

[Follow up question] ...I guess I want to know what the Bible says about instances where saved believers are killed, raped, etc. even though we've prayed for protection, safety, etc. Like verses saying that God will provide; i.e. "Ask and ye shall receive..." or "And whatever you ask in prayer, you shall receive, if you have faith," but they still perish or experience horrific hardship, why isn't that prayer answered though asked with faith by a saved believer? I want to know how we're supposed to view that/ what the Bible says about it.

Jesus had caused a fig tree to wither and die (Mt 21:18-19¹) and the disciples were amazed (21:20). He provided a lesson about prayer saying that if one had faith, he could do what he had just done (21:21a).

In Matthew 7:7-11² the Lord spoke about the responsibilities of a believer. Christians are commanded (7:7) to seek God's will. When they do, they should have confidence that he will reveal it (7:8).

Christians are not guaranteed protected from: murder, adultery, kidnapping, etc. In fact, Christians throughout history have been mistreated by the world.

The author of Hebrews wrote:

Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead—they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us. He 11:32–40

Christians went through trials *by faith*.

The Lord made it clear that: "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" but, he said, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (Jn 16:33)."

¹ Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away (Mt 21:18–19, KJV).

² Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Mt 7:7–11, KJV.

In the last days before the rapture of the church Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy warned about a coming great apostasy (2 Ti 3). Men will be without love and brutal (3:3). Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse (3:13).

Christians should continue in the work of God (3:10-13) and in the word of God (3:14–17).

Believers groan (Ro 8:18a, 23) wishing to be released from pain and suffering. They are to wait patiently and confidently (8:24–25).

Jesus said that his followers would be hated, betrayed and martyred (Mt 24:9-10).

God does not micromanage the believer's circumstances; but, when bad things happen to those who love him and are called according to his purpose (Ro 8:28b), he promises to work them out for their good (8:28).

Christians can pray for protection³. God may answer: yes or no (Ps 18:2, 2 Ti 4:17, 18) for his own purposes. When prayer is not answered, his grace is sufficient (2 Co 12:9).

Christians are not ashamed; but, partakers of affliction (2 Ti 1:8-11, 1 Pe 4:13). They continue in service (2 Ti 2) during apostasy (3-4:5). The Lord is worthy of all of our love and loyalty (2 Ti 1). He has been loyal to his servants (4:6-22).

Believers may be given a foretaste of heaven (Ac 7:55, 56); but, they're not there yet.

³ Characteristics of divine protection: continuous (Ps. 121:3–8), unailing (Josh. 1:5), assuring (Is. 41:10), persevering (John 10:28–30), satisfying (2 Cor. 12:9, 10), necessary (Ps. 124:1–5). Divine protection may be provided against: evil (2 Thess. 3:3), temptation (1 Cor. 10:13), persecution (Rev. 3:10), enemies (Ps. 56:9), falling (Jude 24), dangers (Ps. 91:3–7), calamities (Ps. 57:1). Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index (p. 510). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.