

DO NOT BE AFRAID

(Rev. 1:17-18)

Introduction:

1. Throughout scripture when man encounters deity there is great fear which is addressed by Deity (Ex. 3:5, 6, 12; Is. 6:5-7ff; Ezek. 1:28-2:6ff; Matt. 14:26, 27; Luke 5:8-10; Matt. 28:9, 10; Luke 24:36ff).
2. Where did this fear of God come from? Why should we, His children made in His image fear Him?
3. Let us this morning consider fear; its beginning, its diminishing, and its end.

Discussion:

I. The Beginning of Fear.

- A. In the beginning there was no fear. Man and God were together. Sin had not separated God and man. There was no death.
- B. Then man chose to rebel against God and to pursue his own will, contrary to God's revealed will (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-6).
 1. The immediate consequence was fear (Gen. 3:8-10)! This fear was over being naked and in the presence of God.
 2. Then came the full consequences of sin: toil, separation, and death (which is separation).
- C. The ultimate consequences of sin are an ever expanding list of things to fear: separation from God = pain, sickness, death, starvation, thirst, animals, other men, inclement weather/climate, et al.
- D. Separation from God = fear (Ps. 118:6 = Heb. 13:6; Rom. 8:31).

II. The Diminishing of Fear.

- A. God's first action to alleviate man's fear (Gen. 3:15) was the establishment of the patriarchal system.
 1. Man was allowed to approach God again without fear at the altar.
 2. This offering alleviated the fear of death by emphasizing the concept of substitutionary sacrifice.
 3. This gracious gesture of God was supposed to serve to keep man's focus on the promised redeemer, and the reconciliation with God that would result. Thus, fear subsided.
- B. God's next action to alleviate man's fear (Gen. 12:3) was the establishment of the Mosaic system.
 1. Man was told the very family through whom the promised redeemer would come.
 2. This family was afforded unparalleled access to God. The reunion of God was so intimate as to dwell with them as their God.
 3. But there remained a veil of separation, and the price in sacrifice was expanded greatly.
 4. This gracious gesture of God was supposed to encourage all mankind, and especially the family of Abraham. Thus fear subsided more.
- C. God's next action to alleviate man's fear (John 1:14; 3:16) was the establishment of the Christian system.
 1. God fulfilled His promise given in the garden and narrowed in Abraham in Christ.
 2. The veil was torn away (Luke 23:45), and once again man is able to dwell with God, but only in spirit (John 1:14; 2:19; 14:17, 23).
 3. The only remaining veil is our flesh, and if we remain faithful unto death that veil too will be removed. Thus fear subsided even more.

III. The End of Fear.

- A. Death is the end of fear, even though it was tied to the beginning of fear.
 1. Those who have died in Christ have been placed in Paradise, back into the garden of God. There is no more pain or death, and they are closer to God than ever possible in the flesh. But they are not in the very presence of God, that remains for all God's people to experience together (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 11:40).

2. Those faithful who are alive when Christ returns (the end of all) shall be changed and added to them who await the glorious restoration to God, in Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-53).
- B. Then, and only then, will fear be done away with completely (Rev. 21:22-22:5).
- C. Note again, that man's fear is diminished to the degree that he is with God.

Conclusion:

1. Do not fear, only believe (Mk. 5:36).
2. What has been revealed to us by God ought to serve to remove all fear far from our hearts, and fill us with a sense of joyous expectation of the glory to come!
3. Invitation.

MORE ON "DO NOT BE AFRAID"

1. To be afraid is to be filled with fear. Fear is caused by possible danger and that which is unknown. But God has told us that we need not fear any danger (1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:31ff), and has revealed to us all things unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Even the aspect of fear coming from being startled has been removed by God (Matt. 24:25; et al).
2. Perfect (complete) love (active obedience) casts out fear. Being close to God casts our fear. We may face trouble and terrible persecution, but we ought not fear. These things are a test of courage and commitment.
3. Consider James 1:2-12.
 - Count trials as joy? Why? Because it will make us stronger via patience/endurance. During trials we will turn to God more and will thus have God turn to us more. Even if the trials produce drastic changes in our lives it matters not in the big picture.
 - What follows (vv 13-27) are admonitions to remember God's nature, the need for our faith, and the requirement to live that faith.
4. Consider 1 Pet. 2:11-25; 4:1-19. Note the same message and the same associated admonitions.
5. Picture a small child separated from his parent. What is the natural reaction? What is the solution?
6. The temple concept yet again.