

The Hedge of Protection

Scripture: Job 1:8–11; Luke 21:16–19

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Have you noticed how some Christians speak a different language when they pray? I'm not referring to speaking in "angelic" gibberish language or whatever passes for "speaking in tongues" these days. I'm talking about how some believers attempt to elevate the language and terminology they use during corporate prayer. Call it *Christianese*.

God is a *Thou*. His kingdom is *Thine*. And we address Him as *Thee*. People *beseech* and *petition* instead of simply asking. And those requests can be authenticated by signing off with "in Jesus' name." I'm not saying it's wrong to speak this way, just that it's unusual to the uninitiated.

Beyond that, the *Christianese* can veer into strange territory. An awkward pause in proceedings can be sanctified by a "hallelujah." "Traveling mercies" are requested for safety on long trips. And "hedges of protection" are prayed over those in danger.

As a new believer, it was the "hedge of protection" that intrigued me the most. The prayer warriors all seemed to be in on this exciting discovery of Satan's kryptonite. As they prayed that hedge of protection over the spiritually vulnerable, it conjured images of a supernatural force field in my mind.

Personally, my knowledge of hedges was very limited. My grandfather had the only one that I knew of and it was merely a boundary marker with his neighbor, not a barrier for intruders. I did get some nasty scratches whenever I tried to squirm through it, and it certainly slowed my progress—but it was hardly Fort Knox.

Is it biblical?

It wasn't until I first read through Job that I discovered the biblical basis for the protective hedge.

The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." (Job 1:8–11)

Satan's accusation was simple. Job didn't worship God out of love, but because He was the source of Job's material wealth and the preserver of that prosperity by means of a protective hedge.

Ancient Near Eastern cultures often grew hedges to protect their property, crops, and livestock. They

were usually composed of tangled thorn bushes that became increasingly difficult to penetrate as they grew over time. They were certainly a far more viable alternative to the construction of fences in places where trees were scarce. And it was probably this type of hedge that the author of Job chose as a metaphor for God's divine protection over Job's affluence.

Is it supernatural?

So the protective hedge is not without biblical precedent. But does that mean believers should pray for such protection? And how much liberty can one take concerning where and when that hedge is to be called down?

Some prominent voices in religious media are more than willing to construct a detailed theology around the limited biblical data.

This is a spiritual reality. There is a hedge of protection that comes through Jesus for you and your house. It's invisible, but it's there. As we pray, the Lord will put a hedge around us, our family, our household, and around all that we touch and all that we have. You can visualize this as a physical hedge, or as we often say, think of it as a bubble of God's glory. There is an atmosphere around you that has a force. It carries the presence and power and promise of Heaven. Negative things can be all around you, but as they encounter that bubble, they hit a barrier they can't penetrate. Within that sphere, the blessings of God will come as well as increase. It carries a vibration of Heaven that brings everything else into harmony with God's plan and purpose. [1] <http://sidroth.org/articles/build-hedge-your-house>

That quote sounds like some bizarre hybrid of Scripture and *Star Wars*. But it's actually from a 2012 article that appeared on a prominent Christian website. Sid Roth, who has garnered a large audience through the sensational claims he makes on his *It's Supernatural* television show, featured the article on his website. Its author, Mahesh Chavda, ignores the fact that *God* built the hedge around Job, instead claiming that the hedge is something we can construct around our lives.

There are specific ways we can build a hedge: First, steward your atmosphere. . . . Stay in joy, praise, and thanksgiving. Keep a childlike heart of faith and expectation. . . . Speak the Word of God into that situation. . . . What you say makes a difference. Your words have power. Agree with faith not fear when you speak. Stay in the glory bubble. Confess the blessing of the Lord over your children. Speak destiny and promise over your house, your job, your church, city and nation. Speak in harmony with God's truth. Release life, shalom, and wholeness. . . . You may face a reality that looks like complete defeat. You may even be attacked. But there is another vibration that you can tap into where the living glory brings a different message and a higher reality. In the glory, opposition becomes opportunity for great victory. [2] <http://sidroth.org/articles/build-hedge-your-house>

If you find those comments confusing, it is because they *are* confusing. Even the author confuses himself by going on to argue that all Christians *already have a hedge anyway*—after exhorting us to build one.

Benny Hinn sees an application more personally advantageous, instructing his supporters that the hedge of protection is an essential financial fortification.

There is no doubt that we live in a troubled world. Many bad things happen. The evil upon the earth is more apparent than ever. It surrounds us, permeating every level of society in every region and nation. When God says that a seed can protect us from evil, this certainly includes financial ruin. It means that when we give toward the Gospel, we're building a hedge of protection against the uncertain and chaotic times that can happen. . . . If you want to protect your tomorrow, God has provided you with the secret: Build a hedge of protection and blessing for tomorrow by consistently planting seed toward the Gospel. Don't miss it! [3] <https://www.bennyhinn.org/hedge-of-protection/>

And Hinn is crystal clear in identifying the best place to sow that seed.

Protect yourself today from the evil on the earth as you secure your harvest for tomorrow by planting an uncommon, extraordinary seed—a portion “to seven” and “to eight”—\$70, \$700, \$7,000, or \$80, \$800, \$8,000, or whatever God places on your heart. Whatever God is placing on your heart, give a portion now and pledge the rest over 90 days. Then fulfill your pledge and watch what God does with your seed! Thank you for being my precious partner, and thank you for giving to our wonderful Lord Jesus, whom we love and adore. [4] <https://www.bennyhinn.org/hedge-of-protection/>

While not everyone who deploys the hedge cliché abuses it to that degree, those examples typify how it is frequently misappropriated. The popular cliché has managed to develop a mystical quality of cosmic proportions.

Is there a ring of truth?

Setting aside the excess and science fiction, it is not wrong to recognize that God sovereignly protects His people. But it is important to grasp that fact from an eternal perspective.

It should not escape our attention that God removed His hedge around Job in order to put his faith to the test. Jesus promised His disciples that not a hair on their heads would perish (Luke 21:18). But He preceded that statement by pointing out that the hedge of protection did not apply to His disciples on this side of eternity.

But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives. (Luke 21:16–19)

Indeed the glorious promise of God's protection on all of His people is the doctrine often referred to as the perseverance of the saints.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:27–29)

It is not wrong to desire God's protection in this life. The Lord Himself instructed us to pray for deliverance from evil (Matthew 6:13). But we should not object to earthly danger and tribulation, as if suffering was always outside God's providential plan. Instead we ought to pray for God's grace to sustain us through suffering, remembering that He uses trials to draw us closer to Him: “When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

It's perfectly acceptable to refer to God's protection as a hedge. And while the Lord blesses His people and, many times, shields them from harm this side of heaven, believers must remember that the ultimate fulfillment of His guarantee of protection comes in eternity. We need not fear temporal suffering, but should train our hearts to rest in the safe confines of God's secure, eternal grip.

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