

Psalms 91:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Analysis

They shall bear thee up in their hands (ישאוך על-כפיהם)—The Hebrew verb *nasa* means to lift, carry, or support, depicting angelic care with tenderness, as one carries an infant. The phrase *al-kapayim* (upon palms/hands) emphasizes protective intimacy.

Satan quoted this verse to tempt Jesus (Matthew 4:6, Luke 4:11), twisting divine protection into presumptuous testing. Christ's response—**Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God**—exposes the difference between trusting God's promises in faithful obedience versus manipulating them for self-serving spectacle. **Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone** alludes to stumbling in the wilderness journey; God's promise is provision for those who walk His path, not those who deliberately leap from pinnacles.

Historical Context

Psalms 91 is traditionally ascribed to Moses, reflecting wilderness protection themes. First-century Jews viewed this as a messianic psalm, which explains Satan's use in the temptation narrative. The psalm was recited for protection from plague and danger, with rabbinic tradition calling it 'the Song of Evil Occurrences.'

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Satan's misuse of this verse warn against cherry-picking promises while ignoring their covenantal context?
2. In what ways might you be tempted to 'test God' by claiming protection while deliberately choosing dangerous or disobedient paths?

Interlinear Text

על	כַּף יָדָם	יִשָּׂא וְיָנִיחַ	פֶּן	תִּגַּד	בְּאֶבֶן
H5921	in their hands	They shall bear thee up	H6435	lest thou dash	against a stone
	H3709	H5375		H5062	H68

בְּגִלְגִּלְךָ:
thy foot
H7272

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:24 (Parallel theme): Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

Proverbs 3:23 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

Luke 4:11 (Parallel theme): And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Isaiah 63:9 (Parallel theme): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 46:3 (Parallel theme): Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

Matthew 4:6 (Parallel theme): And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Job 5:23 (Parallel theme): For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.