

SHADOW'S OF COVERING FOR THE LAST DAY'S CHURCH

*Olusegun Timothy Olanipekun
(Intercessors for Africa, Prayer School : East & Southern Africa)*

“The Kingdom of God suffers violence and violent men take it by force . . .

Scripture leaves no room for speculation on the matter of spiritual conflict and warfare. Every believer is enlisted in spiritual combat when they are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God. To help us make progress as believers God has made provision for divine protection. It is not His intention that we suffer any casualties when His people fight against His enemies. If we do it is because we have not operated within the provisions of divine cover. David did not lose one of the battles that he fought for the Lord. On many occasions the enemy outnumbered his army but they prevailed because God was with them. In our day God also wants His people to be assured of covering when we engage the enemy in battle. We need to know and operate within the different layers of divine cover that God has provided for us. We should know what God has provided for our safety and not allow the enemy to impress us.

The Name of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus, the “whole armor of God” and the ministry of angels, these concepts are familiar to most believers who have been taught the fundamental principles of spiritual warfare and they certainly are some of the key components to divine cover. However as the Lord of Hosts leads His church into the final stages of conflict at the end of the Age there is a need to recognize the corporate nature of our calling and God’s intention that victory over His enemies will be secured by the Body of Christ, not by individuals. To this end Scripture describes two other ways in which God provides protection for His people.

The Shadow of the Almighty

The first provision for spiritual cover comes directly from God Himself - His Shadow. Psalm 91:1 “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Everyone who lives on earth comes under either the *shadow of death* or the *shadow of the Almighty*. This is fundamental. Scripture teaches that the god of this world through the fall of Adam has also gained control of the heavens immediately above the earth. We also know that there are three layers of heavens. (See 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, Jeremiah 7:18, Ephesians 6:12), and that there are principalities and powers in heavenly places – the mid heavens is actually their headquarters and control tower over the earth. The life of every unbeliever is controlled or regulated from the mid heavens and the first heaven.

Occult people all over the world use stargazing, palm reading, fortune telling as common practice to predict the future through the movements and manipulation of the heavenly bodies. Everyone who has surrendered to Christ automatically comes under this covering. The spiritual climate created by these activities is described in scripture as the *shadow of death* because the enemy has cast his influence to kill, steal and destroy in every way possible. However when a person surrenders to Christ and is baptized in water, a translation that takes place (Mark 16:16, Col 1:13). The cover of darkness over a person gives way for another cover – the *Shadow of the Almighty*. Instead of being influenced by demonic powers, one begins to experience God directly. The invisible barrier that separates an unbeliever from God is lifted and a cloud of covering from the throne of God is cast over the person. (Isaiah 4:5, Exodus

40:34-38). This Shadow lifts when a believer commits sin. As long as relationship with the Lord is maintained the cloud of God's presence remains.

This shift of the spiritual climate is so real that it is noticed in both kingdoms. It now becomes difficult for demons to attack a believer and unless he sins the Shadow of the Almighty protects him/her from demonic dominion. However any contravention of God's kingdom rule weakens the covering provided by the Shadow of the Almighty.

It is also clear from several scriptures that the Shadow of the Almighty can also provide cover for cities or entire communities that have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. The Shadow of the Almighty is there for family residences and neighborhoods where believers have exercised spiritual authority to possess and claim ownership of the land from the powers of darkness to which the land was sold by their fathers.

Therefore when saints go to battle against the enemy we have the immediate assurance of God's presence by virtue of the covering of His Shadow. Though we are on earth every resource of heaven is available because of this Shadow. Apart from the fact that because of it the enemy is unable to touch us, we are also able to receive inspiration, boldness, motivation, the word of the Lord and His counsel because of the presence of the Lord.

The Shadow Of God's Hand

“...I have covered you with the shadow of my hand...” Isaiah 51:16

Another provision for covering is the *Shadow of God's hand*. Because man is created in God's image, it is not far-fetched to believe that God's hand also has five fingers looks exactly like a man's hand. Scripture says that God also provides a covering, not with His hand, but with the shadow of His hand. There is a reflection of God's hand on earth. In Ephesians 4:11 we find the list of five ministry gifts which God has given to the Body of Christ: The apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry. Through the five-fold ministry God reaches with His hand to the church and to the nations.

Elijah executed eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel. The power of Baal over the nation was temporarily broken. When Elijah prayed for rain, he had to do it seven times. The seventh time his servant saw a cloud, as small as a man's hand rising out of the sea. Elijah interpreted this cloud as small as a man's hand as the cloud of rain that God prepared for the nation of Israel in answer to his prayers. As soon as the covering of darkness generated by the prophets of Baal and Asherah was lifted, God raised a cloud of covering over the nation, which manifested in physical clouds and rain over Israel. The picture that we see in 1 Kings 18:44 in the natural is same in the spiritual. The rain of God's word and divine visitation comes upon a land only after God has raised ministers of the gospel, in the caliber of Ephesians 4:11. These ministers and ministry functions represent God's purposes and interests on the earth just as one may not see a cloud but only its shadow. God does not appear in physical form but there are people whom He has appointed to represent Him in every land and nation. They speak for God. Their words, ministry and activities represent a standard that God has raised in a land. These are the “generals” that provide cover for the rest of the army in a nation.

Just as the hand of man features five fingers so it is that when God stretches His hand over a nation to raise a standard against the enemy and accomplish

something new, we begin to see the five-fold ministries manifest to move the saints forward. Many times however, the Body of Christ in a locality sticks out only one finger and prevents the other four from appearing. Usually, it is the ministry of pastors that is appreciated or seen more clearly than the others. One finger however cannot do the job of two fingers, let alone that of five. The physical body cannot be adequately served with one finger. So too the Body of Christ cannot grow or receive proper cover through one ministry. In our day God is restoring the five-fold ministries in the body.

As saints in a given place are exposed to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, the church in that area becomes strong and better equipped both to serve individuals, to affect the land and to defeat the enemy. In these last days God will restore the five fold ministries to strengthen and cover the body for the final battles against the kingdom of darkness.

Word count: 1415