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QH 12.3

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Fear. Everyone knows fear. There are as many fears and reasons to fear as there are people.

Let me share a story with you about a little girl named Anna. Anna has known fear. In fact, Anna was afraid of just about everything. You see, Anna grew up in a dysfunctional family and always felt like she was invisible. When Anna was 9 years old, she was molested and from that time on, her fears only grew. She was afraid of not being loved by her family. She was afraid of being around men. She was afraid of being left alone, and of not being liked. She was afraid of heights and bugs and falling. She was afraid of not being pretty enough or smart enough or tall enough or thin enough. Anna felt like an outcast and lived with shame and guilt and fear for many years. Yes, Anna knew fear. She was consumed by it.

Fortunately for Anna and for us, there is a happy ending to Anna's story. YHWH came looking for Anna. And when He found her, she learned that she was not invisible and that Someone did indeed love her. As Anna's relationship with YHWH grew and she learned to trust Him, her fears began to subside and to disappear. As she became more confident in the love and care of her Savior, she learned that there was nothing that she had to fear, because He was on her side and would always be there to help and protect her. She learned to trust in His promise that He would always be with her and that she could do all things because of Him.

Anna's fears eventually disappeared altogether, and she became a great vessel in the hands of YHWH, which He used to touch the lives of many others in her lifetime.

This story is a great example of what YHWH can do with our lives, but let's not overlook the fact that, had Anna refused to give up her fears and trust in YHWH, this story would have had a very different ending.

Fear is a very real thing in the lives of many people. But where does fear come from? Can fear ever be a positive thing? What do the scriptures say about fear? Let's examine them together and see what YHWH has to say on this subject. I think you may be surprised. I know I certainly was.

DEFINITIONS

What is fear? According to Webster's Dictionary it is defined as 1) *a distressing emotion such as dread or apprehension aroused by impending danger, evil or pain whether real or imagined*; 2) *full of awe or reverence toward Elohim*.

Did you know the word *fear* is found in the scriptures 523 times in one form or another? That's amazing! These include: *fear, fears, feared, fearest, feareth, fearful, fearfully, and fearing*.

In looking up all these words, I noticed that the most common meanings found in the Strong's Concordance were #3372 for the Old Testament Hebrew words and #5399 in the New Testament for the Greek words. Let's take a look and examine the original meanings of these words.

#3372 – Hebrew *yare* – meaning *to fear, to frighten, to make afraid, to revere, to reverence*.

#5399 – Greek *phobeo* – meaning *to be frightened or alarmed, to fear, to reverence, to be in awe*.

It is evident from looking at just these two words that fear can be either a positive thing or a bad thing depending on the circumstances and who or what you are fearing. Realizing this, let's look at some of the scriptures to get a clearer understanding of fear and what role, if any, it should have in the life of a child of YHWH.

POSITIVE FEAR

In the first five books of the Bible, we are told to *fear* YHWH 24 times. In every one of these scriptures, the word is Strong's #3372, which tells us that we are to fear, reverence or respect our Elohim. This is not just a suggestion to the children of Yisrael, YHWH's chosen people, but a command.

In Devarym 31:12, Moses tells the children of Yisrael to:

“Assemble the people ... that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear YHWH Eloheykhem, and observe to do all the words of this Torah.”

It is through the Torah and obedience that the children of Yisrael learned to fear or reverence their Elohim. King David is a man who feared YHWH. He knew, by firsthand experience, what rewards were in store for those who feared Him. These rewards are written down for us in the Tehillym.

- Tehillah 25:14 – YHWH reveals His covenant to those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 31:19 – YHWH has laid up great goodness for all those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 33:18 – YHWH's eye is upon those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 34:7 – YHWH delivers those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 85:9 – YHWH's salvation is near those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 103:11 – YHWH shows mercy to those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 103:13 – YHWH has compassion on those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 115:13 – YHWH blesses those who fear Him.
- Tehillah 147:11 – YHWH favors those who fear Him.

What does the New Testament have to say about fearing or reverencing YHWH?

- Kepha Aleph 2:17 – Fear YHWH.
- Ivrym 12:28-29 – Let us offer to YHWH our acceptable service with fear.
- Chazon 14:7 – Fear YHWH and give glory to Him.
- Chazon 15:4 – All nations shall fear Him.

Should 'fear' have a role in the life of the child of YHWH? The answer, according to the scriptures, is a resounding, YES!

So, now that we have seen that there is a positive fear and that it should be found in the life of every believer of YHWH, let's take a look at another kind of fear.

BAD FEAR

We all know what bad fear is. It is the fear that leads us to have sweaty palms, cold sweats, panic attacks and a racing heartbeat. It is often known by such names as anxiety, panic, apprehension, dread, horror or terror.

It is the kind of fear Anna suffered from. It is also the kind of fear that the disciples of Yehoshua suffered from.

In Mattithyahu 26:47-56, we read of Yehoshua's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Verse 56 tells us that "...all the disciples forsook Him and fled." They had just spent every day for the last three years with the Master and yet, they were afraid.

In Yochanan 20:19, we see that the disciples of Yehoshua were assembled together in the upper room when Yehoshua appeared unto them. However, this verse tells us that these men were in ‘fear of the Jews.’ They weren’t just afraid, they were terrified they would be taken and killed as Yehoshua was.

In Mark 4:35-40, we read of the day when Yehoshua and the disciples were out in a boat and there arose a great storm. The disciples, being greatly afraid said unto Yehoshua, “Master, don’t you care that we are about to die?” If the disciples of Yehoshua experienced fear, we should not feel that we are exempt from this emotion. We are not any less human than they were.

Fear and terror are very real emotions to various circumstances. In each of the above instances, the disciples thought they were going to die. As human beings, it is natural to want to protect our lives from a premature ending and, when faced with the possibility of death, to become not only afraid, but filled with terror.

Those valiant men who have fought in war will tell you that they experienced fear and terror when faced with capture, bodily injury or death.

Our Father in heaven knows that we are made of flesh and blood because He is the One who made us. He also knows and understands our fears and weaknesses. As we read in Tehillah 103:11, YHWH shows mercy to those who fear Him. But is it possible to truly ‘fear’ YHWH and be full of terror or dread?

PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

Yochanan Aleph 4:18 tells us that fear has torment. Webster’s Dictionary defines torment as mental anguish, suffering or pain. Anyone who has ever experienced true fear or terror knows this is true. But this is not all that 1 Yochanan 4:18 tells us. It also says that “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...he that fears is not made perfect in love.”

As our relationship with YHWH grows, the amount of fear we experience should become less until finally one day, there is no longer any fear.

During their time with Yehoshua the disciples experienced fear. But as they matured in Yehoshua and became filled with the *Ruach Haqodesh*, they became bolder.

What does it mean to be bold? Webster’s Dictionary defines boldness as ‘not fearful in the face of actual or possible danger, courageous, daring; daring to break the rules of propriety.’

In Ma’asey 4:1, Kepha and Yochanan were brought before the Jewish leaders to give an account of their preaching Yehoshua to the people. Verse 13 tells us that the leaders saw the boldness with which they spoke and verse 21 tells us that they let them go. Right away, Kepha and Yochanan went to the other disciples and reported what had happened and they all prayed.

Let’s look at their prayer and YHWH’s response to it in verses 24-30. “...now, O Master, behold their threats and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word...and when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken and they were all filled with the *Ruach Haqodesh* and they spoke the word of YHWH with boldness.” Their great love of YHWH did not allow room for fear.

THE WICKED SERVANT

The story of the talents in Mattithyahu 25 has always been a puzzling one. Verses 24-30 tells us of a servant whom Yehoshua called a wicked servant. Have you ever wondered why Yehoshua called the servant “wicked”? The answer is found in verse 25. “And I was afraid...”

This servant’s fear kept him from doing what he should have done with his Master’s talent. More shocking than the fact that Yehoshua called this servant “wicked” because of his fear, is the punishment that the servant received.

Verses 28-30, “Take the talent from him...and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness...” Does that seem a bit extreme to you? It may seem that way, but obviously Yehoshua takes fear very seriously!

How seriously? Look at Chazon 21:8, “But the fearful...and unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...”

Why such a serious punishment for those who are fearful? It is because the ultimate cause of fear is unbelief and lack of faith. Consider what Yehoshua said to the disciples when he chastised them in Mark 4:40. “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” Without faith it is impossible to be saved (Ephesians 2:8).

Fear is contagious. When one becomes fearful, it is easier for others around that one to become fearful as well (Devarym 20:8).

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM YHWH

Though YHWH takes fear and its consequences very seriously, He has offered us many words of encouragement and strength throughout His word.

- Devarym 7:21 – “You shall not be afraid of them: for YHWH Eloheyka is among you...”
- Devarym 20:3-4 – “Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble...for YHWH Eloheykhem is the One who goes before you.”
- Devarym 31:6 – “Be strong and of excellent courage, fear not nor be afraid, for YHWH Eloheykhem does go with thee and He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.”
- Yeshayahu 35:4 – “Be strong, fear not; behold your Elohyim will come with vengeance...He will come and save you.”
- Yeshayahu 41:10 – “Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am Eloheyka; I will strengthen thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”
- Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Yehoshua HaMashiach who strengthens me.”

With these promises from the mouth of YHWH Himself we can say with David, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my El, in Him will I trust’ (Tehillah 91:2), and “...fear was on every side...but I trusted in thee, O YHWH, and said, ‘Thou art my El.’ (Tehillah 31:13)

Though fear is a torment for those who carry it, it does not have to be. Like Anna, and the disciples, Kepha and Yochanan, it is possible to overcome your fears and allow the love of YHWH to be perfected in you.

Through the blood of Yehoshua you can come before the throne of YHWH, ask for boldness and expect to receive it.

Do not let your fear overcome you but overcome your fear by the blood and strength of Yehoshua living in you. Go ahead, be bold! What are you afraid of?

B’shalom,
Raquel