

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION OF HIS CHILDREN AND CREATION.

1. GOD'S RESTRAINT ON EVIL IN THE WORLD.

Paul informs us in 2Thes.2v7., that God continually restrains the activities of the powers of darkness in the world, and His merciful goodness protects even the unbeliever from their malice. We read in Amos.9v7., that God delivered the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir. We also read in 2Kings.6v1., that God gave victory to Syria through Naaman. God sends His rain on the just and the unjust, and is kind, good and merciful, even to the evil, unjust and ungrateful. Mt.5v45. Luke.6v35,36. The inhabitants at Lystra had unclean lives and were idol worshippers, but Paul tells them that God had been very kind and good to them in spite of all their sin; "The living God, -- did not neglect to leave some witness of Himself, in that He did you good and showed kindly acts, and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." Acts.14v14-17. God has winked at and ignored the former ages of man's disobedience, but now commands all men to repent. Acts.17v30.

God's ceaseless care and devoted love for His Creation fills the angels with continual amazement and worship. The Seraphim forever extol, praise and worship God for His wonderful continual dedicated holiness and caring love towards His creation. Is.6v1-5. Rev.4v8-11. God restrains Satan until the last 3½ years of this age, the time known as, "The Great Tribulation." Even those days are shortened by God to protect mankind from Satan's plan to destroy the whole of mankind. 2Thes.2v7. Rev.12v12. Dan.8v24. 12v1-7. Mt.24v21,22. This explosion of evil and destruction is allowed, in order to show what Satan and his angels are like; and to show the justice and necessity of their eternal judgement, and confinement in everlasting chains of darkness, after the destruction of their bodies in the lake of fire. 2Pet.2v4,17. Jude.v13. Mt.25v41,46. Rev.19v20. 20v10. The horrific carnage on earth produced by this awful manifestation of evil, produces a shocked silence in all the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom. Rev.8v1. The happiness of the eternal "ages of ages" in the kingdom of God; depends on everyone in that kingdom, not only loving righteousness, but also hating evil with all their being. This manifestation of evil produces an eternal hatred of evil in the children of God; and permanently banishes it from the Creation.

2. GOD'S RESTRAINT ON SATAN'S ACTIVITIES AGAINST OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS.

God has always given special protection for the children of God. God's saints rejoiced again and again over the wisdom, and protecting power and love of God; He is a sure refuge and shield from Satan and his demons. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut.33v27. "But Thou, O Lord art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head." Ps.3v3. "Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble." Ps.32v1. "Thou art my hiding place and my shield." Ps.119v14. "He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Ps.91v1. These are but a few of many such Scriptures; let us rejoice in the reality of these exceeding great and precious promises, they "are Yea, and Amen, in Christ." 2Pet.1v4. 2Cor.1v18-22.

At Bethel, the reality of God's total and dedicated caring love and protection was revealed to Jacob; he saw a continual stream of angels coming to minister to him, and returning for more directions from their Lord, for Jacob's well-being. Gen.28v11-19. The Scriptures reveal that God's children have, not just one guardian angel, but multitudes of guardian angels. 2Kings.6v15-18. Children also have many angels which are devoted to their care. Mt.18v10. "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge," was the joyful cry of the psalmist, and it is our joy too. Ps.46v7,11. Heb.1v14. Satan bitterly complained to God about the hedge of divine love and power that protected Job, and "ALL THAT HE HATH," from his malice. Job.1v10. In 1Pet.1v4,5., we are assured that God guards and protects His New Testament children of God, in the same way as His great servant Job. Don't allow the powers of darkness to harass you; they should be trembling in fear at what our Father will do to them. Put on God's armour, resist the powers of darkness, and they will flee from you. Jam.2v19. 4v7. Eph.6v10-20. In Christ we are always sure of victory, for God has called us to triumph not defeat. 2Cor.2v14. The powers of darkness know they are defeated and Hell awaits them. Mt.8v29. Lk.8v31. Rev.12v12.

3. THE SONS OF GOD ARE GUARDED BY GOD AND HIS LEGAL DECREES.

God, as Judge, Creator, and Redeemer, has made and proclaimed His legal decrees, and has enforced them with His power and judgements. The powers of darkness tremble at His decrees. James.2v19. Woe to those evil spirits, or men, who try to defy the decrees of the King of Heaven, or oppose His saints; many have tried, and as a result, are in chains of everlasting darkness. Dan.4v17-23. 2Pet.2v4. Jude.v6,13. These decrees are;-

a. The invincible legal covenant barrier of Christ's redeeming and atoning blood. 1Pet.1v18,19.

There is the legal covenant decree and defence of redemption through the blood of Christ. Satan has no hold, or claim, on those who are redeemed through the blood of Christ; for the blood of the covenant includes protection as well as forgiveness. The blood of the Passover lamb preserved Israel, how much more does the blood of Jesus protect the New Covenant children of God, as we read in Rev.12v11., "And they overcame him (Satan), by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony." Rev.12v11.

b. The legal barrier of identification with Christ's death in baptism. 1Pet.1v4,5.

Baptism in water is God's way of accepting God's covenant. Our old life is buried with Jesus in baptism, and we rise to walk in newness of life, not in fear of demons, or of being possessed by them. Rom.6v3,4. Our heavenly Father erects an invincible wall of protection around us, and cuts us off from former evil and occult connections.

c. The legal barrier of adoption as sons and the new birth.

Christians have a God-protected sonship. We are loved like Jesus by the Father, and He wants the world to know it; and Jesus loves us as the Father loves Him. Jn.17v23. 15v9. 13v34. Jesus said that His enemies committed blasphemy when they said He was possessed by evil spirits. Mk.3v28-30. Is it not blasphemy to say that God will break His covenant with us, and allow Christians, who are loved just like Jesus, to be possessed by demons? God keeps His covenant, and He assures His children of His continual protecting presence.

N.B.1. Peter assures us of God's complete and continuous protection in 1Pet.1v4,5..

God has always given special protection to His children; believers in Jesus, "are always kept, protected and guarded by the power of God through faith." The word for, "are always kept" is "phrouroumenous," the present passive participle of "phroureo," a military term, Acts.9v24. 2Cor.v32., meaning, "to guard or garrison," from "phrouros," "a sentinel." Vincent says, "**The present participle indicates something in progress, a continuous process of protection.**" Peter assures us that the heirs of God's heavenly kingdom are guarded as securely as our heavenly inheritance. When Peter tells us in 1Pet.1v4., that our heavenly inheritance is "**reserved**" for us, he uses "teteremenen," the perfect passive participle of "tereo;" which signifies, "taking care of and keeping by guarding." Our Lord uses the same word, "tereo," in Jn.17v11., when He prays and asks the Father to guard His disciples. He asks the Father, "**keep** in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given me;" "keep" is "tereson," the aorist active imperative of "tereo." Again, in Jn.17v12., our Lord said, "I kept them in Thy Name;" "I kept," is "eteroun," the imperfect active of "tereo;" "I constantly kept and guarded them." Also in v12, "Those whom thou gavest me I guarded;" "guarded" is "ephulaza," the aorist active of "phulasso;" Christ was their "phulax," their sentinel and guard, and He is still is, He ever lives to protect us, and intercede for us. Heb.7v25.

Our Lord said that no thieves or robbers could attack our heavenly inheritance; and He assures us that the heirs of the heavenly kingdom are as securely guarded by God as their heavenly inheritance. Mt.6v19-21. Col.1v5. Our Lord guarantees that no demonic thieves and robbers can harm the heirs of that kingdom; He promises "nothing shall by any means hurt you." Lk.10v19. **God cares more for the heirs of the kingdom of Heaven, than He does for the fabric of that kingdom. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His love for us will never pass away.** God's beloved children are assured of their heavenly Father's care and protection. In 1Pet.1v5., Peter assures us that Christians are protected and enveloped, "en dunamei theou," "IN the power of God." See Phil.4v7., where "phrouresei," "shall garrison," the future active indicative of "phroureo," is used for the peace of God guarding our hearts. The peace of God can guard our hearts in every situation, because the power of God envelops and preserves us.

N.B. 2. John assures us that Satan cannot grasp a born-again child of God.

John writes in 1John.5v18., "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and **the Wicked One does not touch him.**" "Does not touch him," "ouch haptetai autou," is the present middle indicative of "hapto," which means to lay hold of or to grasp rather than a momentary touch, which is "thiggano;" both words are used by Paul in Col.2v21.. John only uses "hapto," herein 1Jn.5v18., and in Jn.20v17., where Jesus asks Mary to "cease holding and clinging to me;" "me mou haptou" is the present middle imperative of "hapto". Jesus explains that Mary cannot keep holding and clinging to Him, because He has to ascend to the Father. There was no prohibition against Mary touching or holding the Lord, for in Mt.28v9. the women took hold of our Lord's feet (ekratesan) and worshipped Him. Mary was filled with joy at finding our Lord risen and alive, and did not want Him to go away; our Lord said that He could not stay because He had to ascend to the Father.

We can say with absolute certainty, that the Wicked One cannot possess a Christian, this is God's sure promise to us, for in 1Jn.5v18., John said that the Wicked One cannot touch, lay hold of, or grasp a child of God. John uses "oidamen," for the knowledge of divine truth and certainties. 1Jn.3v2,14. 5v15,19,20. See "Ye know." 1Jn.2v20. 3v5,15. See 1Jn.3v6,9..

We read in 1John.5v18., that truly regenerated Christians do not live a life of sin, or keep on being dominated by continual sin. John is not speaking of an act of sin, which is indicated by the aorist tense; but the continuous life of sin which is indicated by the present tense, for "Sinneth not," is "ouch hamartanei," the linear present active indicative of "hamartano," "to sin." Christians have victory over sin through the new birth, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ, this frees us from the law of sin and death. Rom.8v1-3.

In the phrase, "he that was begotten of God," "ho gennetheis ek tou theou," "he that was begotten," is "gennetheis," the aorist passive participle of "gennao," which only occurs in the second part of 1Jn.5v18.. Some think it is equivalent to the, "he that is begotten of God," "ho gegennemenos ek tou theou," the perfect passive participle of "gennao," which is used in the first part of this verse and 1Jn.3v9., and refers to a

Christian who is begotten of God. The perfect tense speaks not only of the act of birth, but also of its continuous present efficacy, from the point of birth up to the present.

The Majority Text reading, "keeps himself," "terei heauton," means that it is referring to born-again Christians. Others feel that the reading of the manuscripts A and B and others, and the critical texts, of "terei auton," "keeps him;" makes, "He that was begotten of God," refer to Christ, as "ho gennetheis ek tou theou," is not used to refer to any Christian elsewhere in John's writings. The New English Bible reads, "it is the Son of God who keeps him safe." There is no problem here, both thoughts are true; we are to keep ourselves in the love of God, and our Lord's devoted and continuous intercession for us, is a glorious and wonderful fact. Jude.v21. James.1v27. Heb.4v12-16. 7v25. Ps.121v3,4.

N.B. 3. God's children are the apple of His eye.

In Zech.2v8., the prophet says, "He that touches you, touches the apple of His eye;" and Deut.32v9,10. tells us, "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is His inheritance; ---He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye." What was true of God's Old Covenant saints, it is certainly true of God's New Covenant saints. Demons believe in God and tremble, none of them would think of trying to hit God in the eye, and demons that attack Christians, are in real danger. Many demons are in the abyss because they tried to harm God's dear children.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AN ABIDING ETERNAL PROTECTION FOR THE CHRISTIAN.

The Holy Spirit has come "to abide with us for ever," and as, "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world;" it is impossible for Christians to be possessed by demons as long as they keep their faith in Jesus, and don't fall away from God. Jn.14v16. 1Jn.4v4. Lk.8v13. Mt.24v12,13. 2Thes.2v1-3. Heb.6v1-8. 10v26,27. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; the word for seal in Eph.1v13,14. is "sphragizo," (see Eph.4v30. and 2Cor.1v22.) in Paul's time a seal was used as both a sign of ownership and a guarantee. Paul says "having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." "Having believed," is "pisteuosantes," the aorist participle of "pisteuo," "to believe," this shows that Paul is speaking of the baptism in the spirit and not regeneration, for the aorist participle speaks of an action which takes place before the action of the leading verb. This is exactly the same construction as Acts.19v2., which the Authorised Version correctly translates, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The aorist participle again showing that the believing took place at some time before the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This was proved by events, for in Acts.19v1-6., the Ephesians received the Holy Spirit some time after their baptism in water, when Paul laid his hands upon them.

God the Father puts His seal of ownership upon us by the Holy Spirit's abiding presence, and He warns the powers of darkness that we belong to Him. Eph.1v13,14. Indeed, evil spirits are in great danger when they try to attack God's children, for the Holy Spirit is with us not only to protect us; but also to actively threaten the powers of darkness. His presence makes us quite immune to demon possession. 1Pet.1v4,5. The Holy Spirit also protects Christians who have not been baptised in the Holy Spirit; for His protection is there, whether He is "with us," or "in us." Jn.14v17. We have a good Heavenly Father who protects and defends His children, and only gives them the Holy Spirit and good gifts. Lk.11v9-13. God our Father guarantees that through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit we cannot get serpents, scorpions or stones. This protection springs from the "much more" love of God for us. In Jn.17v23. Jesus tells us that the Father loves Christians just as He loves Him. Our heavenly Father would no more allow a demon to enter His dearly beloved children, than He would allow a demon to enter His dearly beloved Son, our dear Lord Jesus.

The powers of darkness fear Christians who know their position and security in Christ; because God's presence with us makes us a very definite threat and danger to them. In James.4v7., "submit" is the aorist passive imperative of "hupotasso," a military term meaning, "to place or range under;" as we array ourselves under God and resist the Devil; God is with us, and His awesome might causes Satan to flee. James also tells us, in James.4v6., that God resists the proud; "resists" is "antitasso," a military term meaning, "to array against, to range in battle against," God arrays Himself with us against the arrogant pride of the powers of darkness. In verse 7., "resist," "antistete," is the aorist active imperative of "anthistemi," "to take a stand against," as we take a stand with God against Satan, Satan flees from us.

5. CHRISTIANS HAVE LEGAL PROTECTION AND AUTHORITY IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe." Prov.18v10. Every knee must bow to the name of Jesus and recognise its authority; Phil.2v9-11. Rom.14v11,12., both from Is.45v23.

We have authority and dominion over demons in the name of Jesus.

Jesus said in Luke.10v19., "Behold, I give unto you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over ALL the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." The seventy were not mature Christians, for in v21 our Lord calls them, "neepios," "none-speaking babes, "or" little children." The revelation of this power and authority had been hidden from the wise and prudent and given to babes, because it was good in the eyes of our heavenly Father. They were given complete authority over ALL the power of the enemy, and the powers of darkness were terrified at their coming. The 70 disciples returned with joyful surprise that demons were subject to them in the name of Jesus.

Our Lord definitely states, "nothing shall by any means hurt you." Lk.10v19.

Our Lord Jesus used a very strong triple negative when He said, "Nothing you, in no way shall hurt," "ouden humas ou me adikese." It is made up of, "nothing," "ouden;" "in no way," "ou me;" and "shall not hurt," "adikese," the aorist active subjunctive of "adikeo." "Adikeo," is made up of the negative prefix "a," and "dikos," which means, "to act unjustly, to do wrong, to injure, to harm." It is difficult to adequately convey the strength of our Lord's words in English, unless we express it as, "Nothing, in no way, shall not hurt you." The Majority Text has "adikese," the aorist active subjunctive of "adikeo," other texts read, "adikesei," the future active indicative of "adikeo." Both of these readings are theologically correct; the aorist tense assures us, that at the point of conflict with evil angels, God will protect us and there will be no hurt to us; the future tense informs us that God will protect us from harm in any future conflict with the powers of darkness.

The demon that resisted the sons of Sceva, knew they had no authority to use the name of Jesus because they were not Christians. The demon said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you," and ripped their clothes off and caused them to flee. Acts.19v13-16. How different from the promise to babes in Christ, that they can even cause Satan to flee in the name of Jesus. Lk.10v19. James.2v19. 4v5-7.

In Mt.10v1. we see that God's amazing love gave full delegated authority, "exousia;" and power, "dunamis;" to the apostles, even though our Lord describes them as "little children" in Mt.11v25,26.. These Christian babes had authority over all the power of the Devil in the name of the Lord Jesus. The source of this authority is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, as John tells us in 1Jn.4v4., "He that is in us, is greater than he that is in the world." Dare anyone suggest that a Christian is not proof against demon possession when God the Holy Spirit is within them?

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