

Psalm 140

Read Psalm 140:1-5: This is another Psalm of David. David is asking God for protection from evil and harmful men. The Old Testament definition of salvation is *physical salvation* (Do not let them kill me). The New Testament concept of salvation is *spiritual salvation* (saved from hell).

Why was David continuously at odds with envious men and power-hungry aggressors? He was a man who uniquely stood in the gap. David was *like a protective sheep dog*. God built him with special skills to protect his people. He grew up tangling with thieves, lions, wolves and bears. That takes a high level of conviction, and a special physical skill set.

‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. (2 Samuel 7:8-9)

But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:34-37)

One way to see David is as a sheepdog. There are many ancient breeds of dogs bred to protect sheep from predators. One example is the fearless **Anatolian Shepherd (Kangal)**. It is a traditional flock guardian dog, kept with flocks of sheep to fend off wolves and other predators. This breed will actually analyze people and animals that approach the herd. They will not even bark at intruders that have no ill intent. Livestock losses have been cut significantly at more than 80% of the farms where the dogs have been adopted. Kangal is the dog with the most powerful and strongest bite force, which is high enough to take down a wolf in one excellent shot. Kangal has the strongest bite force of 743 PSI while a wolf has about 400 PSI bite force.

This breed is a perfect match for any wolf but would require little training to face a wolf.



Any public guardian has to take personal risks. David had a skill set that put him in harm's way. He inspired men to be likewise bold. He inspired his untrained mighty men of valor to wage war on an unequalled level. His courage and love for his fellow man was contagious. He successfully fought Philistines, Syrians, Moabites, etc...

How does God tell us to protect ourselves from evil men?

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to

quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— (Ephesians 6:11-18)

This verse about spiritual armor speaks of a breastplate of righteousness. Knowing that we are standing up for what is right emboldens us. Living with compromise creates shame, and diminishes our convictions. The armor of light is all on the front side; and is intended for advancement, not retreat. One reason that we might be getting beat up is that we are not moving forward in our faith. We might just be somebody's target practice. David was making big moves to protect people and honor God. That draws fire from everyone who prefers darkness and a godless world.

David's experiences were not just for Israel's benefit. There are reasons for our experiences. David was drawing a lot of fire; though he did what was right much of the time. The weakness of the believer is often in his strength. David had an advantage in hand-to-hand combat and boldness in battle. David also crossed the line as he also took uncalled for lives along the way. God told him that his hands were too bloody. We must fall out of self-love to see things more clearly. David lived by the sword for good reasons; but he had to see past all of that to embrace God's big picture.

But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.' However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. (1 Chronicles 28:3-6)

Read Psalm 140:6-11: Most of us never have to put our life on the line like David. David did many times. He even had doubtful battles that he charged into. David needs no convincing. He knows for a fact that God has supernaturally protected him. God raises up leaders according to our needs.

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, or wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; (Daniel 2:20-21)

Apparently George Washington experienced some similar deliverances as he protected his people.

In the bitterly frozen winter of 1777 as the future of the United States hung in the balance, General George Washington, the father of our nation, pondered his dwindling options. His 12,000 man Continental Army was ill equipped, in rags, and starving. His staff officers were contemplating impending surrender. He had just received news that a much needed shipment of supply wagons had probably been turned back by Congress. Valley Forge was the scene of one of the most desperate moments of the American Revolution.

The darkest hour

General Washington sat in a two story house being used as the headquarters for the Continental Army and read the bitter message delivered by a courier horseman, accompanied by Colonel Danforth and French Commander Lafayette, who was suffering from a leg wound, news of a failed shipment did not set well. The war had come to its most desperate juncture. Morale of his beleaguered soldiers was at an all-time low. Would the new nation survive as Washington begged Congress for more appropriations to fund the war effort against the British? Each month the Continental Army was losing 500 men to sickness and exposure. A grim realization was emerging.

An uncanny moment alone

Washington left his command quarters to step out into the cold night and, followed by his horse, kneeled down on a place in the snow with his hands clasped together. He prayed to God asking if he was fit to make a decision that affected so many lives. Then he asked the Lord for his help. Suddenly before him on the frozen snow covered ground he saw strange images that made him sweep the snow with his hand in astonishment. He then noticed a presence and the voice of someone standing very near. George Washington looked up in surprise to see an Indian Chief who had opposed him along with the French in a battle of the past.

Valor in battle

At the battle Monongahela River under the command of British General Braddock, a deadly skirmish that occurred from a combined Indian and French ambush decimated

the ranks of the English. In the battle the young officer George Washington had two horses shot out from underneath him as British soldiers fell and horse mounted officers were picked off by Indian sharpshooters. Yet, with more than fifteen shots fired at Washington as he tried to re-assemble his troops, the enemy failed to bring him down. General Braddock, Washington's superior officer was killed as were reported numbers of soldiers as high as 800 in the course of the surprise attack.

Later it was found that there were four holes in Washington's uniform coat, and two holes in his hat. In over 200 battles that he participated in Washington was never even scathed!

Former enemy becomes an ally

The Indian Chief there at the battle of Monongahela in 1755 had ordered his rifleman to take out Washington then admitted he had finally ordered his braves to cease fire as this man was being protected by the Great Spirit and was not destined to be die by any bullet. In view of the number of engagements that Washington had fought in, it would seem that this claim was true. The Indian Chief told the discouraged General Washington that he would succeed, that the general of the rag tag Continental Army would become a much remembered leader of a great empire that was to come. Now he inexplicably stood face to face with General Washington in the bitter cold of the night. Suddenly a noise startled Washington and he turned to see what had happened.

No trace is left

The Chief had vanished, but even stranger was the untouched snow that Washington noticed where the Native American chief had stood. There were no footprints! George Washington felt the icy cold ground where the Indian had been in disbelief! He returned to his command quarters bewildered. The general ordered a meeting with his staff officers at 9 o'clock that night as he strode into his office. As officers mumbled among themselves about the impending disbanding of the Continental Army and the supposed promises made by the British that the Colonists would be granted all their grievances except for their independence, the general sat in his chair next to the fireplace and leaned his weary head against the high-back, closing his eyes he dozed momentarily.

Vision of the future?

A vision assaulted Washington's senses as he sat. A wave of clairvoyance washed over his mind as General Washington's eyes rolled in his head with the REM (rapid

eye movement) experienced in the dream state, but now futuristic images were illuminating this leader of the ragged Continental Army. As the assembled staff of officers poured through the door of the command headquarters, General Washington stood firmly and confidently issuing orders that astonished his expectant young officers. The American General astonished his subordinates by ordering them to motivate the soldiers with projects to keep them busy and engaged while proclaiming that they would prevail over the British and victory would be theirs!

We are told that there are spiritual forces continuously doing battle in the heavenlies. For those who are involved, there is an accompaniment and fellowship with God. Those of us who are turning our back on the needs of others miss out on that stream of life and purpose. We wonder why our life is so uneventful and melancholy. God did not design us to live unto ourselves. Our vibrancy and healing and sense of purpose lines up with our call to duty.

Read Psalm 140:12-13: God holds a special place in his heart for the down and out. God raises up leaders as needed for their benefit.

Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.’ (Zechariah 7:8-10)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. (Matthew 5:3-7)

Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed. (Psalm 41:1-3)

David is putting the afflicted and the righteous together as victims to unfair men. Like a sheepdog; he is ultimately honoring his master. David has a heightened awareness of the oppressors. He is like a sheepdog who wants to kill the wolf, and protect his flock. He felt the need to do battle with bears and lions to save his flock. That sense of right and wrong and duty gave him confidence to step into harm's way.