

## A BIBLICAL STUDY ON FEAR

### LESSON TWENTY-ONE: AROUND THE CLOCK PROTECTION

by Sandy Harber

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. " Psalm 91:5-6

I spent hours meditating on and praying through Psalm 91, abiding in the shelter of my God. I stopped running away from my situation. I quietly took up residence in God's hiding place. At first it was the place that I fled to in my grief. But as I settled in, I found that I wanted to remain there permanently. It was the place of my refuge. It was a place of hope.

In this place God provides 24 hour care. The Hebrew day was divided into four equal parts: 1) night (v. 5) - 6 p.m. to midnight; 2) day (v. 5) - 6 a.m. to noon; 3) darkness (v. 6) - midnight to 6 a.m.; and, 4) noonday (v. 6) - noon to 6 p.m. The psalmist assures us there is no reason to fear because the Lord is our dwelling place, or habitation (v.9). The Hebrew word "yare," translated "afraid" in verse 5 is translated "fear" 150 times elsewhere in the Old Testament. It is the most prevalent of the 22 Hebrew "fear" words. In this same verse the Hebrew "pachad" is translated "terror." This is another of our 22 words translated "fear" (41 times) in the Old Testament. Fear comes in many flavors and varying degrees of angst.

Sheltering under God's wings (v. 4) means that we don't have to be afraid in the nighttime. Darkness is one of the principle sources of fear. It's really that unknown thing that may be lurking in the darkness that we fear. "Terror" in the Hebrew can mean a "sudden alarm." In ancient times guards walked the walls of the cities and raised an alarm if the enemy was spotted. But when we are hidden away in the Lord no one can sneak in and attack us. We are protected.

That same idea of being under attack is carried over into the morning hours when we can actually see the enemy's arrows flying toward us. In this day and age we are unlikely to be physically attacked with bow and arrows. But Paul warned us about a very real enemy who shoots fiery darts (Ephesians 6:16). Warfare on this level is spiritual. And it is no less real than physical warfare. The devil can be a very real source of fear. He plants seeds of doubt so that we may question whether God will deliver us from this or that circumstance. Our trust in Him waivers. Paul tells us to quench Satan's darts by exercising our faith. Faith in God will shield us from whatever the devil sends our way.

Abiding in God's secret place means that we don't have to fear illness, even plagues, that move especially in the night (v. 6). There has been a lot of fear recently due to covid. People were so fearful that they were willing to give up some of their freedom. Some people were so afraid that they were willing to coerce other people into getting a shot, wearing a mask, or keeping a 6-foot distance. Actions prompted by fear did more damage than the illness they feared. Fear can be destructive.

Living under the shadow of the Almighty means that we don't have to be afraid in the face of the destruction, or ruination, of our plans, projects, or dreams (v. 6). No matter how carefully we plan, things can go wrong. Remember that God is in control. So, whatever happens He allowed it to happen. This includes natural disasters that can cause a vast amount of devastation. The type of fear referenced in these verses is not the good kind of fear that warns us to fight or flee.

When fear comes upon us we need only remember that we abide in God 24 hours a day. He protects us from human enemies, illness, natural disasters, unseen terrors, and destroyed hopes and dreams. We have nothing to fear.

*"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall be no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Psalm 91:9-10*