

What to Fear

The following is based on an article written by Dan Harless in December 1985. In that article Mr. Harless wrote of fears that dominated the American mind in that day. Worries about the coming of a catastrophic meteorite, acid rain and other "inevitable tragedies" were referenced. Now, nearly 25 years later, these are nowhere near the top of the list of fears. Today many are wringing their hands over the false science of global warming, the economy, jobs, the housing market, oil and terrorism. Should those of us reading this live another 25 years, it might be interesting to pull up this article and remind ourselves then of those things that concerned us in 2010. Again, these concerns of today might not even make the list of worries in the year 2035.

The change in worldly fears notwithstanding, the fear that we should have in our hearts remains constant. Mr. Harless put it this way:

"But, how about food, clothing and other creature necessities? Jesus tells us we are not to be anxious about them. He would even have us rise above the fear of death. See Matthew 6:26-34. Jesus says, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' Then He adds, 'But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' (Matthew 10:28). This is a legitimate fear. Solomon's charge is as cogent today as when it was first uttered some 3000 years ago: 'Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.' (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

"... there is but one fear capable of driving out all other fears. This of course is fear of God. It alone opens the door to peace, goodwill and salvation."

A steady diet of our media, coupled with a lack of faith in God would have anyone shaking in their boots regarding the future. Adding to the anxiety are those television "evangelists" who claim that current events are signs of the final days leading to their version of the end of the world. So many people are living on edge, just waiting for the next shoe to drop that will plunge us into another depression or, worse yet, annihilation.

The world has faced countless catastrophes since man's fall (Genesis 3). There was a worldwide flood (Genesis 6-8). The wars have been innumerable. There have been earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods. Over the centuries famines, droughts, blights and diseases have touched several societies. These are the real disasters. In addition to them mankind has had to deal with those manufactured, predicted disasters that have never occurred but had those who believed in them worried nonetheless.

On any given day we can find plenty to fear. We can be afraid of getting sick or dying from the impurities in the air we breathe, the water we drink or the food we eat. We can live in trepidation of someone breaking into our house, stealing our possessions and causing us bodily harm. We can paralyze ourselves with all kinds of fears, real or imagined, but the one fear we must retain is that which will lead us to the place where there are no fears, anguish or anxiety (Revelation 21); namely, the fear of God. The reason for fearing God is simple. Throughout time, the fears of the world have come and gone, but God has been constant. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psalm 90:2). He is the One who sustains life (Acts 17:28). He is the One who will determine our location in eternity (Matthew 25:31-46). To fear Him is to honor, respect and obey Him, recognizing that He has the power to give eternal life or to condemn to everlasting death.

What or whom will you fear? Perhaps a year from now you would look back on this article, reflect on this question and then ask yourself, "Why was I even afraid of all of that?" "Fear God and keep his commandments." That's a pretty simple formula for happiness, peace and contentment as well as eternal life. May this be our commitment today and all of the days we have yet ahead of us in this earthly sojourn.

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