And the third time it was with an oath, saying that he never knew Jesus the Christ.

But later on, after the descent of the Holy Spirit to earth, Peter was not afraid to acknowledge Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master, and he stood before several thousand people and preached the Word boldly (that Gospel Message for our Salvation). Why?? Because he had then learned to watch and pray ahead before Satan can attack us, as His Word instructs us to do (and as this message is titled "God Provides Our Protection".)

The disciples prayed together, they were of one accord and they waited at the appointed place, where Jesus had told them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit, and in answer to their united prayers and supplications there came that mighty rushing wind 'from Heaven and the Holy Ghost took possession of them, and all the evil imps in Hell could not make Peter flinch; nothing in earth or Hell could stand against him; prison had no terror, even death had no power to make him tremble. Peter went through okay, (although it was a little later than it should have been.) So, God's plan is that we are to watch and pray ahead, holding up the precious Blood of Christ as the purchased price. Because the writer to the Hebrews tells us that the Word of God is full of life and power. So, if we believe it and obey it as we are told, and watch and pray ahead as the Word directs, we can go from victory to victory spiritually, physically, and financially. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, (Matthew 26:41)

In Psalm 91:4, Moses gave us the same thought, He says-"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his; wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

That means trusting in God alone and in nobody else, no other human being. The thought is like a mother hen looking after her little chicks. She does not call upon another chicken to help her, she can take care of those chicks herself. Well, if that hen can handle her job, I am sure God can handle His. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."

And when he said that "his truth shall be thy shield and buckler, he meant that God's Word is to be our armor, our shield. In older times warriors always carried a shield, which they held up in front of them, to ward off the attacks of their enemies. The real thought is that we are to take the 'Word of God' and place it between us and Satan, so that he cannot get thru. There is no disease that can get thru that shield 'the Word of God', even death itself cannot get thru, until our work is finished and our life is ended here on earth, Satan may try to pile up many things, but there is not a disease devised by Satan which can get thru God's armor, His 'precious Word'.

What a fortress, what an armor-plate it is! We have heard about highly-tested armor plate made by the steel manufacturers, but the 'Word of God' is an armor plate which nothing invented by men, or demons, can pass through.

Apostle Paul when writing to the Ephesians says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."(Ephes.6:16).

That means that our 'shield of faith' is to believe that the Word means what it says, and the moment we pray for protection, and the moment we 'believe' that Word, at that moment we have the power of God in front of us, and all around us. And it will quench all the fiery darts of the evil one; all his spiritual darts, all his physical darts, his darts of every kind.

God has provided that 'shield of faith' armor, for each one of us to claim and use against Satan and his agents!

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