

Fear in the Presence of God

Could this really be? Are people actually afraid when they see the miracles of God – when they feel the presence of God come into their midst?

After A.L. and I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit we were told, “You will be amazed at the power of God.” The next weekend we were in our home hanging full-length drapes which would completely cover two walls of the living room. I was holding and hanging these heavy drapes and suddenly something happened in my neck and I was in extreme pain. I dropped the drapes to the floor and was holding my neck trying to relieve the pain with tears running down my face. A.L. came quickly and started massaging the area on my neck. He said, “Joyce, I can feel a vertebrae that has slipped out of place.”

Suddenly, I felt two hands on my spine pulling that vertebrae back into place. My first thought was how did A.L. do that? And then I realized I could still feel his hand rubbing the back of my neck. He couldn’t put his hand inside my neck. The pain was gone. Just as suddenly as it had come it had gone!

“A.L.” I said spinning around. “Did you pray?” We had never experienced an answer to prayer like that before.

“Yes,” he replied, “I asked God to touch you!”

Our son, who was a teenager at the time, held up his finger which was swollen to twice its normal size and horribly black and blue from an accident the previous weekend asked, “What about my finger?”

We had never seen a miracle before God healed my neck. I don’t think we even had time to accept the fact it was a miracle. But A.L. walked across the room and put his hand gently around John’s finger. He said, “Be healed in the name of Jesus.” And as he let go of the finger, we saw it was completely normal! No Discoloration! No Swelling! Normal in an instant!

Our daughter and I ran to the next room and she whispered, “Mom, I’m scared!” I was too. Suddenly, we realized God was really in our house.

Since that time, we have seen many, many miracles and our reaction is no longer fear, but rather rejoicing at seeing the power of God manifested. However, we have seen a reaction of fear in many others when they first experience the power of God in their lives.

And we have been told this fear is a sign that the miracles are not of God.

Fear Stops the Move of God

There was a small town and miracles began to happen. The leaders of the revival contacted each pastor in that town and asked them to be part of what God was doing. A three-year old girl was blind and received her sight. Young men and women were being saved. A lady was healed and came out of a wheel chair. Another lady was on a respirator and was completely healed. More miracles happened and in just a few weeks, people in the town were talking about what God was doing.

Then what happened? One pastor warned his people on Sunday morning not to come near – these healings were the works of Satan.

Another pastor led others to believe the leaders of the revival were taking thousands of dollars away from the local churches.

A third pastor told people that the leaders of the revival had tried to take over his church. None of these things were true. The pastors were reacting in fear because they couldn’t control what was happening. And sadly, this fear, not of God, but of other things, stopped the move of God in that place.

Is this reaction unusual? What does the word of God say?

The First Mention of Fear

The first time fear came into the world is found in Genesis three. Adam and Eve had walked and talked personally with God. They were in a personal relationship with God, but they disobeyed God.

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid ... (Genesis 3:9,10)

Adam and Eve were afraid because now sin stood between them and God.

Jacob Reacted in Fear

Jacob was running from his brother and stopped for the night. He had a spiritual dream and God spoke to him in that place. The words God spoke to him were a wonderful promise for his future, but what was Jacob’s reaction?

"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."

And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place!" Genesis 28:15-17a

The fear that Jacob experienced was that he had stumbled unknowingly into a place where God was. Jacob had an awesome fear of God and that was good.

The Shepherds

Shepherds were going about their business one night taking care of the sheep and angels appeared and spoke of the very thing the nation of Israel had been praying for, and what is the first thing we read? They were greatly afraid.

An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.

They were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. (Luke 2:9,10)

An angel and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Daniel and His Friends

We often talk about how Daniel fasted for twenty-one days and then the vision came. But when Daniel started fasting and praying, he was not alone. Even when the vision came, Daniel was not alone, so what did

happen? His friends fled in fear. And how did Daniel react? In fear. Let's read the story in Daniel again.

I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Then, suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you."

While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words (Daniel 10:7-12).

Is Fear a Sign of Evil?

People have come to us and said, "If the supernatural was of God, people would not be afraid." The word *fear* is used seventy-one times in the New Testament. Let's look at a few of the examples.

When the disciples saw Jesus *walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!"* And they cried out for fear (Matthew 14:26).

When the demoniac was set free from the legion of demons which went into the swine that immediately drowned themselves, we read, *Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.*

They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned (Luke 8:35-37).

They saw the man completely set free, but they were still afraid.

Even in the wonderful story of the resurrection of Jesus, we find fear was there. *Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men (Matthew 28:2-4).*

We might say, "Of course, they were evil men." But what about the women who came early in the morning and were told by the angel, *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."*

After hearing the wonderful news, we read, *So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word (Matthew 28:5,6,8).*

Fear is the natural response of the flesh, when we come into the awesome, presence of our Almighty God. The first words at almost every angelic appearance in Scripture, is "Fear not!" The angel appeared to Daniel and said, "Fear not!" The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Fear not." When Jesus walked on the water and came to the disciples, He said, "Do not be afraid."

When we recognize the fear that comes when God moves in our midst is an awesome awareness of who He is, we can come into the place where we know that "*Perfect love casts out fear*" (1 John 4:18). We can begin to experience His mighty power in our lives.

We are reminded once again of the wonderful promise found in the book of Daniel.

The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits

(Daniel 11:32).