

Psalms 121:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

Analysis

YHWH shomrekha, YHWH tzilkha al yad yeminekha (The LORD is your keeper, the LORD is your shade at your right hand). Shomer (keeper) and tzel (shade/shadow) both indicate protection. Yad yemin (right hand) represents position of honor, strength, protection—guards stood at right hand to shield with their own bodies. In hot Middle Eastern climate, shade means relief, comfort, survival. God as shade protects from scorching dangers. The repetition of YHWH (covenant name) twice emphasizes personal relationship and covenantal commitment.

Historical Context

Desert and wilderness travel in ancient Israel involved real danger from sun exposure—heatstroke, dehydration, sunburn. Psalm 91:1 similarly speaks of dwelling "in the shadow of the Almighty." Isaiah 25:4 calls God "a shadow from the heat." Jonah's anger at losing his shade-plant (Jonah 4:5-8) shows shade's importance. In battles, shield-bearers protected warriors' right sides (vulnerable to incoming weapons). God functions as both shade (from environmental dangers) and right-hand protector (from hostile attacks). Jesus at God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3) now intercedes for believers (Romans 8:34).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. From what scorching "heat" (trials, temptations, persecutions) does God provide shade in your life?
2. What does it mean for God to be at your right hand—both protecting and empowering?
3. How can believers remain in God's "shadow" rather than wandering into exposed danger?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	שֹׁמְרְךָ	יְהוָה	צֵלְךָ	עַל	יְדְךָ	יְמִינְךָ
The LORD	is thy keeper	The LORD	is thy shade	H5921	hand	upon thy right
H3068	H8104	H3068	H6738		H3027	H3225

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 25:4 (Parallel theme): 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.

Psalms 91:1 (Parallel theme): He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Exodus 13:21 (References Lord): And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

Psalms 16:8 (References Lord): I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Psalms 109:31 (Parallel theme): For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.

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.

Matthew 23:37 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

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