

## OVERCOMING CORONAVIRUS FEARS

*“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty... He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust... His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”*

Psalm 91:1, 2 & 4

The Coronavirus has been intensifying global instability, which prophetically defines our time. This advancing pandemic has created extreme anxiety world-wide, causing stock market volatility and an unpredictable economic future. The Coronavirus can now be added to the list of many frightening events happening in the world today, and “Men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking

after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Luke 21:26

Fear about our personal well-being and the safety of our loved ones is indeed challenging the faith of many. God’s Word teaches that the faithful shall “...not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day...” (Psalm 91:5) But, how is it possible to *not be afraid* when the news is filled with terrifying *end times* events; and many predict even more fearful things to come?

Two primary aspects of the above theme text are key to overcoming fear:

1. Dwelling with and abiding in the tender care of the Almighty; and
2. Knowing His truth in the Scriptures and, through these, understanding His plans and purposes.

### DWELLING IN THE SECRET PLACE

To claim this promise found in Psalms 91, one must “*dwell*” in heart and mind with the Almighty — taking refuge in His Words. This means turning one’s back on sin and selfishness and desiring to live in harmony with God’s principles. “*Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.*” Zephaniah 2:3



Those who fully commit their hearts — their wills — to God discover a *peace which passes all worldly understanding*. (Psalm 50:5; Philippians 4:7) These know that, come what may, God is in control of their lives and is not only all-loving, but all-wise and powerful. These trust that, even though physical harm may come to their home, family or person, there is an ultimate good

purpose for everything that occurs in their lives. To them, “*all things, [not just some things,] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*” (Romans 8:28) Thus, for the Christian, “*...though our outward man perish... our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen...*” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

### ABIDING IN GOD’S TRUTH — THE SHIELD AND BUCKLER

Christians learn through their experiences to have the same *attitude* or *mind* found in Christ Jesus, “*who for the joy set before him endured the cross.*” (Philippians 2:5; Hebrews 12:2) Christ our *forerunner* was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. At the age of 30, he *committed* his life to God — being baptized by John — giving up his right to live forever as a perfect man upon the earth. Every thought, every motive and every act of Jesus was in complete harmony with the will of his Father in Heaven.

What did Jesus, our great example, do immediately following his baptism? He went into the wilderness to pray and meditate upon God’s Word. This is the *second* of the keys in overcoming fear in this time of great stress upon the world. The *joy* which allowed Jesus to endure even the heaviness of

his cross — a cross which he bore for three and a half years — was the knowledge of God’s loving plan for all mankind. Like Jesus, we must keep in mind the big picture of how God’s plan is working out for the good of His entire creation, not just those who love Him now. This is what provided the *joy* that helped Jesus *endure* his cross. This is the same *joy* which will carry the Christian through every trial.

But are there not times when trials are so heavy that tears come and fear grips the heart? Yes, even Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus. And Jesus *feared* in the Garden — a fear that he may not have fulfilled all that was expected of him before his crucifixion. *“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers... with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him...”* (Hebrews 5:7-9) Note, Jesus was *made perfect*—implying a process of time to develop him as a *sympathetic high priest* and the *author and perfecter of our faith*. (Hebrews 4:15; 12:2) He sympathizes with our tears, and, not only Jesus, but our loving Heavenly Father understands when we are overwhelmed by our experiences. *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear [reverence] Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.”* Psalm 103:13, 14

The Christian can rejoice, therefore, even though there are times of fear and sorrow, for they recognize that there is a purpose to the suffering. Like our Master, we too, are being developed to have sympathy for mankind and their sorrows. As the Psalmist said, *“Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”* (Psalm 23:4) Jehovah, our *Great Shepherd* guides His children by allowing experiences to teach and discipline them. *“Now no chastening [disciplining experiences] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”* Hebrews 12:11

#### PEACE IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE

The night before Jesus died upon the cross, he spoke these words to his closest followers: *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33) Jesus did not hide the fact that there would be difficult times ahead for those who walk in his footsteps. But, though he warned his followers of troublous

times to come, he also assured them that he would be with them, guiding every affair of their lives. He promised comfort and guidance through the truth of his Father’s Word. John 16:13

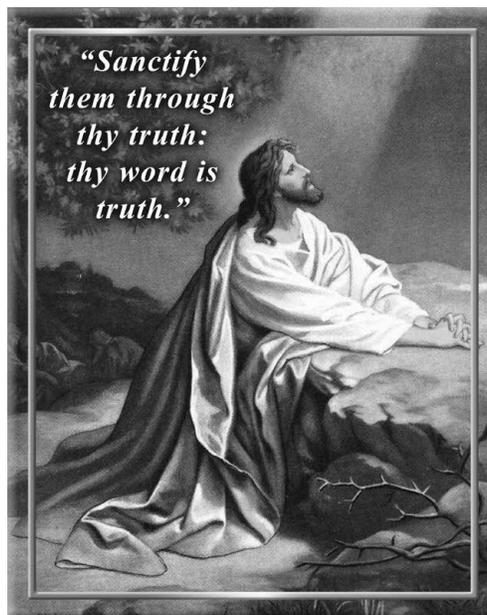
Knowing what God is doing in the earth in preparation for His Kingdom is critical in dispelling fear. A Christian’s faith must be built upon a solid foundation of truth in order to survive the storms of life. The Scriptures are filled with prophecies which provide the necessary information a Christian needs to be prepared for the time in which he lives. But, God only provides the understanding of such prophecies as they become due. Jesus said, *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”* (John 16:12) Truth unfolds as God sees that it will help His servants. For example, God said to Daniel, *“Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end..”* (Daniel 12:9) Daniel prayed for understanding of the *end time* prophecies given him, but it was not time for God’s people to know the interpretation. Now, however, we are living in the *time of the end*, and God’s people have been given great insight and understanding of the very prophecies which Daniel was told to *seal up*.

Discovering how God will end this present corrupt world and set up His Kingdom is critical in abating our fears. Every part of society — political, financial, social and ecclesiastical — that has become corrupt, will be *shaken* and will collapse. Understanding that God must first tear down the old structure of society so that He might usher in the

new, will help calm our fears as we see one element after another being removed. Just knowing that these things were prophesied should give us a solid foundation from which to build greater faith. God is working out His plan, and the end is promised to be glorious! *“I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.... and I will fill this house with glory... in this place will I give peace.”* Haggai 2:7, 9

It behooves each Christian, therefore, to search the Scriptures — not just to know what God’s plans are, but to understand the purpose behind these. Then we can see why God’s plan is the best solution — a remedy in which every person has experienced the effects of sin, selfishness and every form of evil. Those learning the lessons from this experience will desire God’s righteous, peaceable Kingdom.

But, beware. A misinterpretation of Scripture can cause confusion and unfounded fear. On Christian bookshelves today are many books which sensationalize and fictionalize the events of Bible prophecy. Symbolic passages, such as are found in Ezekiel and Revelation, are interpreted as literal, and although the Bible does indicate trouble in the earth at this time, the



wrong interpretation of Scripture can totally distort the loving character and plans of God. Therefore, it is a good practice to square every doctrine with two pivotal truths: 1. The *ransom for all to be testified in due time*; and 2. The fact that *God is love*.

#### THE TRIAL OF FAITH MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

All Christians will be tested upon their faith — each must be developed by experience and found worthy of a *crown of life*. “*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...*” (1 Peter 1:7) For those who are seeking to live and reign with Christ in God’s Kingdom, they must have a crystallized character which has remained loyal to Him. This is why God permits repeated trials of faith. His *compassions fail not*, but we must show Him that we trust in Him. God is not looking for a perfect performance, for no one is perfect, but He *is* looking for a perfect *heart*. For this reason, the Christian does not always find immediate peace and joy in every experience. No, it takes time to learn the doctrines and principles of God’s Word — a lifetime to develop the mature faith that God is looking for in His children. “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*” Revelation 2:10

#### REVERENCE IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM PROVERBS 9:10

Though the flesh fails in having perfect trust and faith, the Christian who has given his life to God through Christ has assurance that Jesus will intercede on their behalf. “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*” (Hebrews 4:16) Sincere Christians have an open invitation to approach the Heavenly Father, through His Son, in prayer for needed grace and help. There is no need of an earthly intermediary — Christ alone is our life-line to God.

Praying to the Heavenly Father, however, is not a privilege to be taken lightly and without the reverence due Him. The early disciples of Jesus inquired: “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” (Luke 11:1) This was an appropriate question — there is a certain manner in which to approach the King of the Universe. Jesus responded: “*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name.*” (Matthew 6:9) Only those who have given their heart to God have the privilege of calling Him Father, and such have the assurance that God has the affection and watch-care of a true father for his child. (See also Romans 8:13-17) While some make the mistake of bringing God down to their level, but the manner of approach to our Father should be one of supreme reverence — “*Hallowed be thy name.*”

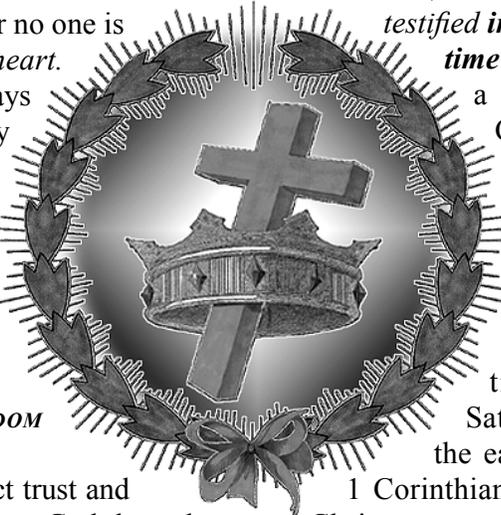
#### CALMING FEARS ABOUT THOSE STILL IN DARKNESS

Perhaps our fear is not for ourselves, but for our loved ones who, thus far, have failed to put their trust in God and who live contrary to His commandments. Jesus is our means of salvation, but what will happen to those who have not accepted Christ now? “*...he is the propitiation for our sins: and **not for ours only**, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2) “*...we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of **all men, specially of those that believe.***” (1 Timothy 4:10) Here again, the knowledge of God’s loving character and plans gives us peace and hope. When God’s will is finally done on earth as it is being done in Heaven, He will then “*...have **all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***” (1 Timothy 2:3-6) Our *due time* may be now, but others will be given a full, fair opportunity for developing Christ-likeness in the future Kingdom of God to come on earth.

Picture the world of mankind eager to learn righteousness in a time when Satan and his demon legion are removed from the earth. (See Isaiah 26:9 and Revelation 20) Imagine a time when God’s loving Son — not Satan — will be the ruling prince in all the earth. (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:4 with 1 Corinthians 15:22-26.) Find rest in the fact that Christ returns with *healing in his wings* — a ruler who will judge and reign with his Bride in righteousness. Review Malachi 4:2; Isaiah 35:1-10; Revelation 22:17.

What a wonderful and merciful plan our benevolent Creator has provided! Christ and his Bride — sympathetic because of their experience with pain and suffering — they will be the honored agents of God in bringing the remainder of mankind back into harmony with Him. (Acts 15:16, 17) At that time, those **now blinded** by error and sin will **begin to see** that the permission of evil has been for their benefit — for their education and development, so that their hearts might be ready and willing to accept the new government.

“*Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear **shall hearken.** The heart also of the rash **shall understand knowledge,** and the tongue of the stammerers **shall be ready to speak plainly.**” Isaiah 32:1-4*



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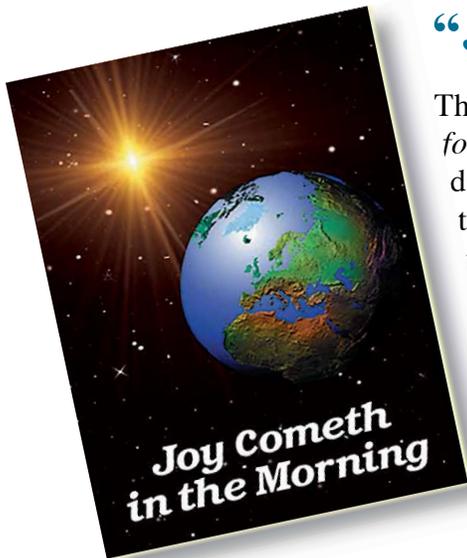
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