

Introduction

There are so many words that we grow up with that carry with them the definition attached to them by the world. Words like “love”, “peace”, “joy”, “faith”, etc. all have worldly meanings that are often contradicted by their biblical definition. This Psalm provides the basis for understanding the biblical meaning of the protection of the Lord. Is it the same as what you envisioned when you first read the title of this Psalm?

Read verses 1-4

Q: What are all the examples used to teach something about the nature of God's protection?

1. Shelter (v.1)
2. Shadow (v.1)
3. Refuge (v.2)
4. Fortress (v.2)
5. Pinions (v.4)
6. Wings (v.4)
7. Shield (v.4)
8. Bulwark (v.4)

Q: What is the common characteristic of each example?

A: They all provide cover for all the possible situations we might find need for different levels of protection, whether as a shield, wings, or shadow to cover us while on the move, or when we need absolute separation from the world such as fortress and bulwark, or something in between to wait out temporary conditions such as shelter, refuge, and pinions. But **ALL** of these things must each be sought after and **RUN** to in order to be used.

Q: What is the implied conditional statement established in v.1 that speaks of our participation in the process?

A: “He who dwells”. We’re choosing where to live, where to establish our home, in this case in Him. It’s implied that we’re not choosing to try and live on our own or away from His protection. It speaks of **OUR** having to make a choice.

¹He who dwells in the shelter of
the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the
Almighty.

²I will say to the LORD, “My
refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!”

³For it is He who delivers you
from the snare of the trapper
And from the deadly pestilence.

⁴He will cover you with His
pinions,
And under His wings you may
seek refuge;
His faithfulness is a shield and
bulwark.

Q: What are the 3 God-qualities in v.3-4 that teach us about the character of God's protection?

1. He delivers us from this world's traps.
2. He provides cover when we seek Him.
3. He is faithful, never letting us down.

Application: People in need of being rescued or protected have to first **want** the help and then must **cooperate** with those from whom they're receiving help. Otherwise the rescue or protection efforts won't be successful.

- Do we sometimes believe we can go anywhere, do anything, and we still be protected by God?
- What are some situations or scenarios that this might not be true?
- Would you characterize yourself as running towards God's shelter or away?

Read verses 5-10

Q: This is describing what it's like to be inside God's refuge, safely in His protection. What do all of these activities have in common?

A: They are all the results of sin, the judgments and consequences that come upon those who choose a worldly lifestyle. You might say they're the ultimate results of someone taking refuge in the world rather than God.

Q: Is dwelling in God's refuge a guarantee of protection against anything and everything bad?

A: No, there may be physical hardships, test and trials—all of which are designed to toughen us spiritually—but more importantly there is the protection that results from living a life that embraces God's righteousness while rejecting sin. The consequences of sin will not befall those who cling to the protection of His ways.

Application: Biblical "protection" is **living** like we should, free of **sin** and **sinful** behavior.

- Do you ever make note that the most important "peace" in life is being free of sin and sinful behavior?
- Do we assess "protection" as to whether we're getting what we want or living like we should?

⁵You will not be afraid of the
terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;
⁶Of the pestilence that stalks in
darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays
waste at noon.
⁷A thousand may fall at your
side
And ten thousand at your right
hand,
But it shall not approach you.
⁸You will only look on with your
eyes
And see the recompense of the
wicked.
⁹For you have made the LORD,
my refuge,
Even the Most High, your
dwelling place.
¹⁰No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near
your tent.

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¹¹For He will give His angels
charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.
¹²They will bear you up in their
hands,
That you do not strike your foot
against a stone.
¹³You will tread upon the lion
and cobra,
The young lion and the serpent
you will trample down.

¹⁴“Because he has loved Me,
therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him securely on high,
because he has known My
name.
¹⁵He will call upon Me, and I will
answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
¹⁶With a long life I will satisfy
him
And let him see My salvation.”

Read verses 11-13

Q: How would you summarize these verses as to what they teach about God’s protection?

A: God provides additional resources for protection that we can’t even see.

Q: How do these heavenly resources fit in with the previous passage?

A: They’re both really discussing spiritual warfare, both in the visible realm and the invisible. The war between God and Satan is for our soul, not our life as it subsists on this earth, but rather whether we attain to the second life.

Application: Biblical “protection” is ultimately for our soul, not automatically for this present life.

Read verses 14-16

Q: What changed in this last passage? How is the tone and perspective different?

A: The previous verses spoke in the 3rd person; here it is God personally speaking in the 1st person “I

Q: What are the 3 things referring to us which provide a definition for what it means to seek His shelter and protection?

1. “...he has loved Me...” (v.14)
2. “...he has known My name...” (v.14)
3. “He will call upon Me...” (v.15)

Application: Take a moment and share how these things identify actions we take to seek His shelter.

Q: What is His personal response to those who seek His protection?

1. “...I will deliver Him...” (v.14)
2. “...I will set him securely on high...” (v.14)
3. “...I will answer him...” (v.15)
4. “...I will be with him in trouble...” (v.15)
5. “...I will rescue him and honor him.” (v.15)
6. “With a long life I will satisfy him...” (v.16)
7. “...I will...let him see My salvation.” (v.16)

Q: How do these actions fit in with the discussion of v.5-10 above?

A: They’re much more focused on winning the spiritual battle than the physical.

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Application: *It is much more about winning the **spiritual** battle than the **physical**.*

- *What does it mean to you that the Psalmist began this as a testimony or teaching, but that it ended with God's personal commentary?*
- *Does this give you more courage to let go the things of this world for the things that lead to His protection?*

Overall Application

- How does this teaching relate to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount:

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

—Matthew 5:29-30

- Are you unprotected in some way at the moment? Is it because you have made a choice to participate in a recurring sin, or not made the effort to run to Him?
- Do you realize the blessing of living a life uncontrolled by sin, even if physical circumstances are less than ideal? Is your desire for eternal protection or temporary rest?

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