

# PRAYING BIBLICALLY

FOR YOUR MISSIONARY



## Protection

By Alan Patterson

Have you ever been shipwrecked? Probably not. Have you ever been robbed? Maybe. Have you ever been stoned for your faith in Christ? Not likely. But besides some of these dangerous experiences, Paul could truthfully and almost matter-of-factly say that he had been *“in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness”* (2 Corinthians 11:25-27).

Heard enough to convince you that missionary life in the first century was a perilous affair? The litany of hazards and threats that Paul faced are so numerous as to make us numb to their reality, but they were, in fact, more frequent than indicated. For example, Paul suffered shipwreck not once but three times, and the chapter quoted above ends with Paul fleeing for his life from the governor of Damascus who was literally guarding the city with a garrison in order to arrest Paul. In that case, Paul’s friends helped him escape by letting him down in a basket through a window in the wall of the city (2 Corinthians 11:32-33).

A sober consideration and application of all of this brings us to the next point in our consideration of biblical praying for missionaries. What do you suppose was Paul’s specific request in this case? You guessed it – protection! In two different places written a few years apart, Paul pled with believers to pray for his protection. He writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:2, *“pray that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”* In Romans 15:30-31 he exhorts the believers to pray for him and his team with these words: *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea.”* Question for you. Does this apply to today’s missionaries? Are there still unreasonable and wicked men in the world who have not faith and persecute those who do? The answer is obvious. Every day GFA missionaries around the world operate in situations that expose them to various dangers and sometimes hostile opposition.

When Paul asked prayer for protection, he was primarily focused on physical protection. But missionaries need protection and rescue from other areas of danger as well such as emotional, spiritual, and even intellectual challenges. By the way, why do you think Paul survived so long and was able to accomplish so much for God’s kingdom? Was it because he was skillful in the martial arts, a strong swimmer, had a thick skin to withstand big rocks, and was adept at sitting in a large basket as he hung and swung from a window? Or was it because God’s people prayed for his safety? The missionaries you know need your prayers today for their protection from evil and evil men.

