

## What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series

### Keeping Covenant

## God of the Rear Guard

### Part 3

"For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your Rereward [literally, Rear Guard]"

(Isaiah 52:12).

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**Thesis:** Because man was not designed by the Creator with eyes in back of his head, God has covenanted with His people to protect and guard them from behind.

**Proof:** In the spirit of the world, man's selfishness makes much of looking out for his own interests, especially watching out or protecting his back. "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1John 4:5). "After all," they would argue, "if we do not look out for ourselves, who else will?" "This wisdom descendeth not from Above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). And, the "wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1Corinthians 3:19). What we should consider, is that **God intentionally fashioned us with the inability to watch our own back, so that we would have to depend upon Him.** <sup>14</sup> Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. <sup>15</sup> For that ye ought to say, If the LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:14-15).

It is a tribute to God that He created us in His own moral likeness. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). Everything about our creation, speaks of the wisdom and love of God, for how could the Creator's work be anything but "very good" (1:31)? "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14). Our eyes illustrate how the Creator intended for us to see, i.e., with a single focus, both physically and spiritually. "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of Light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness" (Luke 11:34). Attentiveness to hear what is spoken to the head and the heart, is the Creator's purpose in giving us "ears to hear" (Mark 4:9). Our mouths, hands, and feet represent how we are to use the features and graces God has bestowed upon us. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7). It is instructive that the "breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14) of what is called the Christian's "whole armour of God" (6:11), armors the front, leaving the back exposed (using the Roman soldier as the illustration.) Thus, it necessitates an offensive stance facing the enemy, as

well as, strategic planning on a large enough scale to keep the enemy from attacking from the rear, which is just what is intended by God promising to "be your **Rereward** [literally, **Rear Guard**]" (Isaiah 52:12). "8 Keep me as the apple of the Eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, 9 from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about" (Psalm 17:8-9).

When man acts wickedly, he takes great pride that he can take care of himself. "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). Self replaces the Almighty. "For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful" (Psalm 36:2). The foolishness of his heart is summarized with the thought, "There is no God" (14:1). How can anyone forget God so thoroughly? Whenever we commit the least sin, at that moment, we have changed from Light to darkness, from Love to hate, from Devotion to God to dedication to self. "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Then, when we continue to **refuse to admit** our sin, i.e., "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us" (1John 1:8), we degenerate into an even more self-deceived state, e.g., "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). Before long, we may even surprise others with the degradation of our conduct, while we continue to obstinately and self-righteously maintain our innocence. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is NOT in us" (1John 1:10). Thus, we pervert God's original plan for our loving submission to His command to "have dominion" (Genesis 1:28) over the planet, into an ultimate declaration of our independence from God. "4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. 6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity" (Psalm 10:4, 6). [For a more thorough discussion of what is sin, why we sin, and how not to sin, please see our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --.]

As the Church approaches the end of this Church Age, the Saints who are now alive, must address the concept that Someone must be guarding the last of us, as we leave this planet, i.e., by Pre-Tribulational Rapture, Pre-Wrath Rapture, etc. "19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and **went behind them**; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and **stood behind them**: 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Exodus 14:19-20). [Please read our article, "[Harpazo: The Scriptural Concept of Rapture](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Harpazo.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Harpazo.html> -- concerning the general idea of the Rapture, and "[The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> -- concerning the Scripturalness of a Pre-Wrath Rapture. And, "[Thy Hidden Ones](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Thy.Hidden.Ones.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Thy.Hidden.Ones.html> -- gives a discussion of God's protection, especially of Tribulation Saints, by means of hiding; while bringing into perspective the possibility of *multiple* Raptures.] Just as the angel of God served as Israel's rear guard from Pharaoh's chariots, the LORD Jesus understands the difficult situation of His people, who are the "Remnant of His Heritage" (Micah 7:18), that vex their "righteous soul from day to day with [the world's] unlawful deeds" (2Peter 2:8). By faith, before the enemy, who spread themselves out against the Saints as a "green bay tree" (Psalm 37:35) to exterminate the Faithful, *our God will interpose Himself, watching our back side, to deliver us; even if He must Rapture us*. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Elisha's deliverance from the king of Syria illustrates how willing God is to protect-- *from the front, as well as the rear*-- those who put their trust in Him to do it. "8 Then the king of Syria warred against

Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. 9 And the man of God [Elisha] sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host [of the Syrians] compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his [Elisha's] servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he [Elisha] answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire *round about Elisha*" (2Kings 6:8-17).

## Conclusion

Just as we understand the specific Promise of Isaiah 52:12, "For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your Rereward [Rear Guard]", to be God's Covenant of *Himself being our Rear Guard*, all of God's Promises may be utilized as Covenants for His protection. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by These ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having **escaped** the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [Please visit the "[Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> -- section of our website, for an extensive listing and discussion of the Promises of God.] **We ought to walk with confidence, when we consider that the God of Omnipotence not only goes before us, but He guards us from behind!** "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

As [C. H. Spurgeon](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.Haddon.Spurgeon.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.Haddon.Spurgeon.html> -- so aptly stated about the Promises of God:

"A PROMISE from God may very instructively be compared to a check payable to the order. It is given to the believer with the view of bestowing upon him some good thing... He is to take the promise, and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true... This done, he must believingly *present* the promise to the Lord, as a man presents a check at the counter of the Bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled" --from the [Preface of Spurgeon's "Faith's Checkbook"](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spurgeon/Faith.Checkbook/Faiths.Checkbook.Preface.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spurgeon/Faith.Checkbook/Faiths.Checkbook.Preface.html> --.

"4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and He heard me out of His Holy Hill. Selah. 5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me *round about*. 7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8

Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Selah" (Psalm 3:4-8).

Amen, and Amen.