

Monday, 5 March 2018 Exodus 14:13-14

And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Finally, after all the plagues with which the LORD had afflicted Egypt, after these demonstrations of the power and might of the LORD, God the Almighty, Moses was ready to assume the mantle of the shepherd of Israel. "*Fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the LORD.*" Don't be afraid of the Egyptians anymore; they're history. A necessary function of any whom the LORD would call to shepherd a portion of His people; to be an encourager, to teach them to lead lives characterized by trust in the LORD's promises.

Tuesday, 6 March 2018 Exodus 14:30-31

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

This was the first action against Egypt that had an element of danger for Israel. There was going to be a slaughter without the LORD's intervention; the nation of Israel was going to be wiped out.

Israel saw the great power, and they feared, and they believed in the LORD. All the way? Fully fearing and believing? No, but a start.

Wednesday, 7 March 2018 Exodus 16: 2-4, 9-12

And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.... Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'" And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

About a month and a half after the Egyptian army was wiped out by the LORD, unbelief, and grumbling had become the *modus operandi* of the people, Not only did they forget the sight of dead bodies on the seashore, but all thought of the slavery exacted by Pharaoh. All that remained were memories of creature comforts.

How quickly do memories, or worse, recognition of blessings fade? We should not criticize the Israelites. We, like them, should not require a continuous flow of blessings to enable us to fear the LORD. We are no better at recognizing the quail and manna as the LORD supplies.

Thursday, 8 March 2018 Exodus 17:1-2, 6

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ...Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

A few weeks, at the most later, and the people have forgotten. Well, grumbling worked the last time, let's try it again. It is obvious that the fear of the LORD is a surface reaction. The might and power of the LORD, God the Almighty has not soaked in.

The water flowed from the rock, bringing to mind the woman at the well to whom Jesus promised living water (John 4:10-11) and His promise to us that we will become rivers of living water. (John 7:38) One of the lessons to learn here is that the Fear of the LORD is not something that wears off. It is a permanent transformation guided by the Holy Spirit to draw His people closer to Him and to use us as His fountains.

Friday, 9 March 2018 Exodus 24:15-18

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

What happened on the mountain? Moses entered the cloud and what happened? This is a watershed moment, a sea change in Moses' life. Why? How?

The simple answer is that he entered into the presence of the Glory of the LORD. Was he totally transformed? No, he still had to face the consequences of his anger at Meribah. (Num 20) Was this the beginning of Moses' fear of the LORD? Yes, I believe so.

And it must be for each of us. We must seek to enter into the presence of the LORD, God the Almighty.

Saturday, 10 March 2018 Exodus 32:9-14

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

The question before me here is whether or not Moses could have effectively debated with the LORD before his sojourn on Mount Sinai? The Israelites have violated the first two commandments by having another god before the LORD and by worshipping a graven image. Granted before they were given the Commandments of the LORD, but ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law. Especially the Law of the LORD.

No, he could not have done so, but on the mountain he entered into the presence, the Glory of the LORD. He was one who was the antithesis of Proverbs 28:9, he became one whose prayers were not abhorred, but one whose prayers were treasured.

Lord's Day, 11 March 2018 Psalm 119:33-40

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!

Lord, I echo the pleading tone of this stanza. Fill me, as only You can do with a complete understanding of Your Law, Your Precepts, Your Testimonies, Your Commandments, Your Promises, Your Rules. Lord, that my walk in Your Kingdom would be one of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, leading all to You; that my mouth would be filled with Your praises and be testifying to Your great mercy, love, and forgiveness; that my message would be, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, it is available to you now, come and join me in it."

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



March 5-11, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Forgive us, LORD, when we succumb to the sin of anxiety, to that grievous sin that represents trust in our own efforts rather than trusting in Your Word.

LORD, You have sent us out to carry the message of the peace of God into all the corners of the kingdom of man. We come to You seeking that guidance and discernment that will empower us to reach all those You have entrusted to our care and ministry; depending totally upon Your promise to guard our hearts and minds in You. Amen

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear. I have chosen to take an introductory look at the subject through the lens of the life of Moses.

Voices Together is published daily on the website of the Fellowship of Ailbe, www.ailbe.org; along with material by other writers to encourage and assist in our walks as disciples of Jesus Christ. These messages can also be received as daily emails or in a monthly printed version by sending a request to:

Pastor John Nunnikhoven, The Church at Prison, Inc.
PO Box 8318, Essex Junction, VT 05452

or to prior@ailbe.org

The Fellowship of Ailbe, (www.ailbe.org)
Realizing the presence, promise and power
of the Kingdom of God.