

Can we be Cowards in the Eyes of God/Elohim?

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The question I ask in the title of this short study is one we who are called of God/Elohim must come to grips with here at the end of the age. All too often we are consumed with our day to day problems (which in many cases are personal trials and tests designed specifically for each of us) and lose sight of some very big issues which will be facing us shortly in my opinion. Let's say they are on the horizon. They will impact many of our lives and our reliance and belief in our Savior and Creator. He will not leave one stone unturned in our development unto perfection which He Himself will actually finish in us, but only after we have run the course as to our ability to do so.

Let's start in Revelation 21:8 from the NKJ. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Cowardly here is #1169 deilos from deos (dread); timid, i.e. (by implication) faithless: fearful." Strongs gives a pretty basic understanding of it here.

Vines says of it; cowardly (see A # 2), "timid", is used in Matt 8:36; Mark 4:40; Rev 21:8 (here "the fearful" are first in the list of transgressors.)

Interesting point Vines brings out.

Vines says of A # 2; "1167 deilia: fearfulness (from deos, fright") is rightly rendered "fearfulness" in 2 Tim. 1:7, RV (for KJV, "fear"). That spirit is not given us of God. The word denotes "cowardice and timidity" and is never used in a good sense, as no 1 phobos 5401 is."

So why is this all important to us, the called of God/Elohim. Surely it can't in any way or form be addressing us! Not so brethren as we will see. Let's just consider for a moment what Vines points out about it being listed as to the character of those who are to be first to be tossed into the Lake of Fire which is the second death in Rev. 21:8. I spoke on this subject back in 1996 only to have some in attendance get upset at me because they stressed that they were timid by nature. How could God/Elohim be so cruel? I might add that each of them has fallen from the truth many years ago and returned to the vomit of traditional christianity.

We all need to come to an understanding of this subject of spiritual cowardice and timidity, for it is talking about us, the called of God/Elohim, who are supposed to be shedding our old self for a new self, created in Christ/Messiah. Let us start in Matthew to get a better understanding

of this and listen to how Christ/Messiah Himself deems it and designated it in context. Matthew 8:26; “But He said to them, Why are you fearful (timid and cowardly), O you of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm.”

Why did Christ/Messiah use this word to describe His disciples here?

Verses 24-25; “And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

We can read the same account in Mark 4:40.

Were they actually perishing or just had the perception that they would. It is clear to understand they were very clearly anguishing over the thought of losing their physical lives even though Christ/Messiah was with them and gave the trial no such recognition by His actions of sleeping through it. Keep in mind by this point in their relationship with Christ/Messiah they had witnessed many mighty miracles and had been exposed to many of Christ/Messiah’s teachings, His instructions which also contained talks on His intended purpose and the timing of His death. That is very important to the usage of this word denoting cowardice and timidity. It is also important to note that in Matthew 8:26 He tied it to #3640 “littlefaiths” and in Mark 4:40 to “no faith” or as #4102 denotes, “How do you not have faith?” This is all very relevant to our calling and relationship with the Father and the Son.

“#3640; littlefaiths, is used 5 times in the gospels. Matt 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8 and Luke 12:28. It is oligopistis from #3641 and #4102; incredulous, i.e. lacking confidence (in Christ/Messiah): of littlefaith.”

The JP Green Interlinear correctly translates it or deems it as “littlefaiths” all one word not two. Christ/Messiah correctly names them “Littlefaiths”! Vines says it is used only by Christ/Messiah when He confronts anxiety and fear (cowardice and timidity). Our Lord and Savior expects a lot more out of those of us who are actually in a right relationship with Him. They the disciples and we should know better than to be fearful of such when we are given a spirit of power and not fright as we will cover a little later. In Mark 4:40 the Greek actually says; “How not have you faith?” Christ was dumfounded and disappointed at this behavior. They were displaying no faith in Him even with Him being at their side. He expected a much deeper degree of pistis; “firm persuasion of conviction” in Him.

With this simple understanding of what Christ expected of those who had been called to be His betrothed let’s turn to Revelation 21. In verses 1-6 we are given an understanding of the timing of the events found here which form the context for verses 7-8. These are great events in the timeline of salvation. We read about a new heaven and a new earth being in place, (imagine

that and things are still physical so where does that take us in some of the old teachings we were given?), a New Jerusalem as in the bride, God/Elohim living among men, and the spirit of God/Elohim “the fountain of the water of life” being freely given **to all who thirst for it**. Very, very, important for not “all” will **thirst** for it as we understand and thus the need for a Lake of Fire or simply put; the second death. However some can’t conceive of such a thing.

Verse 7 instructs us that; “He who overcomes shall inherit (future tense) all things, and I will be his God/Elohim and he shall be My son.”

The JP Green says of it;” The one overcoming will inherit all things, and I will be God/Elohim to him, and he will be son to Me.”

Notice two very key conditions here in verses 6 and 7. The recipient will be thirsting for it and will reflect or demonstrate this by overcoming! Overcoming here is #3528 nikao from #3529; to subdue (literally or figuratively); conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory. In other words those being spoken of here must be exhibiting the works which show they want to prevail, get the victory, conquer evil which might be rooted in themselves and not approach it in a timid or cowardly way. They will be engaged in the process. This involves the demonstration of faith residing in them, true conviction as to the outcome as well as to the Being who is giving them the opportunity to inherit all things (eternal life). This is all encompassed in the way of God/Elohim and to His expectations and not our thinking which falls far short of the thinking of God/Elohim. Doing it His way demonstrates to Him that we have a thirst for eternal life with Him above all else. We display a firm conviction to Him, an unfaltering persuasion. As I have mentioned in the past on much of this subject “freely” has a price tag attached to it.

Now let’s see what all this is contrasted with, in sequence, as God/Elohim drops the big bomb in verse 8. “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Now let’s read this from JP Greens and get a much deeper understanding of what the Greek is actually teaching us here in verse 8. “But the cowardly and unbelieving, **and those having become foul**, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all the lying ones**, their part will be in the lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Here we have a translation with a much better understanding of what God/Elohim is teaching us and wants us to understand. Dear brethren every single one of these classifications is spiritual in definition and intent. This is not talking about the physical equivalent which will be forgiven if repented of. These are conditions that brethren have ultimately decided to exist in after having a true relationship with Christ/Messiah and the Father. Please do not overlook this.

Remember the context these are given in here as to the timing of the events surrounding this declaration, not suggestion of God/Elohim.

Here we have classification number one for the second death as to those who are cowardly. The context Christ/Messiah used this word in earlier is very important to understanding what He designates as cowardly behavior. He used it of the disciples who should have known better, who should have had developed a much greater degree of faithful reliance in Him and His teachings to them. He tells us He will never leave nor forsake us in spite of what trial is facing us. It may require us laying down our life to show Him that we will not waiver in our trust and faith in the promises He has given us. Scary times are ahead brethren. Many will be asked to give up their physical life if they do not deny Christ/Messiah. Have we come to grips with that in our personal relationship with Him? He told the disciples or in essence called them, named them, "littlefaiths" or in essence little cowards! They clearly showed very little if any faith in what they had been taught and witnessed by Him. They were only thinking about their physical skin and it pushed them to the limit and doubt entered in. It is clear to me that the cowardly ones being described here in verse 8 have at some time in the past been in a relationship with Christ/Messiah and rejected it for something else more soothing, more pleasant in their minds instead of having to stand with Him in difficult times.

But let's not stop there, let us look at category number two in the listing of who will be going into the second death and lock up the fact these are spiritual designations and characterizations. It is the unbelieving or #571 apistos. The best translation which can be applied to it here in context is "untrusting." Trust is a core aspect of being a "believer." Our very works will display to God/Elohim if we in fact are true believers regardless of what trial or test faces us. Here we are seeing the end result of those who will not trust in Christ/Messiah. They are listed as number two into the lake of fire in this timeframe. They have been given the opportunity to trust in Him at some earlier time and rejected it and thus Him.

Category number 3 is a real eye opener when we see it correctly translated. My NKJ falls far short of conveying the true intent of what is being said here. The JP Greens hit it right on the head, "those having become foul." The word translated for abominable here is #948 bdelusso from a presumed derivative of bdeo (to stink); to be disgusted, i.e. (by implication) detest. Vines says of it, "to render foul (from bdes, to stink), to cause to be abhorred (in the Septuagint in Exodus 5:21; Leviticus 11:43, 20:25, etc.) is used in the middle voice, signifying; to turn oneself away from (as if from a stench; hence to detest.

Do we see why JP Green translates it "those having become foul"? We are talking about those who knew the truth, who had become living sacrifices daily, tasted it, understood it (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-27) and then turned their backs on it. They became a stench in the nostrils of God/Elohim. An unacceptable sacrifice!

Take time and apply the same thinking to the other categories listed here which are going into the lake of fire at this time frame being spoken about.

Let me point out something about the last category mentioned here to assist in your study of them. The NKJ translation of the Greek says “all Liars” but that is not a good translation. Remember the context and then apply Greens translation here to it. He says “and all the lying ones.” We are not talking about all of humanity here who may have lied. We are talking in context about some who had been called of God/Elohim but turned into liars for the express purpose of turning brethren from God/Elohim and unto themselves. Lying here is #5571 pseudes; from #5574: untrue, i.e. erroneous, deceitful, wicked: false, liar.

We are talking about those who are lying against the truth of God/Elohim. This is not talking about lying against a neighbor. The same word used here is also found in Revelation 2:2; “... And you have tested those who say they are apostles (ones sent forth from God/Elohim) and are not, and have found them to be liars (or lying ones). “

That is who is being spoken about in Revelation 21:8 as to the last category scheduled for the second death. This is very serious behavior in the eyes of God/Elohim. It merits the Lake of Fire. The actual Greek does not water down the intent to encompass simple lying here. Thus it should not be translated as “all liars.” We are talking about a sin unto death!

With this all established let us get back to the first category, the cowardly or timid, the deilos (1169). Vines told us it is comparable to deilia “fearfulness” in many uses.

2 Timothy 1:7; “For God/Elohim has not given us a spirit of fear (cowardice), but of power and of love and of a sound mind (not one tossed to and fro).” Some translators use “cowardice” here and rightly so for that is the intent of it being used in this context. Ask yourself, have I ever displayed cowardice behavior in the past when having been challenged about the way of life, the walk you have been walking? I know I have. There are some who would want to make it all sound more palatable, more innocent by saying; timid or shy. Call it what you may, if we allow such behavior to grow and flourish we put ourselves in a position of being ashamed of Christ before men. That is not a good thing and it is certainly not an innocent thing either. We are to speak of the hope which is in us as to Christ regardless of who is asking or where we are. To do otherwise is so repulsive to God/Elohim that if it becomes a habit we will inherit the Lake of Fire. Just think some who have come before us have been faced with this in the utmost of trials, that which would cost them their physical life. Many of them placed their reliance in and on Christ/Messiah and have made the ultimate sacrifice in His name.

We do not have to look far or think long to see Christians of this world who do not have the gift we have been given accepting death rather than to deny Christ. My heart goes out to them and at the same time I ponder as to what their resolve will be when they are actually called of

God/Elohim and given the spirit of God/Elohim. There are many who are being butchered today at this very time, who are incredible examples for us in this regard. Have we given that much thought? Will we be able to display the same resolve if not a greater one based on what will be given us by the spirit to articulate at that time. We must be willing to lay down our lives and witness to the truth of God/Elohim at the most distressing of times as part of our relationship with Christ. Will we be timid, cowardly; or act with the spirit of power which is in us? The quickest way to extinguish the spirit as I know it is to deny Christ/Messiah before men, and please understand this encompassed being ashamed of Him.

These are not pleasant things to talk about brethren but necessary all the same. The world is moving at breakneck speed towards end time events; Jacobs's trouble as we know them. We must be thinking soberly about them, yet not allowing them to dictate what we do in our daily lives with our families, co-workers at our jobs, etc. With that said we must never deny Christ being in us and we must display the works which are pleasing to our Father and to our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ/Messiah. I can't conceive of anyone actually wanting to be a coward unto death. It is something when you think that one who is attempting to save his life through cowardly actions will in the end lose it when it comes to our relationship with Christ/Messiah.

Our peace we give to you.

Brian and Linda