

Yahweh is our Strength; our Refuge; and our Deliverer

The need for God's protection, and the deliverance of His people from their enemies, has been a biblical theme right from early on in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament this was seen particularly in the physical – or natural realm; but in the New Testament the emphasis is on the struggles we have in the spiritual realm. So much of what we see in the OT is a type of what we see in the NT. The principle of 'first the natural, and then the spiritual' is clearly stated by Paul in 1Corinthians 15:46 – *'But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.'*

So, why does the Bible have so much to say about enemies; our need for deliverance; and the means of overcoming that God has provided?

1. Firstly, we need to realise that God allowed the devil to exist after his rebellion against God; and He also allowed him to tempt Adam and Eve to disobey God's command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. Secondly, Adam and Eve's sin affected them profoundly – they now possessed a sinful nature at the core of their being – a nature which all of their offspring inherited – from then on, right throughout history.
3. Thirdly, God has purposes in everything He does – therefore He allowed the devil to exist; and sin to enter humanity as phases of His eternal purposes!
4. Fourthly, God earnestly desires that we put our hope and trust in Him – not only as our Saviour – but also as our strength; our refuge; and our deliverer.

As all believers will know, life is not necessarily an easy road. We all face a wide range of difficulties, challenges, and struggles. And as noted, God has allowed these things to occur for a purpose; and one of the primary purposes in this context is that God wants His people to recognise is that **only He has the power to deliver us**, and that He wants us **to trust Him as our deliverer**. Our natural inclination is to do it in our own natural strength, but our enemies are too strong; too smart; and too deceptive for us to be able to handle on our own. God's purpose is that we learn to be consistently dependent upon Him; not just in these areas, but in many other areas in our daily lives.

Another reason is that God wants us to be '**overcomers**' – overcomers of our own self-life, and of the spiritual forces of wickedness that are arrayed against us. In this we are totally dependent on Yahweh as our Saviour and deliverer.

Because of the importance of the above reasons, there are many Scriptures in this article; firstly to encourage us that Yahweh is always there for us to

protect and deliver us in all circumstances – provided we put your faith in Him to do so; and secondly, that we might learn to use the Word of God as a weapon against our enemies. But for this to be effective we need to store God's Word in our hearts so that we can quote the appropriate scriptures to the enemy, causing him to flee as he did when Jesus said to him – *'It is written ...'*

In saying all this, the implication is not that you memorise every scripture included here. That would not be possible. But my suggestion is that you familiarise yourself with them, and memorise some of the most applicable ones to be able to recite to the enemy when he tempts, deceives, or attacks you.

➤ **Yahweh is the Almighty One, He is our strength**

Psa 24:7-8 *Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.*

⁸ *Who is this King of glory? Yahweh, strong and mighty, Yahweh, mighty in battle!*

Psalm 28:7-8 *Yahweh is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. ⁸ Yahweh is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.*

Psalm 73:25-26 *Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Jeremiah 16:19 *O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: "Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit.*

➤ **Yahweh is our Rock, our Fortress, and our strong Deliverer**

Yahweh deliberately allowed David to go through challenging times, so that He could use him, both as an example of how we are to trust in the Almighty, and also to provide inspired Scriptures for us to use as part of our armour against our enemy the devil in our difficult times.

Psa 18:1-3 (NIV) *I love you, Yahweh, my strength. ² Yahweh is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I called to Yahweh, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies.*

Psa 18:30-50 (NIV) *As for God, his way is perfect: Yahweh's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. ³¹ For who is God besides Yahweh? And who is the Rock except our God? ³² It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my*

way secure. ³³ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights. ³⁴ He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

³⁵ You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me; your help has made me great. ³⁶ You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way. ³⁷ I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. ³⁸ I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.

³⁹ You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. ⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. ⁴¹ They cried for help, but there was no one to save them— to Yahweh, but he did not answer. ⁴² I beat them as fine as windblown dust; I trampled them like mud in the streets. ⁴³ You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me, ⁴⁴ foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. ⁴⁵ They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.

⁴⁶ Yahweh lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior! ⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, ⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me.

⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you, Yahweh, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name. ⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever.

I would suggest that you read through the whole of Psalm 18, as it is all about Yahweh's deliverance of David out of the hands of his enemies.

Psa 31:1-5 *To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. In you, O Yahweh, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! ² Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!*

³ For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; ⁴ you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. ⁵ Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Yahweh, faithful God.

Psalm 62:5-8 *For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah*

Psalm 91 is perhaps one of the most well-known Psalms which proclaim Yahweh as our refuge; our hiding place; and our deliverer. It is truly encouraging for those who choose to dwell in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psa 91:1-16 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say to Yahweh, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*

³ *For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.*

⁵ *You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.*

⁷ *A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸ You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.*

⁹ *Because you have made the Yahweh your dwelling place-- the Most High, who is my refuge-- ¹⁰ no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. ¹² On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.*

¹⁴ *"Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. ¹⁵ When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."*

Psalm 144:1-2 *Of David.*

¹ *Blessed be Yahweh, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle; ² he is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.*

It was not only David who knew Yahweh to be a strong deliverer and a place of refuge, but also other OT men of God. The Sons of Korah were responsible for guarding the entrance to the sanctuary, and for ministering with music at the Tabernacle. There are a number of Psalms that are attributed to them.

➤ **Psalms of the Sons of Korah.**

Psa 44:4-8 (NIV) *You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob.*

⁵ *Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes. ⁶ I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; ⁷ but you*

give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. ⁸ In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.

Psa 46:1 *To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song.*

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

⁸ Come, behold the works of Yahweh, how he has brought desolations on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

¹¹ Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

➤ **Solomon's declaration**

Pro 18:10 *The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.*

➤ **The prophets**

Isa 12:2 (NIV) *Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. Yahweh, Yahweh himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation."*

Isa 26:3-4 *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ⁴ Trust in Yahweh forever, for Yahweh, Yahweh is an everlasting rock. (Notice the strong emphasis on the name of 'Yahweh' in v.4)*

Isa 45:24-25 (NIV) *They will say of me, 'In Yahweh alone are deliverance and strength.'" All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. ²⁵ But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in Yahweh and will make their boast in him.*

Nah 1:7-8 *Yahweh is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. ⁸ But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.*

What a positive encouragement all these Scriptures are for us. The two passages in particular that I would encourage you to learn are **Psalm 18:1-3** and **44:4-8**. Also – **Psalm 91** is a long one to memorize, but I would suggest that you at least familiarize yourself with it; and when you are feeling anxious, or under stress or pressure, then that is the time to declare these Scriptures, or read through them with a positive trust in Yahweh to be what He declares for you.

Prov 3:5-8 *Trust in Yahweh with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes; fear Yahweh, and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.*

Praise God for His mighty power; and His care, protection, and deliverance for those who trust in Him.

When we come to the NT, the stand-out deliverer is of course Jesus.

➤ **Jesus is our strength; our refuge; and our deliverer**

Jesus is the living 'Word'; He is God in essence. And as such, all the Scriptures about Yahweh being our strength; our refuge; and our deliverer, apply to Jesus as well. Jesus, who is our 'Life', has been given authority over every other power and authority. This especially refers to the spiritual forces of evil that are arrayed against us.

God *'...raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet...* (**Eph 1:20b-22**)

2Cor 12:9 *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Eph 6:10 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

Phil 4:13 *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

➤ **Through His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus has delivered us from the evil one.**

1John 3:8b *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

Col 2:15 *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

➤ **Jesus has provided us with everything we need to be overcomers and to live a godly life**

Rom 8:32 *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

2Cor 6:7 *...in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left...*

2Cor 10:3-5 *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

2Pet 1:3-4 (NIV) *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

➤ **There is no need of fear when we are trusting in the Lord**

Deu 7:21 *You shall not be in dread of them, for Yahweh your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.*

Psa 27:1-3 *Of David. Yahweh is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Yahweh is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?² When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.*

Psa 46:1b-2 *...God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea...*

Psa 118:6-8 *Yahweh is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?⁷ Yahweh is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.*

⁸ *It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in man.*

Isaiah 26:3-4 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ⁴ Trust in Yahweh forever, for Yahweh the Lord is an everlasting rock.

Rom 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³ He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Heb 13:6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

➤ **It is God's power that delivers us from our enemies: both our flesh, and the spiritual forces of evil**

Psa 44:4-8 You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob. ⁵ Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes. ⁶ I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; ⁷ but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. ⁸ In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.

Even though this is pointing to the victories that God proclaims for Jacob (Israel), it is nevertheless a general God-given principal that applies to all of God's people who trust Him as their deliverer.

Psa 18:39-40 For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. ⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed.

Prov 18:10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

The 'name' of God (as in the Scriptures above, and many others) refers to Yahweh's nature and abilities – to all that He is. In these verses, it applies

especially to the fact that Yahweh will hear our prayer, and by His almighty power will deliver us in whatever way he chooses. Sometimes He allows us to go through difficult times to test us – to see if we will continue to trust Him to the very end. God may allow the devil to harm us physically, but he can never harm us spiritually – provided we keep on trusting our Deliverer for His protection. It is only through God’s power that we can win the battle against every enemy.

Eph 6:10-18 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...*

➤ **Praise is a God-given weapon**

Psa 8:2 *Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. (cf Matt 21:16)*

Psa 149:5-9 *Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.*

⁶ *Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands, ⁷ to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples, ⁸ to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, ⁹ to execute on them the judgment written! This is honor for all his godly ones. Praise Yahweh!*

Meditation: It is because of God’s compassionate and gracious care of His people; together with His almighty, sovereign power; that His protection and deliverance are always available for us. He cares for us; He wants to keep us from the evil one; and has all the power to do so. But we need to be aware of **the conditions** under which God’s protection will apply. Psalms 91 begins with: ‘Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High...’ To ‘dwell’ means to remain; to

stay; to rest. This is a decision we have to make – to remain under God’s shelter – His covering and protection; and to renounce any forces of wickedness that are trying to cause us to fear. What can harm us if we remain under God’s protection? The second phrase is just a different way of saying the same thing: we ‘... *rest in the shadow of the Almighty.* (NIV)

Notice the next condition. It is a confident statement of **our faith in God** to do what he says: “*He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.*” For us to be able to experience the fullness of God’s care, protection, and deliverance, we must be trusting in God and his promises, and confidently declare those promises when we sense that we are under the attack of the enemy. This can happen in times of stress, depression, or other trying circumstances. As we have already noted; God allows these things to happen for the purpose of training us to trust Yahweh and His Word for us, and to use His Word as a means of overcoming.

Read through the very encouraging Psalms 18 & 91 several times, and let the thoughts of them settle into your heart. Praise God for His care and protection from hidden dangers and from deadly diseases.

Take time to praise and worship

Psa 73:25-28 *Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.*

²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

²⁷ *For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.*

²⁸ *But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.*

Isa 25:1-4 (NIV) *Yahweh, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago. ² You have made the city a heap of rubble, the fortified town a ruin, the foreigners' stronghold a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. ³ Therefore strong peoples will honor you; cities of ruthless nations will revere you. ⁴ You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.*