

Don't Be Afraid

1 Peter 3:13–14 (NKJV)

13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

We have never been more controlled by fear than we are today.

And sadly many Christians have the same mind set.

I had a lady who is a friend on facebook who sent me a podcast.

The podcast was telling people that the vaccine was the mark of the beast and everyone who received it was doomed to hell.

All it takes is a simple reading of the passage to realize that the vaccine is not the mark of the beast.

The mark of the beast is connected with worship of the beast, the anti-christ which I have not seen any evidence of such going on in our country.

Revelation 13:4 (NKJV)

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

Revelation 13:12 (NKJV)

12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Revelation 13:15 (NKJV)

15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Revelation 14:9 (NKJV)

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

Revelation 14:11 (NKJV)

11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

We are to fear God, not the anti-christ, regardless of who people tell us that he is.

People of Paul's day thought Nero was the anti-christ. But did Peter and Paul and John fear him?

Jesus made it very clear that we are not to fear man.

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

In our text this morning Peter realizes that persecution is ongoing and will probably not stop.

So what are we to do?

That is what he has to tell us.

- I. Do what is right and you will have less to fear.
 - A. And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?
 1. Generally speaking governments reward good behavior not evil.
 2. When Daniel was taken to Babylon, did he do good or evil, he did good.
 - a. And he was rewarded for it.
 - b. Even toward the end of his life when those who were envious of him tried to get him into trouble with the king what did he do.
 - c. When he knew that the decree was signed, he went to his house and prayed as he had always done.
 - d. In that case God sent his angels to shut the lion's mouths and preserve righteous Daniel.
 3. When Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold as a slave what did he do?
 - a. He became the best slave the man had ever had.
 - b. When Potiphar's wife lied about him and he was thrown into prison what did he do.
 - c. He became the best prisoner in the prison.
 - d. When his brothers were going to kill him do you suppose God lacked angels to protect him.
 - e. When Potiphar's wife thought to have him killed do you suppose that God had no angels to protect him.
 - B. We should do what is good and not evil.
 1. 1 Peter 3:16–17 (NKJV)
 - a. ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

2. Did you get that?
 - a. It is better to suffer for doing good than to suffer for doing evil.
 - b. If a law is not contrary to the Word of God then we are to obey it.
 - c. There is nothing unusual about suffering for the wrong that is done.
 - d. But it is strange when people will suffer for doing good.
 - e. The Corrie Ten Boom family and the Anne Frank family suffered during the German occupation not for doing evil but for doing good.

II. We have no guarantee that we will not be persecuted.

A. But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake

1. Millions around the world today suffer for righteousness' sake.
2. By conservative estimate about 100,000 were martyred for Jesus last year.

B. You are blessed.

1. This does not seem to make any sense.
2. Suffering would not be considered a blessing or lead to a blessing.
3. Matthew 5:10–12 (NKJV)
 - a. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

III. We are not to be afraid.

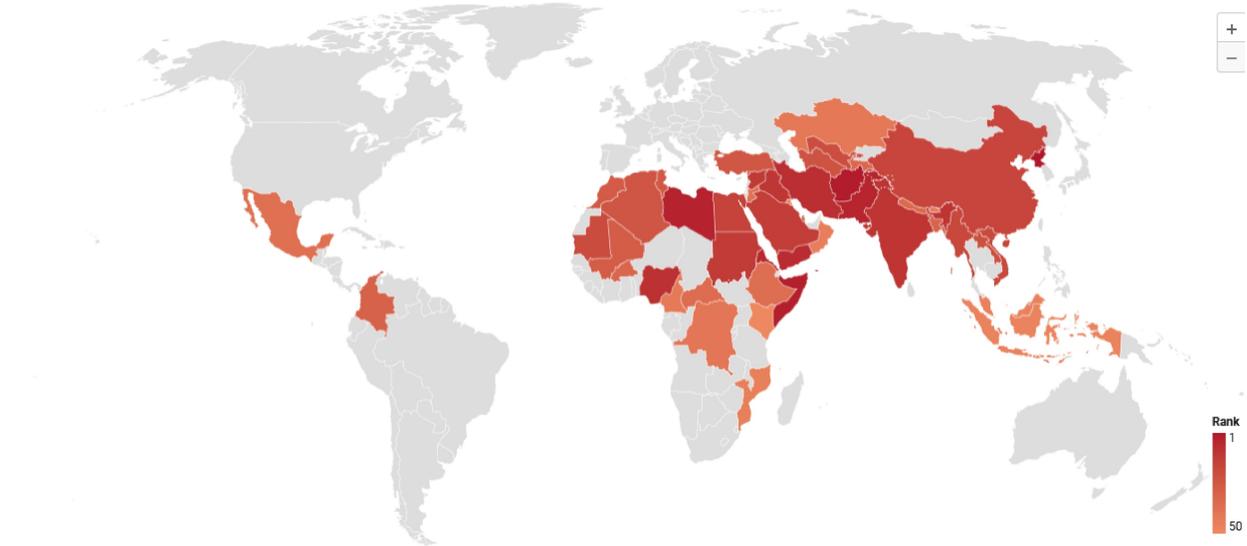
A. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

1. In verse 15 he quotes from
2. Isaiah 8:13–14 (NKJV)
 - a. 13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. 14 He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
3. Hebrews 13:6 (NKJV)
 - a. 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

- B. Why not fear man, what does fear that fear lead to?
1. Weakness and despair.
 - a. Look at Elijah, the mighty prophet of fire.
 - b. When he became fearful, he left the place of service.
 - c. He became deeply depressed and discouraged.
 - d. He wanted to die rather than serve God.
 2. It leads to a lack of faith.
 - a. Consider the case of the servant of Elisha.
 - b. When he and Elisha were in Dothan the army of the Syrians surrounded the city.
 - c. They had come to kill Elisha.
 - d. Notice the fear in Elisha's servant.
 - e. But what was the true case.
 - f. God had the army that surrounded Dothan surrounded.
- C. So then let us have confidence without fear.
1. Confidence in not and not in man or man's government.
 - a. Psalm 118:8 (NKJV)
 - (1) 8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.
 2. Do you suppose the God who surrounded Dothan to protect Elisha is short of angels to surround you in your hour of trial.
 3. Or do you suppose that when Herod took James had him beheaded that the angels were not there to receive him.
 4. Or what about Stephen who when he laid down his life was not surrounded by God's mighty had to receive him home.
 5. I am sure in the last month many Christians in Afghanistan have been put to death by those who serve Satan, but not one was left alone for God was with them, the angels surrounded them and gave them strength to suffer for His name's sake.
 6. According to an article in Christianity Today, January of 2021, Afghanistan is #2 for persecution led only by North Korea.

Where It's Hardest to Be a Christian (2021)

The top 50 countries where Christian persecution is worst (Nov. 2019 to Oct. 2020).



Revelation 2:10 (NKJV)

10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.