

God Protects His People

God protects his people

[JOSHUA, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *He continually protected us as we traveled and when we passed through nations.* JOSHUA 24:17B NET

God is a refuge for his people

He [David] said, *“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, ³my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence.* 2 SAMUEL 22:2-3 ESV

God guards his people

Look! The one who is guarding Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. ⁵The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade at your right side. ⁶The sun will not ravage you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD will guard you from all evil, preserving your life. ⁸The LORD will guard your goings and comings, from this time on and forever. PSALMS 121:4-8 ISV

God protects his people from all evil – including Satan

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.* PSALMS 23:4 ESV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:3 NET

God will protect his people until the end

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] *God’s power protects you through your faith until salvation is shown to you at the end of time.* 1 PETER 1:5 NCV™

God protects his faithful people from spiritual harm throughout their lives, bringing their salvation to fruition at the end of the age.

Pray for persecuted Christians

CHAPTER 19

God’s Care of His People

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I. God's Saving of His People

See also: *13. Salvation through Jesus Christ*, p. 217

God has the capacity to save his people always – no matter what the circumstances. Thus God can save his people from all things – and ultimately he does. The Bible contains both examples of God saving his people and promises of him continuing to do so.

In reading this chapter about God's saving his people, bear in mind that the Bible also speaks of God's people experiencing sufferings common to all people (cf. *39. Hard Times*, p. 325) and also persecution for their faith (cf. *40. Persecution*, p. 333). God can and does save and preserve his people, but also does allow or even ordain difficult experiences for his people – often for reasons that may not be clear.

Promises given in the OT of God saving and preserving his people are still very much relevant under the new covenant – as is reflected in a number of NT passages. But they are more applicable in a spiritual sense – in keeping with the greater spiritual nature of the second covenant in contrast to the often more tangible aspects of the first covenant.

God's Capacity to Save His People

God is able to save his people – no matter what the odds

[SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO TO KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR:] *If you throw us into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from the furnace. He will save us from your power, O king.* DANIEL 3:17 NCV™

Nothing can prevent the LORD from delivering, whether by many or by a few. 1 SAMUEL 14:6B NET

God has mighty power to save his people

The LORD your God is with you; *the mighty One will save you.* ZEPHANIAH 3:17A NCV™

God provides for all their needs – they will not lack anything

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM:] *And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:19 NET

Then Jesus said to them [his disciples], *“When I sent you out with no money bag, or traveler's bag, or sandals, you didn't lack anything, did you?” They replied, “Nothing.”* LUKE 22:35 NET

God Strengthens His People

God strengthens his people when they are weak

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. ISAIAH 40:30-31 ESV

God strengthens his people in the face of adversity

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *You give me strength for battle; you make my foes kneel before me.* PSALMS 18:39 NET

[PAUL:] *At my first defense no one appeared in my support; instead they all deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed for all the Gentiles to hear. And so I was delivered from the lion's mouth!* 2 TIMOTHY 4:16-17 NET

Note that in Paul's letters “Lord” is generally understood to be a reference to Jesus Christ.

God strengthens them spiritually, until Christ's return

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *You are being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, so that you might patiently endure everything with joy ...* COLOSSIANS 1:11 ISV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:8 NET

II. God's Preservation of His People

As with verses which speak of God's saving of his people, verses which speak of God's preservation of his people are amongst the best-loved verses in the Bible. They contain some of the Bible's great promises, which reassure us when we wonder if God has "lost our address". As such they provide good reason for God's people to trust in him and be at peace.

God Meets His People's Needs

God cares for his people

The LORD is good; he protects his people in times of trouble; *he takes care of those who turn to him.* NAHUM 1:7 GNT

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Turn all your anxiety over to God because he cares for you.* 1 PETER 5:7 GW

Note that this subsection points to the overall theme of this chapter. As such it is reflected in and pertinent to the whole chapter.

God meets his people's physical needs even in harsh situations

[LEVITES, TO GOD:] *For forty years you sustained them. Even in the desert they never lacked anything. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.* NEHEMIAH 9:21 NET

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.* PSALMS 23:5 ESV

Even amidst adversaries, God provided for David – as implied by "prepare a table [feast] before me" and "my cup overflows".

God satisfies his people's spiritual hunger and thirst

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. MATTHEW 5:6 NET

Jesus said to them, *"I am the bread of life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.* JOHN 6:35 NET

Then *with his mighty power he led them out* [of captivity in Egypt], ... ACTS 13:17B CEV

God does not need to use any other means but himself

[GOD:] But I will show pity to the people of Judah. *I will save them, but not by using bows or swords, horses or horsemen, or weapons of war. I, the LORD their God, will save them.* HOSEA 1:7 NCV™

Here God speaks of saving his people by no other power but himself.

God Saves His People – from All Things

God is the Savior of his people

[DAVID, TO GOD:] Guide me in your truth, and teach me, *my God, my Savior.* I trust you all day long. PSALMS 25:5 NCV™

God saves his people out of all troubles

[DAVID:] I sought the LORD's help and he answered me; *he delivered me from all my fears.* ⁵Those who look to him for help are happy; their faces are not ashamed. ⁶This oppressed man cried out and the LORD heard; *he saved him from all his troubles.* ... ¹⁷The godly cry out and the LORD hears; *he saves them from all their troubles.* ... ¹⁹*The godly face many dangers, but the LORD saves them from each one of them.* PSALMS 34:4-6, 17, 19 NET

[PAUL:] However, the Lord stood by me and gave me strength so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the gentiles could hear it. *I was rescued out of a lion's mouth.* ¹⁸*The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will take me safely to his heavenly kingdom.* Glory belongs to him forever and ever! Amen. 2 TIMOTHY 4:17-18 ISV

Christ had rescued Paul from physical danger (v. 17) – in fact he had done so many times (cf. 3:11). However in light of vv. 6-8 which indicate that Paul's death was near, it appears that in v. 18 Paul is not this time referring to a physical rescue but a spiritual one – where the Lord would bring him "safely to his heavenly kingdom".

God sets his people free from things that imprison

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant and the son of your female servant. *You have freed me from my chains.*

PSALMS 116:16 NCV™

God's saving of his people makes known that he is the only God

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *Or has any god ever tried to come and take one nation away from another for himself? The LORD your God used his mighty hand and powerful arm to do this for you in Egypt. He did this using plagues, miraculous signs, amazing things, and war. He did his great and awe-inspiring deeds in front of you. ³⁵You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God. There is no other god.* DEUTERONOMY 4:34-35 GW

God Helps His People against Enemies

God consistently helps his people

God is our refuge and strength, *an ever-present help in times of trouble.* PSALMS 46:1 GW

[PAUL:] *I have experienced help from God to this day ...* ACTS 26:22A NET

God helps his people by delivering them from enemies

The LORD helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from evil men and delivers them, for they seek his protection. PSALMS 37:40 NET

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] So we can say with confidence, *“The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”* HEBREWS 13:6 NET

For God fights for his people, giving victory over enemies

[Jahaziel, a Levite]: “Pay attention, all you people of Judah, residents of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says to you: ‘Don’t be afraid and don’t panic because of this huge army! *For the battle is not yours, but God’s. ... ¹⁷You will not fight in this battle. Take your positions, stand, and watch the LORD deliver you,* O Judah and Jerusalem. Don’t be afraid and don’t panic! Tomorrow march out toward them; the LORD is with you!’” ... ²²When they began to shout

and praise, *the LORD suddenly attacked the Ammonites, Moabites, and men from Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. ... ²⁹All the kingdoms of the surrounding lands were afraid of God when they heard how the LORD had fought against Israel’s enemies.* 2 CHRONICLES 20:15B, 17, 22, 29 NET

God enables his people to overcome all that is in the world

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] What then shall we say about these things? *If God is for us, who can be against us? ... ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... ³⁷No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us!* ROMANS 8:31, 35, 37 NET

Verse 31b implies that if God is for us then no one can effectively oppose us. In all adversity we have complete victory through Christ (v. 37).

God's people are enabled to overcome Satan

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I have written to you, young people, that you are strong, and *the word of God resides in you, and you have conquered the evil one.* 1 JOHN 2:14B NET

The reference to the word of God living in these believers suggests that it played a significant role in them overcoming Satan. As such this points to God enabling his people to overcome Satan.

Pray for persecuted Christians