

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXII

January 1, 2012

No. 1

What Fear?

(Jerry Fite)

Fear is a powerful thing. It can block you from entering a dark room; paralyze you when attempting to make a good first impression; and silence you when contemplating public speaking. It is often a self-imposed barrier to change and progress.

Fear is also synonymous with reverence. Reverence or fear of God is a good and necessary thing. *“The fear of Jehovah is beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).* One does not truly know God unless they develop a healthy reverence for the Almighty.

Peter sets before us the fear we are not to have, and the fear we should always possess in I Peter 3. We are not to fear what the enemies of righteousness propose to do to us: *“But even if ye should suffer for righteousness sake, blessed are ye; and fear not their fear, neither be troubled” (I Peter 3:15).* Yet, you are to *“sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord; being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope*

that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Peter 3:15). This fear is the reverence and meekness toward God that moves us to always tell people the revealed truth from God’s word.

So, when thinking about fear, we must ask the question “what fear?” Is it fear that men may employ to deter us from righteousness, or is it the reverential fear for God that accompanies all righteousness?

The wrong kind of fear can rise up even when we are determined to do what is right. In Jeremiah’s day, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and appointed Gedaliah as governor. When Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah, God’s people turned to Jeremiah for divine direction. They said, *“... we will obey the voice of Jehovah or God, to whom we send thee that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of Jehovah our God” (Jeremiah 42:6).* Jeremiah returned with God’s answer to their prayer: *“If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck*

you up . . . Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him saith Jehovah: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand” (Jeremiah 42:10-11). The people wanted to follow God’s directives, but they allowed the fear of an earthly king to overcome their faith in their heavenly Father. Fear can overcome faith! Godly people must be constantly aware.

We need to develop a faith in God that puts a comma in our question. We should say, *“What, fear?”* We refuse to let intimidating fear get in our way of serving God. We should say, *“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me” (Hebrews 13:6).*

As we look to a new year of striving to strengthen our souls and save the lost, may we always manifest reverence for God. May we not fear what man can do. Do not let the fear of rejection get in your way of asking to study the Bible with a precious lost soul. Never let the fear of ridicule deter you from standing for the truth!