

Preparing for Spiritual Battle: How to Respond as Israel and Iran Head Toward War

“Then the officers shall speak further to the people and say, ‘Who is the man that is afraid and fainthearted? Let him depart and return to his house, so that he might not make his brothers’ hearts melt like his heart,’” (Deut. 20:8).

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In times of battle or when facing any formidable challenge, fear is a debilitating force. This precept protected the morale of the Israelite community because a fearful soldier could spread anxiety among the troops, weakening their resolve and focus. Allowing those who were afraid to return home ensured that only those with strong faith and courage faced the enemy. It is not God’s desire that His people succumb to fear. The command to not be afraid appears more than one hundred times in the Hebrew Bible and is the most repeated command in Scripture. The Lord both encourages and charges us not to fear:

“Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you,” (Deut. 31:6).

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand,” (Isa. 41:10).

We often coddle and even embrace our fears without realizing we are receiving something that is abhorrent and unholy. Our Maker commands us to fear only Him. Fearing God alone sets us free and glorifies Him.

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Rabbi Yeshua said to His disciples, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" (Matt. 8:26). Notice how in this one sentence He contrasted faith and fear. God's Spirit works through faith; the power of darkness moves through fear.

Yahweh told Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous," (Josh. 1:6-7).

In this passage, we see the essence of this law, not to fear before an enemy in battle, being spoken to Joshua by the mouth of God Himself. Unless Joshua walked in the light of this precept, he would not have been able to drive out the enemy and take possession of the promised land. The same thing is true in our lives today. Fear is always knocking at the door of our hearts and minds, coming at us from a million different ways and directions. Unless we put our foot down, obey the Lord, and crush Satan's head under our feet, we will remain in torment.

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Like Joshua, we must not be afraid. We must resist fear and strive to root it out of our lives in order to live in holiness before God. He grieves when we don't trust Him.

The precept not to cower in fear before an enemy in battle

(Deut. 20:8) is a reminder that no matter what we face—even the possibility of being martyred for our faith—we must not fear for our physical safety but rather make the Lord our trusted fortress.

Rabbi Schneider hosts the impactful television program, *Discovering The Jewish Jesus*, which is available in more than 100 million homes in the United States and nearly 200 nations worldwide. In 2021, he began broadcasting on radio and now airs across America. Rabbi Schneider imparts revelation of Jesus' Jewish heritage and His fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Questions of how the Old and New Testaments tie together, and how Yeshua completes the unfolding plan of the Almighty Yahweh, are answered with exceptional clarity. His new book, *Decoding the Torah*, is available now. Learn more at his website,