

Hit From Behind

Psalm 5:12

Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

I have a couple accident stories to tell you. Most of them have to do with Brazil, but then again we've been prone to accidents so it happens anywhere that we go. The devil is out to get you, so beware.

We were missionaries in Porto Alegre, Brazil, a large city of 1,500,000 people. We lived on the outskirts of the city on the northeastern side of town. We would often have to go downtown to do business, which was a long bus ride, or about a half hour drive by car. Once or twice a month I would make the trek downtown to pay all bills because you couldn't do it by mail. You had to do it in person at the bank, or at the electric company, or wherever you had to pay your bill. I looked forward to those times because I enjoyed going into center city. I would always treat myself to an espresso coffee, ice cream, or some special lunch when I was downtown.

One day I had spent the day downtown paying my bills, getting my hair cut, having lunch and an expresso. When I finished I left the parking garage and decided to take the roundabout way to get back home because the more direct route was through the middle of the city which got quite congested. I took the bypass going around the city. This route would save me fifteen minutes and would take me almost to our house in the northern part of the city.

This wide four-lane boulevard had traffic lights and pedestrian crosswalks. I got onto the four-lane road and was cruising along nicely, making good time. I was in the left lane of the four-lane highway when I came to a traffic light that was red, so I stopped, being the first car at the light. This was not an intersection but a pedestrian crosswalk. I remember pulling up to the stop light. I remember looking in my rearview mirror and seeing a truck some distance behind me. I also noticed there were people crossing the street in front of me. The next thing I heard was a crash and all of my windows exploded. The truck that was behind me evidently didn't have any brakes. He slammed into the back of my car going 40 or 50 miles an hour. It's quite a shock to be hit from behind like that! After he hit me I ended up in the grassy median strip with the whole back end of my car completely crushed. I sat there for a moment dazed by what had just happened. I climbed out of the car confused and disoriented. I had not seen the truck other than noticing him in my rearview mirror some distance away. I got out of the car hurting from the sudden impact. I surveyed the situation. My car was totally destroyed. The truck was leaking radiator fluid all over the street. The driver of

course was upset because his brakes didn't work. He was speaking rapidly in Portuguese and I was still upset so my Portuguese probably wasn't the best that it could have been. While I stood there an elderly man came running across the street yelling at me. He was screaming at me in Portuguese and I thought I was in serious trouble. He was asking everyone who the driver of the car was. I hesitantly admitted I was the driver. He suddenly grabbed me and began shaking my hand saying, "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" Then he explained that I had saved the lives of his grandchildren. They were crossing the street right in front of my car when the truck hit. He said, "Your eyes got as big as saucers and you frantically spun the steering wheel to the left avoiding hitting my grandchildren. You saved my grandchildren, that's why you ended up in the median strip. You are a hero. They would have been killed but for your quick thinking. Thank you so much." By this time he was in tears telling the police officer and the people gathered around what I had done.

After he told me this I remembered seeing the children in the street in front of my car, but when the truck hit me I just reacted. I appreciated the man complementing me and telling me what a great driver I was, but to tell the truth I was totally unaware of what took place. It's at that moment I remembered the Scripture that says, "*The angel of the Lord encamps around about them that fear him and delivers them.*" I believe it was the angel of the Lord that took hold of that steering wheel and turned it in the direction it needed to go. God takes care of his children.