

## Jesus' prayer for believers

### Protected by Jesus

There was an article in National Geographic several years ago provided a penetrating picture of God's wings. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park in the US, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage.

One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree.

Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick.

When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies.

When the blaze had arrived and the heat had singed her small body, the mother had remained steadfast.

Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

Dean Courtier

John 17:11-12

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

#### 1) What do we need protection from?

- Throughout history – Biblical as well as non-Biblical history – we see multitudes cases of God's protection over His people
  - Moses as an infant
  - Daniel in the Lion's den
  - Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego in the fire
- However, we see an equally number of cases where God didn't seem to protect His people, and they suffered and died
  - John the Baptist was beheaded
  - James was killed with the sword
  - Stephen was stoned
  - Even today, Christians are martyred
  - During the Covid epidemic many Christians held on to Psalm 91, the Psalm of protection, yet many Christians still passed away from Covid
- Does God or does God not protect us from physical dangers?
  - Yes, He does, and no, He doesn't
  - We need to understand that there are times when God protects His people, there are times when He allows them to suffer to discipline them, and there are times when He orchestrates them to suffer and even die to fulfill His purposes
  - He allowed Job to suffer, the Israelites to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, the Israelites to be taken into captivity in Babylon for 70 years
  - He healed a blind man who hadn't sinned, but was blind that the work of God might be displayed in his life. He sent Jesus to suffer and die on a cross that His purposes might be fulfilled
- So then, what protection was Jesus referring to?
- Jesus was about to leave the world to return to the Father, but the believers were going to remain in the world
- They needed protection from the ways of the world
  - 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the

pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

- What we really need protection from are the lures of the world that would that would affect our eternity
  - As much as He is concerned about our physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, they are all secondary to our eternal wellbeing

## 2) How does God protect us?

- He protects us from the onslaught of the devil
  - Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- He has given us His amour to protect us from the devil
  - Ephesians 6:14-18 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
- Aspects of the Armour of God
  - Truth counters the lies of the devil
  - Righteousness counters sin
  - Gospel of peace counters division
  - Faith counters unbelief and doubt
  - Salvation counters hopelessness and despair
  - Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God counters all falsehood

## 3) The protection of God

- John 17:11-12 Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.
- Jesus emphasises that protection is in the name of the Father and also in His name, which the Father had given Him
- A name signifies the essence of a person. It embodies their character, nature, traits, and purpose
  - When we are protected by God, we are protected by all he is and all that He stands for
- He is a faithful God who keeps His covenants
  - 2 Thessalonians 3:3 The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.
  - Many times God wanted to destroy the Israelites but then He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
  - After David His covenant with David kept Him from destroying Judah
  - Jesus has made a new covenant with us in His blood and He will always remember His covenant to us whom He has bought for Himself
- Jesus means Saviour, for He saves us from our sins
  - Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.
  - Sin is absolutely destructive and if anything would destroy our lives it would be sin
  - Jesus saves us, delivers us, keeps us from sin. IN doing so He protects us from self-destruction
- We are protected by the strength of God
  - Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
  - What is stronger that the Lord and His mighty power?
  - If He protects us with His strength, what can oppose us?