

Be Not Afraid

At the Red Sea, Moses told Israel, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today." Exodus 14:13

As Joshua was commissioned to lead Israel into the Promised Land, God told him to study the Law given through Moses. Joshua was to obey it, follow God's commands, and not be afraid of the nations he would face. Joshua 1:6-9 "...Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

The Old Testament is filled with the statements to "do not fear" or "be not afraid" but to depend on The Lord for protection. To the faithful, safety was always given. David was confronted with wild animals when he was a shepherd and was a fugitive from Saul and members of his own family who wanted to kill him. He never forgot His protector and defender. He expressed his feelings in this, Psalms 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

The New Testament moves the emotion of fear from the physical to the spiritual kingdom. Jesus said, "...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matthew 10:28. He never said that there is nothing to be afraid of. But for those who know Him, there is no reason to fear following Him.

Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was very near, and no one should fear or worry that they could not be part of it. Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And in John 10:14-15 He says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." How can one be afraid of the person that gives their life to save others?

As Jesus came to the disciples who were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, they feared when they saw Him. But He said, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid," Matthew 14:27.

As Jesus was transformed and the voice spoke from heaven, the three disciples "were greatly afraid." Matthew 17:6-7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

Those that saw the risen Lord were full of fear and dread. But He comforted them and said; "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" Matthew 28:1.

When Paul started preaching in Corinth, many opposed him. But Jesus came to him in a night vision and said; "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city" Acts 18:9-10.

Much later as Paul was on his way to Rome, Jesus again appeared to him at night to encourage him and said; "'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you, Acts 27:23-24.

Although Jesus will never appear to us with those words of comfort, we have His assurance that we have nothing to fear if we follow Him. The Hebrew writer compares the Mountain of the Law of Moses to the church in Hebrews 12:18-28. That mountain was one of fire and tempest that could not

be touched. There was noise and the voice that the people could not bear to hear. But we who follow Jesus have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, protected by an innumerable host of angels. That city is the church of Christ. And we have come to "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." Further, the writer says, "...since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

There is nothing to be afraid of while we are cared for by the Christ who has all power and authority. For as Paul wrote to the church in Colosse, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, Colossians 1:13

Does the power of God keep you through faith in His Son, who is both Lord and Christ?