DO NOT FEAR!

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them. For the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

If there is one verse in the Bible that could be the contender for the heavyweight champion verse of them all, this just might be it. One short verse encapsulates the ***entire heart of God*** and His message to all of His children. There can be no doubt that this message covers the first half of this chapter. And Yahweh desires so strongly for this message to be conveyed to His people that he says it multiple times within just a few short verses. First Moses says it to the Israelites in the above verse. Then Moses says it to Joshua in verses 7-8:

Deuteronomy 31:7-8*"...Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers...And the LORD, He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you. Do not fear nor be dismayed."*

QUESTION: ***Using the above scriptures, what can you conclude are the two most influential spirits/emotions that move people to do or not do things?***

Fear and rejection. As a pastor and someone who has counseled many people, I can attest to the veracity of this fact. People are moved by fear to do things that they otherwise would not do and rejection can paralyze the life of an individual from ever being who they were meant to be. Yahweh knows this fact, which is why He addresses it here, on Moses' last birthday in his closing speech before he dies. Let's take a look at the Hebrew word for fear and see what we can find.

Yare (pronounced *yaw-ray*)

Yare can be interpreted as *"fear, dreadful, a terrible thing, afraid, to stand in awe."* Strangely, it is one of the words in the Hebrew language that can have a double meaning. It can mean fear in the sense of truly fearing for your life and it can also have the meaning of standing in awe of someone in respectful reverence. In the Paleo hieroglyphic Hebrew language, where each letter was originally a picture, we can see both sides of the coin.

Yare is spelled ***yod, resh, aleph.*** **Yod** was originally a picture of a hand and meant *"hand, right hand of strength, power of God."* **Resh** was a picture of a head and still means *"head or beginning"* today. **Aleph** was an ox head and meant *"strong leader."* When you put it all together, you have *"the hand on the head of the strong leader."* What's interesting about this is that we don't know what the outcome of this hand on the head of the leader actually is. It could be the hand of anointing on the leader or the hand of correction. Yare has both meanings. It is the respect and reverence for the one in authority over you that can both bless and correct you. This is the role of a good Father. Depending on the actions of his son, a father can bless or he can correct.

Psalm 80:17 *"Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself."*

This is clearly a Messianic Psalm that is referencing God putting His right hand upon His Son and making Him strong. But what does that really mean? Whenever we see God's right hand coming upon someone it can be both in correction as well as in anointing. So was the Son of God corrected or was the hand of anointing? I'm going to suggest something that might be out of the box but based on my own life and the pattern of the scriptures I believe that it's true. I'm going to postulate that yare is both anointing and correction at the same time. In scripture, the pattern shows that anointing comes from correction. Just like the head cannot be separated from the tail on a coin, it seems to be the Father's pattern of dealing with us to correct FOR the purpose of making us strong for Himself.

Job 5:17 *"Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up. He wounds, but His hands make whole."*

Following this verse, the Father goes on to say that the result of this "hand on the head" is unbelievable blessings. There are so many blessings it takes the rest of the chapter to list them all.

Hebrews 12:7-11 *"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons. For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons...No chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful. Nevertheless, afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*

We can see from the above scriptures that having the hand of God on you isn't always very pleasant. In fact, it can be very painful. Trust me, I know. But His hand isn't there out of wrath. He is working on a plan for His sons and daughters. Chastening **IS** the process of anointing. We don't like to look at it in that way because we humans always want something for nothing. But the truth is that the greater the anointing the more the hand of God will be upon you to destroy more of your flesh. If He desires you to be a conduit then He has to clean out more of your pipes. In America, we say ***"No pain, no gain."*** This could not be truer than it is in the spiritual realm. God disciplines those He loves because He knows that after the discipline, just like in Job, the blessings that get poured out are beyond what we could ever think or imagine.

QUESTION: ***Do you feel any pain in your life?***

Take the pain Abraham must've felt when he was told to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. No father could ever imagine actually killing his ***only*** son. The emotional trauma of that test had to have pushed Abraham to the limit. But he did not back down from God's hand on him. He trusted Him and the result was that he qualified for the call on his life and his progeny became as the stars of the sky.

Look at Jacob and the major discipline he received in his life. ***God had to teach him a lesson.*** But by the time he learned it, he came out of Laban's house with both the love of his life and extreme wealth. In addition, the pain he endured for wrestling with the Angel qualified him to receive the status of being called **"Israel,"** the patriarch of the twelve sons who would be the subject of the entire bible from that time on.

King David was chastised and had to suffer greatly because of it. But what it produced in him was a title that no one else in the bible ever had the privilege of holding: **"a man after God's own heart."**

Joseph was disciplined heavily and then was paid back beyond measure for staying under God's hand.

Paul was knocked off his horse and made blind for three days. Those must have been the scariest days of his entire life as he had no idea if he would be blind for life. But when the chastisement of God lifted off him, what he was given was an anointing to be such an instrument in Yahweh's hands that he would pen two-thirds of the New Testament. He was granted a powerful and anointed ministry because of the hand of God on his life.

But the best example is, of course, Yeshua Himself. He was crushed for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He learned obedience through suffering, and He took the correction and hand of God on his life to perfection, resulting in the anointing above all anointing. ***He did not do this because of His own sin but because of ours.*** He took our correction to show us what happens when we stay under the hand of God and don't run from His loving discipline.

We see the pattern of God blessing ***THROUGH*** the pain over and over and over again in scripture. We see that the pain **IS** the first part of the blessing. It's designed to be hard. In a way, it's designed to test your faith and your endurance to try to scare you away. It's like He allows the enemy to attack, like in the case of Job, just to see if you're worthy for His divine blessing. We have to ***earn*** it, ladies and gents. ***Salvation is free but the anointing is not.*** You may have a call on your life but that calling, if it is to ever be materialized, must be paid for by the hand of God on your life. We are born into sin and He must remove our will in order to make room for His. What general allows a new recruit to lead hundreds of men without going through the proper training that will push him to the brink? Just because that general sees greatness in that young recruit on the first day does not mean that he's qualified for the "call" he sees in his life. He must have the hand of the general on his head. And more often than not, when a high-ranking officer sees potential greatness in a new recruit in real life, they will be harder on that individual than on any other recruit. They will push them harder, judge them more strictly, and force them to go beyond the measure of all the other recruits. Why? Because he wants to pull the greatness out of them.

QUESTION: ***What are you going through today that God is trying to pull the greatness out of?***

Have you ever considered that the pain you might be experiencing right now is actually the interview process for the promotion and blessing you've been praying for? Have you ever considered that Yahweh really wanted to give you a blessing but Satan sued you for it on the grounds that you were not qualified to receive it*?* ***It's all a test.***

We've all heard the saying ***"God's hand is really on that person."*** But when we say that we're normally talking about the blessings we see in their life. And because we don't truly understand God's process and how He gives blessings, we don't see what they had to go through before we can recognize the blessings. People only see the finished product: an iced cake that's decorated perfectly. They don't see metal beaters beating it down, foreign ingredients being forced together, and being put in an oven for what seems like an eternity. Diamonds are forged in darkness and under great pressure. **Gold** is purified under great heat. **Silver** is refined by the blacksmith by holding it in the fire so long that it begins to melt. When he can actually see his image in it, he immediately pulls it out of the fire so as not to destroy it completely. In the same way, the Father desires us to be made in His image, and many times that requires us to be forged in fire until we almost can't take it anymore. It's at the point of full surrender to the ***"General"*** that we become what we were destined to be.

So when we take all this back to the speech Moses made to the children of Israel who were about to cross over the Jordan and finally take their inheritance, a destiny they were born for, He tells them not to fear. Why? Because Moses knew that inheritances don't come for free. That although Yahweh had told them that He was going to give the land to them, that does not mean they would not have to fight for it. It meant that they were the ones called to receive it. Now they just had to go through the test to qualify for it. This is why Moses told them and Joshua that they need not be afraid because God was going to be with them. As a matter of fact, he said one of the most comforting phrases in all of the Bible: "He will never leave you or forsake you." No matter how many giants you face. No matter how many fortified walls (like those around Jericho) you find yourself up against, He **WILL NOT EVER** leave you or reject you. He is there, hiding in the shadows, preparing your blessing, and watching your back. He will not give you more than you can handle. And just when you think you cannot take any more, He comes through to show you His great love for you.

THIS is what is meant by fearing God: respecting His hand on our lives and His word so much that no matter what the circumstances may be, we do what He says and trust in Him. This is the meaning of yare. But in almost every test there will be a purposeful element of real fear. He allows the enemy to scare us through some sort of potential – or real – scenario. He wants to see if we will follow His commandments and trust Him when bullets are being sprayed at us. The general may see greatness, but it has to be proven on the battlefield in real-time. And this is where many of us fail so miserably. We break under the slightest pressure. We fold when the going gets tough. We pack up and go home when we're in pain. We struggle with "being strong and of good courage." And that is **EXACTLY** why our heavenly Father keeps us in the fire. Because we are called to be strong but in the Spirit, we are very weak.

Don't forget that when the Israelites came out of Egypt they were slaves and blue-collar workers. It was through the battle and the hand of God in their lives that they became the most powerful army in the world. We are not to fear the situation or men. We are to fear and trust God in the situation. Our courage does not lie in ourselves and our own strength, but in the power of God. "Not by might, nor by [man's] power, but by my Spirit, says Yahweh." When we stop looking at our pain as negative and start looking at it as Yahweh trying to build us up in our faith so He can do great things through us and with us, then we will finally have peace in the midst of the storm. We will understand how Yeshua was sleeping on the boat while the storm was raging all around. When we truly know that He has our back and He will ***NEVER*** leave us or forsake us, then we finally come to the place where we know that like my friend Blake always says, all we have to do is just "go through it to get to it." When you walk through the fires of hell and you're staring the devil in the eye in your great pain, take the time to remind him that you're just passing through. He has to stay there.

Be of good courage and do not fear. He will never leave you, reject you, or forsake you.

Shalom,
Jim Staley