



"Life with God is not immunity from difficulties, but peace within difficulties."

—C.S. Lewis

31-Jul-26

God Keeps Us

When a military force secures a stationary line of resistance (in Korea, it was called the "main line of resistance" or MLR), the officers often send part of the force back a mile or two to build a secondary line of defense. This new line's purpose is to provide a defensive position for mainline soldiers to fall back to if the enemy bursts through the MLR. Bunkers and other defense structures are built in advance to provide shelter and protection. Once an army gets the opposition on the run, it has the upper hand. If the enemy has no secondary line of defense prepared, a hasty retreat turns into a swift rout.

I cannot remember all the details of the army's preparations to build the secondary line where I was stationed in Korea. What I do remember is that, after working my shift on the second line of defense, I took a shortcut through a field. The brush I walked through stood about waist-high. I soon came to a barbed wire fence, which I was forced to climb. In the midst of scrambling over it without injury or tearing my uniform, I saw the words painted on small red triangles that always sent shivers down my body: DANGER MINES.

I was already through the field. Young and full of bravado, I just said, "Whew!" under my breath and went on my way.

Now, when I am much older, that little story makes me ask, "How closely does [God](#) watch over those He is currently dealing with?"

In His prayer during His final [Passover](#), [Jesus](#) prays to the Father for His disciples' protection. First, in [John 17:12](#), He declares, "While I was with them in [the world](#), I kept them in Your name." Then, in [John 17:15](#), He asks the Father, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one," not just His present disciples but also "those who will believe in Me through their word" (verse 20).

The words "kept" and "keep" are forms of Greek *tro* (*Strong's* #5083), which encompasses the ideas of guarding, protecting, and keeping in custody. Its usage ranges from observing commands (such as "If anyone keeps My word"; [John 8:51](#)) to physically or figuratively protecting individuals ("Holy Father, keep through Your name . . ."; [John 17:11](#)). The apostle John uses it most frequently, emphasizing the Father's and Christ's efforts to safeguard believers. Its synonyms are "watch," "observe," "guard," "preserve," and "shield," among others.

Jesus is asking His Father to protect the elect, to keep them safe and on the right path in a world that hates or has forgotten God. The world cannot take out its hatred and frustrations on God, so hating those that [love](#) Him and keep His commandments, they target God's physical people for persecution.

John writes of this in [John 15:18-20](#):

If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. . . . If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

All we have to do is read the book of Acts and see what happened to the apostles in the years following the founding of the church. Tradition hands

down stories that say all of them but the apostle John died martyrs' deaths, and John himself suffered severe persecution. The apostle Paul famously endured horrible beatings and other perils throughout his ministry (see [II Corinthians 11:23-28](#)), finally suffering beheading in Rome. Other believers down through the centuries have similarly suffered for their [faith](#) in Christ.

We live in an anti-God environment, a post-Christian age, as some are calling it. One major party in America expelled God from its political platform, and the other is no paragon of virtue either. Atheism dominates the nation's educational system. Even many of the churches are falling apart at the seams, rushing to embrace unscriptural "doctrines" that accept anyone's lifestyle out of an excess (and appalling misunderstanding) of "love" and "compassion." Pornography is everywhere on the Internet. In our media, people openly scoff at those who try to live by traditional Christian moral principles. People in God's church face such an environment every day.

We need God's oversight and protection.

But we should not cower in fear or become depressed because the rest of this world stands against us. Jesus teaches in [Matthew 24:13](#), "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Along with endurance, we must be thankful, considering that, even though the world considers us to be weak and foolish, we have the most wonderful calling ever given to mortal men and women. By God's election, we are in this position: called to an amazing future in God's Kingdom but required—with God's constant help—to overcome this present evil age to attain our inheritance. Just read our incomparable status and future in Paul's eloquent, inspiring passage in [Ephesians 1:3-12](#).

Does God watch over His people? Paul provides an example in [II Corinthians 1:8-10](#):

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still

deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

Notice that the apostle writes, "He will still deliver us." His watchful care and protection are ongoing. His keeping of the church did not end in the first century. If we, in this present time, are faithfully maintaining our relationship with Him, He is always willing to help.

Years ago, Luigi Vaghi gave a touching sermonette during one of my church visits to South Africa. He related that to attend the Feast with his wife and three children, he had spent all his money. After the Feast ended, they started home with no money and knowing that they had no food [waiting](#) for them in the house. They did not know what they could do. Anxiety tormented them the entire way home. As they pulled up to their house, they were astonished to see several bags sitting on their porch, and when they got out and inspected them, they found them full of groceries! They never found out where the food had come from.

No one knows how difficult his road to the [Kingdom of God](#) will be. Some of us may not be touched by outright persecution, and we should thank God for His [kindness](#). But the chosen children of God should not be surprised if hatred, trouble, and even abuse descend on them because they keep God's Word. The Bible's prophecies predict that God's people will have a tough time, especially during the immediate lead-up to [Christ's return](#). As Jesus said, we must faithfully endure.

Will God deliver us without a scratch? We must all understand that God's higher purpose is to bring us into His Kingdom, and that He may require us to make a witness for Him before the world. In such a case, Jesus' example in the Garden of Gethsemane is the one to follow: "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)).

The Father will answer Jesus' prayer for His people in John 17. He will keep us, guard us, and watch over us. The encouraging words of Hebrews 13:5-6 should help to bolster our faith:

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
So we may boldly say:

"The LORD is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?"

- John O. Reid

New Transcripts

[1885: Deceptions of the Last Hour!](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 18-Jul-26

[1886A: Debased Sodom](#)

Given by James C. Stoertz on 25-Jul-26

[BS-TC07: The Commandments \(Part Seven\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 31-Dec-88

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Promised: Protection and Healing](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

God gives several conditions for receiving protection and healing, including God's sovereignty, God's purpose, and one's level of growth. A way to see things "God's way" involves replacing our carnal, egocentric viewpoint with outgoing concern. We must transpose our "me first" attitude with a "you first" one. Nonetheless, God's promises stand, and He is very willing to fulfill them for us.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Divine Protection Today?](#)

by Staff

Does God protect His people even today? Indeed, God's arm has not been shortened!

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 31-Jul-26) will be **Are God's Holy Days To Be Kept Today?**, given by **Martin G. Collins**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday (EST)** and all day Saturday.

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