

God's Promise to Protect

You can't pick up a newspaper today or watch the news without reading or hearing a story about some horrific event concerning the intolerance of radical Islam. There are so many groups that are out to kill as many non-Muslim people as they can that it's hard to fathom. Christians world-wide are in constant danger. As it was after the events of September 11, 2001, many look to God for answers. How could He let these things happen? How can a loving God allow us to be placed into the situation we're in? What should our response be?

The Old Testament is full of situations like ours. There are horrible things happening to the people of God followed by the same type doubts and questions. One such sequence of event is in **II Kings, chapters 16-22**.

During the reign of one of Israel's most wicked kings, Ahab, Elijah was prophet in Israel. As recorded in **1 Kings 18:16-40**, he arranged a meeting with Ahab to prove to Him that Jehovah was the only true God and not Baal, the "god" Ahab worshipped. A contest was held between Elijah and 450 prophets of Baal. The result? The prophets of Baal couldn't do what Jehovah could and Elijah, the Scripture says, "slaughtered" the prophets of Baal. A great victory, but not one large enough to make Elijah confident in God's protection of him.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, threatens Elijah right after this. Elijah runs because he fears for his life. He begins to feel sorry for himself and his situation. In **2 Kings 19:4**, he asks God to take his life from him. His statement in **verse 10** makes it clear that he is not confident in God's protection:

"I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

It is at this time that God reassures Elijah of his protection, feeds him and allows him to rest. His strength and confidence was renewed. He was told that the new king that he would anoint, Jehu, would destroy the influence that Ahab and Jezebel had over Israel with the use of 7000 that God said had not "bowed knee to Baal." Elijah boldly prophesied against Ahab and Jezebel in **1 Kings 21**. Dogs would lick Ahab's blood and, not at the same time, dogs would eat Jezebel's flesh. Ahab's family would suffer and die at the hands of Jehovah God and His servants. By **2 Kings 9**, the prophecies were fulfilled. God has a tendency to deal with evil people.

Four things learned from **I Kings 16-22**: (1) God will always protect His own, (2) We are not alone in our struggle with evil, (3) Trouble will always follow those who do evil, and (4) We must wait patiently for the Lord to act; first, to strengthen and protect us, and

second, to deal decisively with evil. David said it best (if we'll only believe it) in **Psalm 56:11**:

"...in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?"