

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Be Not Dismayed!

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

The Lord addresses the words of Isaiah 41:8-20 to Israel as they faced the time of Babylonian Captivity. But the promise He gave in verse ten in essence was repeated many times to His people in old times. It remains as comforting and reassuring to Christians today as it was to the faithful in the time of Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah. The Lord said:

1. "Fear Not, for I am with you." Fear is a common emotion of mankind. Many things can cause us to be afraid: violent weather, crime, war, critical sickness, brushes with death, economic depression, and tragic accidents, to name a few. Christians face the same dangers that cause the rest of humanity to fear, plus the persecution and affliction they may suffer as Christians. But Christians have less reason to fear these things than others. They hear the tender voice of God saying "fear not" while giving them the greatest reason not to: "for I am with you."

2. "Be not dismayed, for I am your God." Dismay is a kind of fear that results in anxiety, discouragement, and apprehension. It indicates a loss of faith and courage in facing some difficulty, real or supposed, with which one does not know how to deal. We sometimes find ourselves facing such things with such depressing uneasiness that we hardly know what to pray for in regard to it. But here again, the words of God speak softly to our hearts saying there is no reason to be dismayed, "for I am your God." We may not see the end but God does. We do not need to know the solution to our problems beforehand. It is enough to simply know that the Lord is our God (cf. Psalm 23). That says it all!

3. "I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you." The Lord does not promise to deliver us from the things that may cause fear or dismay, but He removes fear by promising the strength to deal with the problems. He also promises in His providence to help us. We

are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may "obtain mercy and find grace in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

If we surrender our lives to the Lord without fear or dismay, trusting Him for the promised strength and aid, then He says: "I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." With the assurance God gives in these words, what cause do we have to fear or be dismayed?

- Earl Kimbrough, via Gospel Power, Anderson, AL, 01/05/2003

A Difference Between My People and Your People

When God brought the ten plagues upon Egypt to cause Pharaoh to let Israel go, God's purpose was not to punish Israel, but to convince Egypt. Therefore, it is specifically pointed out in the record of some of the plagues that they were intended for Egypt only, that Israel would not be the recipient of those plagues. When God through Moses warned Pharaoh of the coming plague of flies, He said, "I will make a difference between My people and your people" (Exodus 8:23, NKJV). God made a difference between those who were His people, and those who were not. Those who were His people received His mercy and blessings. Those who were not His people received punishment. There is a difference between those who are God's people, and those who are not. They are different both as to their present condition and future destiny.

Present Condition

Those who are God's people have "redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). God's people have "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). His people have been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:3). Those who are not God's people are different. They are still in their sins, and in that condition are spiritually dead (1 Timothy 5:6). While in sin, one is "having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11). Those who reject the opportunity to become children of God do not have the redemption, peace and spiritual blessings possessed by God's people.

Future Destiny

There is also a difference regarding future destiny. "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). God's people have the promise, "And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes: and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying

nor pain, any more" (Revelation 21:4). But those who reject God's message and invitation to man, there remains "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:27).

May we assist you in your obedience to the Gospel, that you might become a child of God?

- Leon Mauldin, via *Gospel Power*, Anderson, AL, 09/29/2002

Share A Quote ...

"The American Banking Association once sponsored a two-week training program to help tellers detect counterfeit bills. The program was unique — never during the two-week training did the tellers even look at a counterfeit bill, nor did they listen to any lectures concerning the characteristics of counterfeit bills... All they did for two weeks was handle authentic currency, hour after hour and day after day, until they were so familiar with the true that they could not possibly be fooled by the false."

- (Ben Patterson, *Waiting*: InterVarsity Press, 1989)

Just So Long As We Worship?

There are people who think that just so long as we worship in some way (usually as we see fit), our worship is acceptable to the holy God. Is there anything in the Bible that supports this view? Has God actually left it up to man to decide the best way to worship Him? God has revealed so many things to us in the Holy Scriptures, is there no directive for how imperfect people may acceptably approach a holy God in worship?

Bible students are keenly aware that one of God's first controversies with man involved the question of worship. Though not recorded this early in the Bible, there must have been some directive from God with regard to "offering" something in worship to Him. Why would they have done it? And why are we informed of God's reaction? Notice:

"So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell." (Genesis 4:3-5).

Moses does not record the reason why God had regard for one and not the other. However, it seems clear that, just as their offerings were different, their attitudes were very different. We learn more about this in the New Testament: "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks." (Hebrews 11:4).

Are we to learn anything from the worship that took place then? What does "through" the sacrifice offered mean? What does Abel, though dead, still say to us? Are there sacrifices (gifts) that are better than others? Would there be any significance to the righteous condition of the worshipper? Is it only acceptable to worship through faith?

Both brothers believed in God and worshipped Him. Later in the Scriptures we learn facts about the acceptability of "the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions." (Exodus 13, 22, 23, 29, 34; etc.). If this had been the requirement given to these brothers, we can easily see that one offering was by faith and the other was not. Cain's anger (Genesis 4:5-6) shows us that his attitude of heart was not right. Do you suppose that any of these things that are stated about the worship of these brothers, one being regarded and the other not, provided a spark in the heart of Cain that led to the murder of his brother? John indicates that Cain's "deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." (1 John 3:11-15). Would you think that what he offered and how he offered it made up some portion of this "evil"?

Every person who desires to please God and be rewarded by Him for faithful service should yield to the Scriptures and what they reveal on *every* subject, including worship of the Most High God. Is all worship offered to Him acceptable? (See Matthew 15:9.) Why are we warned about the dangers of vain worship? Be careful with this answer: Was all worship based on a knowledge of God's word, or did some people worship in ignorance? (See John 4:22.) Further, in the controversy between Jew and Samaritan concerning worship, was one right and the other wrong? (See John 4:20, 22.) Is it possible to worship in ignorance? (See Acts 17:22-23). Did the Lord provide any knowledge showing mankind that idolatry and creature worship rather than Creator worship is terribly wrong? (See Romans 1:18-25.)

Can you read the directive of Jesus Christ without thinking that worship to God must be according to His specifications?

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He who

is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.'
Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" (John 4:23-26).

- Gary Smalley

- * "Others may destroy your reputation, but only you can destroy your character!"
 - * "Salvation is free, but it is not cheap!"
 - * "The man who has to eat his own words never asks for another serving!"
 - * "It is easier to say what you think than to tell what you know!"
 - * "Sin will cause the cup of joy to spring a leak!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)