

Isaiah 25:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Analysis

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress—The Hebrew מַעֲזֵּב (maoz, strength/stronghold) appears twice, emphasizing God as fortress for the vulnerable. פָּלָל (dal, poor) and אֶבְיוֹן (evyon, needy) describe those without resources or power. בָּצָר-לֹן (batsar-lo, in his distress) indicates dire straits, extreme trouble. While God judges the proud (v.2-3), He protects the helpless.

A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat—Four metaphors for divine protection:

1. מַחְסֵּה (machseh, refuge/shelter) from
2. זָרֶם (zerem, storm/downpour),
3. צָלֵל (tsel, shadow) from
4. חָרֵב (chorev, scorching heat).

These image God as protective covering—shelter from destructive weather that would otherwise kill the exposed.

When the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall (בַּרְעָם, ki ruach aritsim kezerem qir)—The ruthless oppressors' 'blast' (רָעָם, **ערִיאִים קָרְם קִיר**,

ruach, breath/wind) is like a violent storm beating against a wall. Yet the wall (God's protection) stands firm.

Historical Context

This verse encapsulates biblical theology of God's preferential concern for the vulnerable (Psalm 82:3-4, James 1:27). Ancient Near Eastern societies offered little social safety net—the poor faced exploitation, the needy perished without protection. Israel's law provided safeguards (Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 24:19-21), reflecting God's own character as defender of the defenseless. Jesus embodied this, describing His mission as good news to the poor (Luke 4:18). The early church's radical care for widows and poor (Acts 6:1-6, James 2:1-7) demonstrated God's character. This verse also comforts persecuted believers: when 'terrible ones' attack like storms, God is refuge and shadow.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's role as 'strength to the poor' challenge prosperity gospel teaching that equates faith with wealth?
2. In what ways are you currently experiencing God as 'refuge from the storm' or 'shadow from the heat' in your distress?
3. How should God's protection of the vulnerable shape the church's ministry priorities and resource allocation?

Interlinear Text

לְךָ לְזַרְעָלֶךָ מַעַזְעָלֶךָ
H3588 H1961 For thou hast been a strength to the poor
H4581 H1800

מְחֹזֶקֶת הַלְזָה בָּצָר לְאָבִיו וְלְמַעַזְעָם
For thou hast been a strength to the needy in his distress a refuge
H4581 H34 H6862 H0 H4268

עַרְיוֹנִים יְמִינָה רְמִינָה מִמְּחֹזֶקֶת כְּלָמִידָה
from the storm a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible ones
H2230 H6738 H2721 H3588 H7307 H6184

קָרְבָּן קָרְבָּן קָרְבָּן
from the storm against the wall
H2230 H7023

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 3:12 (Parallel theme): I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

Isaiah 32:2 (Parallel theme): And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

James 2:5 (Parallel theme): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Isaiah 33:16 (Parallel theme): He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

Psalms 12:5 (Parallel theme): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

Psalms 107:41 (Parallel theme): Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

Isaiah 66:2 (Parallel theme): For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 49:25 (Parallel theme): But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

Isaiah 11:4 (Parallel theme): But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Isaiah 37:36 (Parallel theme): Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.