

God Will Take Care of You

1) Does God promise to protect believers from harm?

A) God loves and cares for his children, and he has promised to guard and protect them. Consider the following verses:

- (1) “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. Because you have made Yahweh your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone” (Ps 91:1, 3–6, 9–12).
- (2) “Yahweh is your keeper; Yahweh is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. Yahweh will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. Yahweh will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore” (Ps 121:5–8; cf. Ps 41:1–3; 145:20).
- (3) “This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them” (Ps 34:6–7; cf. Prov 12:21; 18:10).
- (4) “But now thus says Yahweh, 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. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.” (Isa 43:1–2).

B) There are many examples of God’s protection in the lives of the saints:

- (1) Daniel was saved from the lion’s den (Dan 6).
- (2) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were saved from the fiery furnace (Dan 3).
- (3) Moses was saved from the Nile river (Exod 2:1–10).
- (4) Elisha was saved from the Syrians (2 Kings 6:8–23).
- (5) The widow of Zarephath’s son was raised from the dead by Elijah (1 Kings 17:17–24).

2) Does this mean that believers will never experience difficulties and trials?

A) The passages above seem to confirm that as believers, we enjoy special protection from the dangers and disasters that happen in the world around us. But is this the whole story? Are there any exceptions to these protections? Yes, there are:

- (1) Abel was killed by his brother Cain (Gen 4:1–12).
- (2) Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers (Gen 37).
- (3) Joshua and Caleb wandered for decades in the wilderness because of the rebellious Exodus generation (Num 14).
- (4) Naboth and his sons were killed by Jezebel (1 Kings 21:1–16; 2 Kings 9:24–26).
- (5) “Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb 11:35–38).

B) Experiences like these are not confined to the pages of Scripture:

- (1) On June 28, 1987, four Dallas-based Christian leaders were killed in an airplane crash as they were returning from a Focus on the Family retreat in Montana.
- (2) On May 23, 2024, American missionaries Davy and Natalie Lloyd were shot and killed by gang members in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The couple and a Haitian mission director were leaving a youth group activity at a church when they were ambushed by three trucks full of armed gang members.
- (3) In my own life, my wife Charity was mauled and almost killed in a dog attack.

All of us either know someone who has gone through something like this, or we have personally experienced such difficulties and trials. Is this normal? Does the Bible really teach that believers will encounter such things?

3) What kinds of difficulties can believers expect to face?

A) God has promised to protect us, but he also warns us that we will experience the following kinds of trials:

- (1) We will be tempted, attacked and hindered by Satan.
 - “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt 4:1; cf. Heb 2:18; James 1:14–15).
 - “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet 5:8; cf. Eph 6:10–20; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thess 5:8).
 - “But since we were torn away from you...we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us” (1 Thess 2:17–18; cf. Daniel 10:2–5, 12–13, 20; Jude 9; Rev 12:7).
- (2) We will be persecuted by the world.
 - “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are

not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours” (John 15:18–20; cf. John 16:33; Acts 14:22).

- “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Pet 4:12–14).
- “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12; cf. 1 Thess 3:1–4; 2 Cor 11:23–28; 12:10; Rom 8:35).

(3) We will be harmed by others.

- While there are times the world persecutes us because we are believers, there are other times when we are harmed simply because the world is self-centered and sinful (Rom 1:28–31; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 2 Tim 3:2–4). A negligent driver may slam into your car on the road, not because he’s attacking you for being a Christian, but because he simply didn’t care enough to drive safely.
- All of us are affected by the wickedness of the world around us, and while we often think of this in terms of injury done by another individual, we are also affected by social, economic and political disorders: inflation, recessions, economic collapses, riots, wars, coups, looting, vandalism, insurgencies, rebellions, strikes, etc.

(4) We will be affected by the fall.

- “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). The fall caused all the physical problems that lead to death: illnesses, pandemics, plagues, contagions, harmful viruses and bacteria, cancers, genetic defects, etc. It is also the cause of the inherent weaknesses, limitations, and vulnerabilities that we all experience: limited strength and endurance, vulnerability to stress, anxiety, and depression, limited attention span and memory capacity, decline in mental acuity with age, etc. In short, our bodies and minds can fail us when we need them most.
- “Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you” (Gen 3:17b–18a). The fall caused pain and difficulty in our labor and food production.
- “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen 3:16a). The fall caused pain in childbearing.
- “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you” (Gen 3:16b). The fall caused disunity and dysfunction in marriage and relationships.

(5) We will be affected by the flood.

- Before the flood, the earth was “very good” and did not experience natural disasters (Gen 1:31). Then the flood destroyed the earth, and now we have earthquakes, avalanches, landslides, volcanoes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, lightning, wildfires, tornados, hail, drought, ice storms, blizzards and many other natural hazards (Gen 7:11–12, 19; cf. Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5; Matt 24:7).
- At the beginning of creation, all the animals lived in peace with one another and with mankind (Gen 1:29–30). After the fall, men involved animals in their wickedness and violence (Gen 6:11–12). After the flood, God put a barrier between men and animals by making animals afraid of men (Gen 9:2–3). Now animals kill and eat one another, and sometimes they kill and eat men and women (Gen 9:5).

(6) We will be fought against by the flesh.

- “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Pet 2:11; cf. James 4:1).
- “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Rom 13:14).
- “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal 5:16–17; cf. Col 2:23; 3:5–10).

(7) We will reap what we have sown.

- “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal 6:7–8; cf. Job 4:8; Hos 8:7; 10:12; 2 Cor 9:6).

(8) We may be sinned against by fellow believers.

- “Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times’ (Matt 18:21–22; cf. Luke 17:3–4).
- “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel” (James 4:1–2a; cf. Gal 5:15, 26; 1 Cor 3:3; 6:1, 6; 2 Cor 12:20–21).
- “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12–13; Mark 11:25; 1 Pet 3:8–9).

(9) We will encounter false teachers.

- “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words” (2 Pet 2:1–3a; cf. Matt 7:15; 2 Tim 4:3; Col 2:8).
- “For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Jude 4; cf. Gal 2:4; 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:10–11).

(10) We will be disciplined by God.

- “And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.’ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Heb 12:5–7; cf. Ps 38; Prov 13:24; 2 Cor 7:8–10; Rev 3:19).
- “But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works” (Rev 2:20–23; cf. 1 Cor 11:27–30; James 5:14–16).

(11) We will be tested by God.

- “After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” (Gen 22:1–2; cf. Gen 2:15–17; Job 1:6–12; Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:2, 16; Ps 26:2; 105:17–19; Prov 17:3).
- “But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts” (1 Thess 2:4; cf. James 1:12; 1 Pet 1:6–9).

4) If God promises to guard and protect us, then why does he allow us to go through so many painful trials?

- So we will learn the consequences of sin (Rom 6:23; Gal 6:7–8).

- So we will learn the importance of seeking wisdom (Prov 4:7; 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).¹
- So we will learn to resist temptation (Heb 12:5–11; 2 Cor 7:8–11).
- So we will be humbled and learn not to rely on ourselves (2 Cor 1:8–9; 12:7–10; Deut 8:2, 16).
- So we will build the spiritual muscle of endurance (James 1:3–4; 5:10–11).
- So we will learn to wait on God (Ps 27:11–14; 31:24; 37:34).
- So we will grow in godliness and Christlikeness (Rom 5:3–4; Heb 5:8; 1 Pet 1:6–7).
- So we will receive glory and blessing (1 Pet 3:9, 13–14; 4:12–14; 2 Cor 4:17).
- So others may be comforted (2 Cor 1:3–5).
- So others may learn and grow (1 Pet 2:15; 3:16; 2 Cor 1:6; 2 Tim 2:10; Job 42:7–9).
- So others may be saved (1 Pet 2:12; 3:1, 15–16).

5) If a balanced understanding of God’s Word reveals that we can expect to have many difficult trials in life, then what comfort are God’s promises of protection?

- They remind us that an infinitely wise, powerful and loving God is carefully deciding exactly when and how to protect us. We can trust him!
- They assure us that our pain has been allowed in order to achieve the purposes listed above. We never suffer for nothing!
- They teach us to wait on God and not pass judgment on his works until he’s finished doing all he desires to accomplish.²
- They give us the peace of knowing that God is with us in every trial and heartache, for he is watching over us in love every moment.

6) How should we feel when God supernaturally protects someone else while we suffer through a difficult trial? Has God been good to them but not to us?

- An example of this can be found in Acts 12. In the same chapter, we learn that James the son of Zebedee was killed by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1–2), while Peter was miraculously rescued by an angel (Acts 12:3–11). Did God love Peter more than James? Did God protect Peter but not James?
- Ironically, it was Peter who previously asked Jesus about this same issue. Jesus had revealed to Peter that he would one day be martyred, and Peter, seeing James’ brother John nearby asked, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” (John 21:21b–22). In other words: “Peter, it’s none of your business whether John will be martyred or not. You just follow me and don’t worry about John!”
- Jesus plainly tells us that we are not to compare our experience of God’s protection with that of others. God loves us all the same, and he is good to all of us, but he has different plans and purposes for each of our lives. We should focus on following him and not on how hard our path is compared to everyone else’s.

¹ You can do things to harm yourself that are not sin, but are simply not wise: (1) buying a house without getting it inspected, (2) buying a used car without getting a vehicle history report, (3) buying a stock without investigating the company’s financial records, etc.

² For a more thorough discussion of this point, see the Ask Away on January 16: https://comeafterme.com/web_documents/English/AskAway/016-January-16-Ask-Away.html

7) What's a good way to praise God in the midst of trials?

- A) There's a hymn by Isaac Watts called "Strength in Weakness" that does a great job of praising God in spite of pain and difficulties:

Let me but hear my Savior say,
"Strength shall be equal to thy day,"
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.

I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While He my sinking head sustains.

I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own pow'r may rest on me:
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.