

A BIBLICAL STUDY ON FEAR
LESSON ELEVEN: GOD IS PRESENT

by Sandy Harber

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Psalm 46:1-2

God is a very present help in trouble. "Present" means that He is there in Person. Are you in trouble? Well, good news - God is standing right there beside you. My favorite of God's compound names is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is present. "Jehovah Shammah" are the last words of the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 48:35). They are translated into English in our King James Bibles as "The Lord is there."

The God standing with you in time of trouble is your refuge and strength. The Hebrew word for "refuge" means "place of hope; shelter" from the root word meaning "to flee for protection." Could anything be clearer? When you are in trouble flee to God for protection and hope. He will shelter you. Psalm 91:4 gives us this word picture: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. . . ." Seek shelter under the wings of your Heavenly Father. Add to this "strength," which means "security; force; power." Your place of shelter in God is secure.

Therefore - in view of the facts that you are in a secure location of protection and hope and God is right there beside you - you will not fear. Under these conditions what is there to be afraid of? What can possibly threaten you with God right there protecting you? Nothing. Not even a great upheaval that shakes the earth off its axis and throws mountains into the sea. When fear comes upon you respond with this thought: My trust in God's protecting presence and power is such that nothing can make me afraid, not even a mountain shaking or the disappearance of the earth.

Just remember that God is with you wherever you are. When everything in your life is going just the way you want it, God is there. When it seems like everything that can go wrong has gone wrong, God is there, too. In good times and bad, God is present. Acknowledge His presence in your life.

Before Joshua led the Hebrew people into the Promised Land, God commanded him to: 1) be strong; 2) be of good courage; 3) be not afraid; and, 4) be not dismayed (Joshua 1:9). Two positive and two negative commands. On the positive side, God told Joshua to stand his ground like a good soldier (be strong) and to be alert, brave, and ready for battle (be courageous). On the negative side, Joshua was to not be affrighted and shake terribly (be afraid) or breakdown, lying prostrate, and terrified (be dismayed).

Why was Joshua given these commands? How was he supposed to bravely stand his ground and not be afraid or dismayed? Because the Lord God was with him wherever he went. God was present in Joshua's life 24/7. God is present in your life 24/7, too. What is your defense against fear? Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is present.

"Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Joshua 1:9