

# The **Bible** Unpacked

## **Comprehensive Study Series**

The Bible's teaching compiled  
for established believers

Paul Mallison



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## **Comprehensive Study Series**

The Bible's teaching compiled  
for established believers

### **19. God's Care of His People**

Paul Mallison

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## A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who lead the Israelites and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net).

**Users are asked to pray regularly for persecuted Christians** and, if possible, support them financially. These things can be done through organizations that provide aid to them and/or prayer notices, such as those listed under [Persecuted Christians](#).

## Suggestions for Study Groups

### Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

### Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

### General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
  - (a) how you relate to God and/or to other people; or
  - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?





# I. God's Saving of His People

See also:

- 13. *Salvation through Jesus Christ*

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 numerous examples of God saving his people and promises of him continuing to do so.

In reading this chapter about God's saving and preservation of his people, one should bear in mind that the Bible also speaks of God's people experiencing sufferings common to all people (cf. 39. *Hard Times*); and also persecution for their faith (cf. 40. *Persecution*). 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. As such we should bear in mind C. H. Spurgeon's words: "It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord...Ill to him is no ill, but only good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach his honour, death is his gain". (See also the introductory comment under *God saves them out of all troubles*, ch. 19.)

## a) God's Capacity to Save His People

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

**DAN 3:17** [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.* NCV™

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

**God has mighty power to save his people . . .**

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

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

**. . . God can perform awesome deeds to save them**

**DEUT 26:8** [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] Therefore *the LORD brought us out of Egypt with tremendous strength and power, as well as with great awe-inspiring signs and wonders.* NET

**DAN 6:27** [KING DARIUS, SPEAKING OF GOD:] *He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.* ESV

The implication is that God can perform "signs and wonders" in delivering people, as he did in saving Daniel.

**God does not need to use any other means but himself to save his people**

**HOS 1:7** [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.* NCV™

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

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**Note: Salvation belongs to God – for he is the only savior**

**JONAH 2:9** *Salvation belongs to the LORD!* NET

**ISA 43:11** I, I am the LORD, and *besides me there is no savior.* ESV

In saying that salvation belongs to God and that he is the only savior, the Bible implies that though salvation or deliverance from trouble may take different forms, ultimately God is behind it.

Does God still perform awesome deeds to save people today? Do you know of any?

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What does the fact that God does not need to use any other means but himself to save mean for his people?

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How should believing that God is always able to save, affect the way we act and think?

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## b) God Saves His People – from All Things

### God is the Savior of his people

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

### God saves them out of all troubles

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

**2Tim 4:17–18** [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.* <sup>18</sup>*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. 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 saves his people from all their enemies

**2Ki 17:39** Instead you [the Israelites] must worship the LORD your God; then *he will rescue you from the power of all your enemies.* NET

**2Chr 32:22** *The LORD delivered Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the other nations. He made them secure on every side.* NET

**On delivering them, God may even honor his people**

**Ps 91:15** [GOD, SPEAKING OF ONE WHO LOVES HIM:] When he calls out to me, I will answer him. I will be with him when he is in trouble; *I will rescue him and bring him honor.* NET

**Note: God is the light of his people, giving them light . . .**

**Ps 27:1A** [DAVID:] *The LORD is my light and my salvation.* GW

**Ps 118:27A** *The LORD is our God, and he has given us light!* CEV

OT verses that speak of God giving light to his people generally use "light" to represent that which extends from God's favor, such as salvation and well-being (cf. *NIV Study Bible*). By such things, metaphorically speaking the darkness of one's circumstances is turned to light.

**. . . God gives them light even in the midst of darkness**

**JOB 29:3** [JOB:] *God's lamp shined on my head, and I walked through darkness by his light.* NCV™

**MIC 7:8** [ISRAEL:] My enemies, do not gloat over me! Though I have fallen, I will get up. *Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.* NET

Even with all the wonderful promises in the Bible, dreadful things still happen to some of God's people. Why do you think this is so?

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In what way are promises made under the Old Covenant that God would rescue Israel from all her enemies (cf. 2Ki 17:39) applicable to Christians today?

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Is there any "darkness" in your life for which you experience or need God's "light"? How do we access God's "light"?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## c) God Redeems His People

See also:

- c) *Jesus Christ's Death and Redemption from Sin*, Ch. 13

God redeems his people from adversity in that he rescues them and sets them free from it.

### God is the Redeemer of his people . . .

**ISA 47:4** [ISRAEL:] *Our Redeemer—the LORD of hosts is his name—is the Holy One of Israel.* ESV

### . . . God redeems his people

**Ps 34:22** *The LORD redeems the lives of his servants; and none of those who trust in him will be held guilty.* ISV

**ISA 43:1** But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for *I have redeemed you*; I have called you by name, you are mine.” ESV

### God redeems his people from enemies

**JER 31:11** *For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.* ESV

### God sets them free from suffering and things that imprison

**LUKE 13:10–13** Now he [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, “and a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up completely. <sup>12</sup>When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said, “*Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.*” <sup>13</sup>*Then he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.* NET

**Ps 116:16** [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.* NCV™

**God will redeem his people from death**

**Hos 13:14A** [GOD:] *From the power of Sheol I will rescue them, from death I will redeem them. O death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction?* ISV

**Note: God vindicates his people**

**Ps 135:14** *For the LORD vindicates his people,* and has compassion on his servants. NET

To vindicate someone is to clear them from blame; one could say it means to free or redeem from blame.

Is there anything that you need God to set you free from? What can you do to receive his help?

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What does "redeem" mean? And in what way/s does God redeem his people?

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What is the connection between "ransomed" and "redeemed" (Jer 31:11) – and how are they seen in Jesus Christ's work?

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## d) God Helps His People against Enemies

### God helps his people in need, including against enemies

**Ps 121:1–2** [A PSALMIST:] I look up toward the hills. *From where does my help come? <sup>2</sup>My help comes from the LORD, the Creator of heaven and earth!* NET

Help against enemies would appear to be at least partially in view here (cf. v. 7).

### God consistently helps his people in need

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

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

### God helps his people by delivering them from enemies

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

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

### God helps his people defeat enemies

**Ps 118:7** *The LORD is with me to help me, so I will see my enemies defeated.* NCV™

### For God fights for his people, giving victory over enemies

**2CHR 20:15, 17, 22, 29** He [Jahaziel, a Levite] said: “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. ... <sup>17</sup>You 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!’*” ... <sup>22</sup>When 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.* ... <sup>29</sup>All the

kingdoms of the surrounding lands were afraid of God when they heard how *the LORD had fought against Israel's enemies*. NET

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

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

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 enables his people to overcome Satan**

**1JN 2:14b** [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*. NET

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

What troubles with adversaries have you had in which God has helped you?

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In what sense are battles confronting us not ours, but God's (cf. 2Chr 20:15)?

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What "victory" is Paul speaking of in Rom 8:37. How is it applicable in your life?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## e) God Is Revealed in Saving His People

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See also:

- d) *God's Judgment Reveals God*, Ch. 10

### **God's saving of his people makes known his salvation to the nations**

**ISA 52:9–10** Break out into shouts of joy, ruins of Jerusalem. *The LORD will comfort his people. He will reclaim Jerusalem.* <sup>10</sup>*The LORD will show his holy power to all the nations. All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.* GW

This speaks of future deliverance for Jerusalem, in which God would demonstrate his holy power, causing all nations to see his salvation (v. 10).

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

**DEUT 4:34–35** [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.* <sup>35</sup>*You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God. There is no other god.* GW

### **God's saving of his people reveals God's great power**

**PS 106:8** *Yet he delivered them for the sake of his reputation, that he might reveal his power.* NET

This refers to God delivering Israel from the Egyptians.

### **God's saving of his people reveals God's glory**

**ISA 44:23B** *The LORD saved the people of Jacob! He showed his glory when he saved Israel.* NCV™

**God's saving of his people evidences God's love and faithfulness**

**Ps 57:3** [DAVID:] *He will answer from heaven and save me; he will defeat my oppressors. God will show me his constant love and faithfulness.* GNT

**God's saving of his people shows God's holiness and righteousness**

**EZEK 28:25** This is what the Lord God says: *I will gather the people of Israel from the nations where they are scattered. I will show my holiness when the nations see what I do for my people. Then they will live in their own land—the land I gave to my servant Jacob.* NCV™

**Ps 98:2** *The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.* ESV

In what way/s has God revealed himself that you are aware of?

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What is the "glory" of God spoken of in Isa 44:23b (in *God's saving of his people reveals God's glory*)? And how was it shown by God saving Israel?

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What evidence have you seen of God's "constant love and faithfulness" (Ps 57:3)?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## **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.

## a) God Meets His People's Needs

Note that the first subsection below points to the overall theme of this chapter. As such it is reflected in and pertinent to the whole chapter, not just this section.

### God cares for his people

**ZEC 10:3b** *The LORD of Armies takes care of his flock, the people of Judah. He makes them like his splendid war horse.* <sup>GW</sup>

**1PET 5:6–7** [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand <sup>7</sup>by casting all your cares on him because *he cares for you.* <sup>NET</sup>

### God sustains his people

**Ps 3:5** [DAVID:] I lay down and slept; I woke again, for *the LORD sustained me.* <sup>ESV</sup>

### God meets his people's physical needs

**PROV 10:3** *The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.* <sup>ESV</sup>

**1TIM 6:17** [PAUL, INSTRUCTING TIMOTHY WHAT TO TEACH BELIEVERS:] As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on *God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.* <sup>ESV</sup>

It can be inferred from the final clause that God provides us with everything we need (cf. CEV, NLT), with physical needs being primarily in view here.

### God meets their physical needs even in harsh circumstances

**NEH 9:21** [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.* <sup>NET</sup>

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

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**

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

**JOHN 6:35** 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."* NET

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

**PHIL 4:19** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM:] *And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.* NET

**LUKE 22:35** 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."* NET

**Note: God is his people's portion**

**Ps 73:25–26** [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. <sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* ESV

The question (v. 25a) implies that not only did the psalmist not have anyone nor anything else in heaven, he also did not long for such. In saying that God was his "portion forever" (v. 26) the psalmist appears to mean that God was all he would ever need (cf. GNT) or desire (cf. v. 25b).

How does God provide for you? How do you respond to this?

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What does it mean to “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matt 5:6)?  
How is such hunger and thirst satisfied?

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Do you lack anything you need – physical or spiritual? If so, what can  
you do about it?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## b) God Strengthens His People

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See also:

- c) *God Works through His People (II): Empowerment*, Ch. 20

### God is the strength of his people

**Ps 28:7–8** [DAVID:] *The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.* ESV

### God strengthens his people

**EPH 3:16** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, ...* NET

**PHIL 4:13** [PAUL, REFERRING TO CHRIST:] *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* ESV

### God strengthens his people when they are weak . . .

**ISA 40:30–31** *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup>but 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.* ESV

### . . . God restores and renews his people

**1PET 5:10** [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you in the Messiah Jesus to his eternal glory, will restore you, establish you, strengthen you, and support you.* ISV

**2COR 4:16** [PAUL:] *Therefore we do not despair, but even if our physical body is wearing away, our inner person is being renewed day by day.* NET

### God strengthens his people in the face of adversity

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

**2TIM 4:16–17** [PAUL:] *At my first defense no one appeared in my support; instead they all deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. <sup>17</sup>But 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!*

NET

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

### **God strengthens them spiritually, until Jesus Christ's return**

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

**1COR 1:8** [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.* NET

### **God encourages his people**

**2THES 2:16–17** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, <sup>17</sup>encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do or say.* NET

### **God heals his people**

**PS 30:2** [DAVID:] *O LORD my God, I cried out to you and you healed me.* NET

**JAMES 5:14–16** [JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] *Is anyone among you ill? He should summon the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him up – and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed.* The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness. NET

The topic of healing is a somewhat controversial one. Does God promise to heal all illness, if we have faith that he will? This passage and Psalms 103:3 support the affirmative. 2 Corinthians 12:7–9 and the fact that numerous people of faith have remained ill after repeated prayer, suggest otherwise. However we do know that God

wants his people to take all such needs to him in prayer, in assurance that he will hear and act for one's ultimate good and in line with his will.

### **God also supports and upholds his people . . .**

**Ps 94:18** [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] If I say, "My foot is slipping," *your loyal love, O LORD, supports me.* NET

**Ps 37:23–24** The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. <sup>24</sup>*Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.* NKJV

### **. . . God even carries them**

**Isa 46:3–4** [GOD:] Family of Jacob, listen to me! All you people from Israel who are still alive, listen! *I have carried you since you were born;* I have taken care of you from your birth. <sup>4</sup>*Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will take care of you. I made you and will take care of you. I will carry you and save you.* NCV™

In supporting and upholding his people, God is at times figuratively spoken of as carrying them.

In what ways does God strengthen his people?

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Do Christians need to do anything in order to be “strengthened with all power according to his glorious might” (Col 1:11)? If so what?

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How does God encourage his people?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## c) God Protects His People (I): General

### God protects his people

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

**Ps 32:7** [DAVID, TO GOD:] *You are my hiding place; you protect me from distress. You surround me with shouts of joy from those celebrating deliverance. (Selah)* NET

### God protects his people from enemies

**Ps 31:20** *You are their shelter from harmful plots, and you are their protection from vicious gossip.* CEV

**Ps 91:14** The LORD says, "Because he is devoted to me, I will deliver him; *I will protect him because he is loyal to me.*" NET

### God preserves his people's lives . . .

**Ps 138:7** [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.* ESV

### . . . God keeps his people safe and secure

**Ps 16:8–9** [DAVID:] *I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. <sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.* ESV

### God protects his people from Satan and all evil

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

**Ps 23:4** [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.* ESV

## **God and Jesus Christ keep their people as their own – until the end**

**JOHN 6:39** [JESUS:] *Now this is the will of the one who sent me – that I should not lose one person of every one he has given me, but raise them all up at the last day.* NET

**JOHN 10:28–29** [JESUS:] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and *no one will snatch them out of my hand.* <sup>29</sup>*My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.* ESV

God and Jesus Christ keep their people as their own, in a right relationship with them. In doing so they shield their people from spiritual harm throughout their lives, bringing their salvation to fruition at the end of the age.

If the New Testament warns God's people that they will suffer persecution, how is Psalms 12:7 for example (in *God protects his people from enemies*) applicable to God's people today?

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When facing trouble, how can we like David say: "...my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices..." (Ps 16:8–9)?

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What assurance do we have that God will keep us – protecting us from being snatched away from him, or falling away from him?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## d) God Protects His People (II): Depictions

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### God shields his people

**Ps 33:20** [GODLY PEOPLE:] We wait on the LORD; *he is our help and our shield.* ISV

**Ps 140:7** [DAVID, TO GOD:] O sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, you *shield my head in the day of battle.* NET

### God surrounds his people

**Ps 125:2** *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, now and forevermore.* NET

**Ps 34:7** *The LORD's angel camps around the LORD's loyal followers and delivers them.* NET

### God is a refuge for his people

**2SAM 22:2–3** He [David] said, *“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, <sup>3</sup>my 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.* ESV

### God guards his people . . .

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

**Ps 91:11** *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.* ESV

### . . . God watches over his people

**PROV 2:8** God sees that justice is done, and *he watches over everyone who is faithful to him.* CEV

**God is a shepherd to his people . . .**

**Ps 23:1–4** [DAVID:] *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. <sup>2</sup>He takes me to lush pastures, he leads me to refreshing water. <sup>3</sup>He restores my strength. He leads me down the right paths for the sake of his reputation. <sup>4</sup>Even when I must walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff reassure me.*

NET

In portraying God as a shepherd (and his people as sheep) the Bible points to how God protects, rescues, leads, provides and generally cares for his people. In conjunction with this, the analogy depicts his close relationship with his people.

**. . . Jesus Christ is a shepherd to his people**

**JOHN 10:14–15** [JESUS:] *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me – <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep.* NET

Pick one of the depictions that you relate to and say how it encourages you.

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Do angels camp around Christians and guard them (cf. Ps 34:7; 91:11)?

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What is one area of your life in which your thoughts and feelings would be affected by keeping the teaching about God's protection in mind? To help you do this, choose a verse to learn.

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Pray for persecuted Christians

## e) Epilogue: God's Care of the Needy

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Bear in mind that while many verses in the Bible assert that God looks after the needy, the Bible also speaks of the suffering of the needy. As such the Bible often speaks of God delivering the needy as opposed to keeping them from experiencing any troubles (just as it often speaks of God saving his people out of troubles as opposed to keeping them from experiencing any troubles, though the latter is also spoken of). Additionally, note that much of the teaching in this section is often interpreted as generality.

In considering the plight of the needy and God's response, we should also remember that the Bible often refers to God working through his people to achieve his purposes. One can infer from this that a good part of what God does to secure justice and protection for the needy – as spoken of in this section – he does through his people.

### **The needy are often mistreated by the wicked and made to suffer**

**JOB 20:19** For *he* [a wicked person] *has oppressed the poor and abandoned them; he has seized a house which he did not build.* NET

**ECCL 4:1** [A WISE TEACHER:] *So I again considered all the oppression that continually occurs on earth. This is what I saw: The oppressed were in tears, but no one was comforting them; no one delivers them from the power of their oppressors.* NET

### **However, God rescues the needy**

**Ps 35:10** [DAVID:] With all my strength I will say, “O LORD, who can compare to you? *You rescue the oppressed from those who try to overpower them; the oppressed and needy from those who try to rob them.* NET

**Ps 109:31** [DAVID, SPEAKING OF GOD:] *For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.*

**God secures justice for the needy**

**Ps 140:12** [DAVID:] *I know that the LORD will act on behalf of the tormented, providing justice for the needy.* ISV

**God protects and is a refuge for the needy**

**Ps 12:5** “Because of the violence done to the oppressed, because of the painful cries of the needy, I will spring into action,” says the LORD. *“I will provide the safety they so desperately desire.”* NET

**ISA 25:4A** *You [God] have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rain, and shade from the heat.* GW

**God provides for the needy**

**Ps 68:10B** *Out of your goodness, O God, you provided for oppressed people.* GW

By drawing on these verses, what encouragement could you give a person in great need?

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Who does the term the “oppressed...in tears” (Eccl 4:1) bring to your mind? What about oppressed Christian groups; which ones do you know of that face intense persecution?

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What could you do to be “an instrument” of God in helping the needy and suffering – particularly those mentioned in your previous answer?

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Pray for persecuted Christians

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## Notes

[illegible]

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## Topics in This Series

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- II. God's Pre-Eminence

##### 2. God's Character

- I. Holy Characteristics
- II. Loving Characteristics

##### 3. Jesus Christ

- I. General
- II. Jesus Christ and God

##### 4. The Holy Spirit

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Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

**Barnabas Fund** – [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org)

It provides material and spiritual support based on locally identified needs.

**Christian Solidarity International** – [csi-usa.org](http://csi-usa.org)

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

**Christian Solidarity Worldwide** – [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

**Open Doors** – [www.opendoors.org](http://www.opendoors.org); [www.opendoors.org.au](http://www.opendoors.org.au)

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

**Religious Liberty Commission** – [www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc)

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org).

**Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin** – [rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com](http://rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com)

This site provides weekly prayer bulletins.

**The Bible League** – [bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted](http://bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted)

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and provides training.

**Voice of the Martyrs** – [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)

VOM helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

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It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

*Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.'* Matthew 25:40 NCV



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