

BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE

By Pastor Greg Hooker

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“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

In this age in which we live, there is an enormous amount of uncertainty and chaos erupting around the world. Wars, violence, political upheaval, famine, pestilence, our national debt with the looming ‘fiscal cliff’, the decay of moral and ethical values, families turning against one another, legalized murders of babies, the acceptance of alternative lifestyles, and the list goes on and on. Simply put, our world seems to be in a complete and irreversible mess!

While it’s true our generation is experiencing global disarray like never before, God’s Word remains true and steadfast – a sure anchor through the storms endeavoring to drown us. Notice the exhortation of the Scripture printed above, *“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6).”*

Let’s break this passage down into four segments and see if we can glean some comfort and encouragement to help us through these troublesome times.

1) “Be strong and of a good courage...” The original connotation if translated in our present day vernacular means, “Stand up and be a man”! As Christians, we are to stand strong and steadfast – not in our own might, but in the Omnipotence of the Lord. When the Israelites marched upon their enemies, God told them to be strong and courageous – I will go before you with my mighty power, says the Lord of Hosts! In like manner, God’s children are exhorted to “stand up and be a man” – exhibit bold confidence as we face the tough challenges of the day, because the Almighty blazes the trail before us!

2) “...Fear not, nor be afraid of them...” Fear will always cripple and render you powerless when faced with the enemy’s opposition. Have you ever noticed when confronted with danger, a Lioness will ‘go before’ her young cubs to protect them? Even so, God goes before us with a vengeance repelling the angry teeth of the enemy! All the forces of evil cannot advance in the wake of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah! Fear not! Follow me! I will protect you from all harm!

3) “...for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee...” The name “LORD” is in capital letters, and refers to the Lord’s name, “Jehovah”. Jehovah, when combined with other Hebrew names, is God’s personal name which identifies and relates Him to His people. For example, when we see the combination of Jehovah-Nissi, it means ‘God is our banner’. As an army would gather around their general to receive instructions for the battle, we are to rally around God for combat instructions on a daily basis. “Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before. Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; Forward into battle see His banners go!”

4) “...he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” God told the Israelites as they marched upon their enemies, ‘I WILL NOT FAIL YOU’! NOR WILL I FORSAKE YOU! In this world filled with uncertainty and chaos you can be sure of one thing, God will always be there for you when your time of need arises. When it looks as though our nation is on the brink of self-destruction, when it seems WWII is about to break out, when families are falling apart and friends are deserting you, when disease and sickness ravages your frail body, and hope and dreams lie crumpled at your feet; just remember – our Everlasting Conqueror goes before us removing all imminent threats and obstacles and will never – under any circumstances – fail or forsake you! It will never be said, God is a deserter!

Dear Jehovah God, we thank you for your shield of protection and love surrounding our lives. Forgive us when we fret and worry about things that are beyond our control, but are miniscule in your sight. We place our lives, our nation, our families and friends under the umbrella of your Sovereign and Providential care. In Jesus name, your son, Pastor Greg Hooker.