

Psalm Sundays

Text
Psalm 125

Topic
The psalmist describes God supernaturally surrounding His people the way the mountains are naturally around Jerusalem

Title
"Round, Round, God Surrounds, He Gets Around, Yeah, God's Around, Round, Round, Round"

Wakanda is protected by an impressive force field.

In 2018's *Infinity War*, the enemy Drop Ships crashed into the force field and were immediately repelled and destroyed.

The force field is a critical technology in fictional tales. It is an energy barrier. While it can be used for containment or confinement, it's usual function is to protect a person, area, or object from attacks or intrusions.

I can only guess how many times Captain Kirk said, *"Raise shields."* It's always followed by successive reports on the remaining percentage of shield-strength, until finally Kirk is informed, *"The shields can't take another hit."*

1 of 12
Psalm 125

*"Round Round God' Surrounds He Get's Around,
Yeah, God's Around, Round, Round, Round"*



The invading alien armada from *Independence Day* had energy shields so potent they could shrug off nuclear weapons without a scratch. Spoiler alert: Humanity ultimately won by uploading a computer virus to the mothership that disabled the shields, then nuking the mothership before they could correct the problem.

Violet Parr, daughter of Bob & Helen, has the power to generate her own force fields, and often does so as one of the Incredibles.

Back in 2012, Boeing received a patent for a kind of force field. No report on their progress.

Psalm 125:2 says, "as the mountains **surround** Jerusalem..." At 2510 feet in elevation, Mount Zion is the mountain on which Jerusalem is built. Surrounding it are several other taller peaks, e.g., the Mount of Olives.

The psalmist uses this *natural* shield of the city from enemies as a metaphor for God's *supernatural* shield of His chosen, saying, "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, **So the LORD surrounds His people.**"

As far back as The Book of Job, which is believed to be the oldest book in the Bible, we see God surrounds His people. Satan prefaced his assault upon Job by complaining to the LORD, "Have You not made a **hedge around him,** around his household, and around all that he has on every side?" (1:10).

The LORD is Shield, Hedge, Fortress, Hiding Place, Keeper, Refuge, Rock, Shade, Shelter, and Stronghold. They all communicate, each in their own way, His *surrounding* believers.

2 of 12

Psalm 125

*"Round Round God' Surrounds He Get's Around,
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We want to rejoice in God's surrounding as we work through this psalm. We also need to talk about those times the shields seem at 50%, or down completely, and we feel as though we can't take another hit.

I'll organize my comments around two points: #1 God Will Preserve You In His Forever Surround, and #2 God Will Prove Himself To You In His Forever Surround.

#1 - God Will Preserve You In His Forever Surround (v1-2)

We always need to be cautious when applying things to ourselves that God promised Israel. We are *not* Israel; **Israel was never the church.** For one thing, the New Testament reveals several "mysteries" about the church. A "mystery" in the Bible is something that was previously unknown until made known in the New Testament. A few of the mysteries revealed about the church are:

- 👤 The church is one body (Ephesians 3:1-12).
- 👤 The church is an organism (Colossians 1:26-27).
- 👤 The church is the bride of Jesus (Ephesians 5:32).
- 👤 The rapture of the church (First Corinthians 15:51-52).

That's all to say, "How can Israel be the church if the church was a mystery not revealed until the New Testament?"

We'll be careful, but since God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, we can examine His treatment of Israel and expect His treatment of us to be similar based on His nature and on His character.

3 of 12

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The New Testament may not use the same metaphors to describe God surrounding.

But the spirit of verses one and two most definitely apply to us as being secure in Jesus.

The New Testament may not ever say that Jesus is a "hedge," but it's applicable, and I'd say it's appropriate language for us to employ.

Psa 125:1 A Song of Ascents. Those who trust in the LORD Are like Mount Zion, *Which* cannot be moved, *but* abides forever.

The word "Zion" means something like *fortification*, or has the idea of being *raised up* as a *monument*. It is mentioned in the Bible over 150 times. It is synonymous with the city of God, with the place that God says He loves, with Jerusalem (Psalm 87:2-3).

It was David's intent during his reign to build a Temple on this property. I wonder if they put up a sign? "Future home of God on earth."

Solomon, David's son, would lay the foundation and build the Temple for the LORD.

The Bible sometimes calls Mount Zion, Mount Moriah. It was the site where Abraham was asked to offer his son, Isaac, on an altar as a sacrifice. The episode makes no sense until you realize that it was on that same spot that God the Father would offer His Son, Jesus, as the sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Jerusalem, by the way, *has no strategic military value*. An advancing army has to go out of its way to go there. Everything that has happened there throughout history is spiritual.

4 of 12

Psalm 125

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Psa 125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD surrounds His people From this time forth and forever.

Technically, biblically, Mount Zion and the other peaks will *not* abide "forever."

The apostle Peter tells us that, in the future, "The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up... all these things will be dissolved" (Second Peter 3:10-11).

To quote Tazerface, "*It's metaphorical!*" Standing in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, the history and the prophecies involving the nation of Israel shouted to His gathered people of His surrounding them with wonderful, miraculous things that had transpired there, and that will again in the future. A sense of the LORD's preservation of the nation was communicated by the mighty mountains metaphor.

Jesus promised **us** forever preservation when He said, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

Listen to that one phrase at a time:

- 🧠 "I **give** them eternal life." God's salvation is entirely a gift. It cannot ever be earned or deserved. It cannot be *achieved* - only *received*.
- 🧠 "Eternal life" doesn't simply mean we will live forever. Everyone lives forever - but their quality of life isn't eternal life with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nonbelievers will live forever in conscious torment in the Lake of Fire.

5 of 12
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- 🗣️ "They shall never perish" means once you've received eternal life, you cannot be lost to "perish" eternally like nonbelievers.
- 🗣️ "Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." No one, either natural or supernatural, can alter your position in the Lord's hand.
- 🗣️ "My hand." It is a nail-printed hand. The Cross upon which He died, and Jesus' subsequent bodily resurrection three days later, render all the promises of God True and Amen.

Jesus followed-up His promise by insisting, in the very next verse, "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand" (v29).

Before you let your mind wander to coined, catch-phrases like "eternal security," or "once saved, always saved," simply read again those nineteen words Jesus spoke. You'll conclude that Jesus preserves you. He began the work in you, and He will finish it.

#2 - God Will Prove Himself To You In His Forever Surround (v3-5)

The force field protecting Wakanda repelled the immense herd of Outriders, but the continuous pressure by the aliens allowed a few to pierce through. Once the Avengers understood they were at risk of being flanked, Black Panther ordered a section of the shield to be opened to direct their attack upon the gathered heroes.

Does Jesus open sections of His shield to expose us to attack? It sure seems that way.

Reading the opening chapters of Job, it sure seems the LORD uprooted the protective hedge, to allow Satan to rush in.

6 of 12

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Let's ask two preliminary questions:

- 🧠 Is God's hedge about His children a promise of protection from material loss?
- 🧠 Is God's hedge about His children a promise of protection from physical illness?

Nope, it's not. Especially in the church age. We are promised trouble - and lots of it.

In The Book of Romans, in chapter eight, Paul says that God is "for us," and that nothing can separate us from His love. Then he rattles off an incredible list of troubles that come against us.

Likewise in Hebrews chapter eleven we read of awful things that befell believers, and still do.

The life of the apostle Paul was filled with immense suffering.

Here at Calvary, we talk about trouble *all the time*:

- 🧠 For one, trouble is a major topic in the Bible. We talk about it because it comes up a lot in verse-by-verse teaching.
- 🧠 For two, even though we know to expect trouble, it still seems to surprise us when it comes.
- 🧠 For three, I believe the problem of pain and suffering is the #1 reason nonbelievers reject God. It's for sure the #1 reason they give.

7 of 12

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Here's the thing: When we are assaulted, it isn't because Jesus opened Northwest Section 17 of the force field. **His promised spiritual shielding remains in place.**

We need to stop thinking that Jesus quits surrounding us.

Psa 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest On the land allotted to the righteous, Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.

When they are "under the scepter," *i.e.*, under the authority, of wicked oppressors, God preserved them.

Isn't that the history of the nation of Israel in the proverbial nutshell? Egypt... Assyria... Babylon... Persia... Greece... Rome... Israel was "under the scepter" of all of them, but she survived.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70AD, Israel was no longer a nation. But even though dispersed all over the earth, and targeted for extermination, they survived to become a nation again in modern times.

Israel will survive a future extermination attempt by the Beast of the Revelation - the man best known as The Antichrist.

And they won't just survive physically, making it to the end. The apostle Paul tells us all Israel will receive Jesus and be saved.

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB" (Romans 11:26).

8 of 12

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Psa 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest On the land allotted to the righteous, Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.

The “righteous” were those Jews within the nation of Israel who believed God, and to whom the LORD thereby declared “righteous.” They could absolutely trust that the LORD would keep them by overruling the wicked.

Concerning the final words of verse three, Joseph Benson writes:

[God intervenes] lest through human infirmity, and the great weight or long continuance of their troubles, [the righteous] should be driven to impatience, or to despair, or to use indirect and sinful courses to relieve themselves. We learn from this that God considers the frail frame of his people, and proportions their trials to their strength, by the care of his providence, as well as their strength to their trials, by the power of his grace.

The New Testament counterpart is to say, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*” (First Corinthians 10:13).

Add to that this great promise in the Book of Jude: “[Jesus] is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present *you* faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (v24).

Psa 125:4 Do good, O LORD, to *those who are good*, And to *those who are upright* in their hearts.

Psa 125:5 As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, The LORD shall lead them away With the workers of iniquity. Peace *be* upon Israel!

9 of 12

Psalm 125

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Keep the nation of Israel in mind. Not all Jews were saved. You weren't saved by birth; or by obeying the Law; or by offering sacrifices; or by pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As I mentioned a moment ago, you were saved by believing God. He credited it as righteousness.

Regarding the "good" in verse four:

- 👤 They were "good" by virtue of God declaring them righteous.
- 👤 Their uprightness in heart was not the basis of their salvation, but rather the result of it.

The reason that Israel was often "under the scepter of wickedness" was because the nonbelieving Jews of verse five "turned aside to their crooked ways."

God therefore "[led] them away" by giving the nation over to the wicked nations whose morality and practices they were emulating; and whose god's they were worshipping.

The righteous suffered greatly "under the scepter." They were thrown into fiery furnaces; they were thrown into lion's dens; they were thrown into cisterns and left to drown in muck and mud. How is that a hedge? How does that preserve?

Remember: **The hedge is not protection from or against material affliction.**

I did a quick Strong's Concordance search of the words "surround," "surrounds," and "surrounded." Here are the results in the NKJV:

Psa 5:12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

10 of 12

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Psalms 32:7 You *are* my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalms 32:10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

Psalms 142:7 Bring my soul out of prison, That I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, For You shall deal bountifully with me."

Psalms 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, Who *is* mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.

God's surround promises you all the spiritual enablement you need in the midst of trouble.

Do you need a to know God's "favor?" Do you need "a song of deliverance?" Do you need "mercy?" Do you need the fellowship of other believers? If so, you can count on the LORD's "faithfulness" by providing them.

As an Incredible, Violet could extend her force field to preserve others. It's somewhat common in SyFy for those with a force field to extend it.

"Faithfulness" surrounds the LORD and is therefore extended **to surround you.**

I don't think this list exhausts the spiritual resources Jesus has to extend to you.

Grace would certainly be another shield, as would love. We sing a chorus, "Your holiness surrounds me."

11 of 12

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I say on the basis of God's love for you that anything pure and spiritual you need to surround you is extended.

There's more: It is in those times when your only shielding is spiritual that God proves to you His love, or His grace, or His mercy. You can't experience them unless you need them.

While watching the Drop Ships explode, Bucky said, "I love this place."

When you are shielded, but in some trouble, you are enabled to say, "I'm **loved** in this place."

Nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

12 of 12

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