

## What Lies Ahead

"Fear of the Future" consumes many people's lives. However, it isn't the way we are instructed to live. Jesus puts it like this, *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on it. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"* (**Matthew 6:25**) Anxiety is how the devil keeps us imprisoned in his world system. It is how he keeps control in his domain. *"Will I have enough food to eat? Will I have enough clothes in my closet? Will I have enough money to pay my bills?"* But Jesus says: *"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? No matter how much we worry we cannot extend our lifespan by even one hour! The point Jesus is making here is that we should not worry about these things. We should not be anxious or fearful about anything. He is saying, "Stop acting as if God isn't going to take care of you."*

Why do we not trust God as we ought to? Why do we think God will hold out on us, that He will not provide for all our needs? Such unbelief is at the root of our anxiety. It's the nagging suspicion that 'maybe God doesn't really care for us', and therefore, we must take matters into our own hands in order to provide for our needs. This in turn, causes us to strive and toil, which is meaningless.

**Ecclesiastes 2:22** puts it this way, *"What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labour under the sun?"* The answer is, *"Nothing but more toil and anxious striving!"* Unbelief is a big problem. So how do we break through our unbelief? We must be sure of what lies ahead. We must know 'who' has gone before us and what 'power' has made a way for us. I have found two **Covenant Promises** that will help us to deal with our unbelief and cause us to have no fear of what lies ahead.

**Genesis 24:7** says, *"The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there."* The first Covenant promise is this.... **God will send His angel before you**. God has commissioned His angels to guide events for our benefit. When Abraham spoke to his servant about finding a wife for Isaac, he said, *"He (God) will send His angel before you."* Later, the servant repeated Abraham's instructions to Rebekah's father and brother: *"The Lord, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way"* (verse 40). Prosper in this context means "to make successful." Abraham knew that God would send one of His angels to oversee the servant's efforts of finding a wife for Isaac and make the trip a complete success. By using an **angel** to guide specific events, God provided Rebekah for Isaac. God intends to do the same for us!

**Angels** can also provide for all our needs. In **1 Kings 19:1-8**, Elijah escaped into the wilderness from Jezebel, who had just massacred most of the prophets of Israel. While the prophet slept, an **angel** appeared. *"Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat'"* (verse 5). So Elijah ate the cake and drank the water that the **angel** provided for him. Then he laid down again. *"And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, 'Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you'"* (verse 7). Elijah rose, ate and drank again and traveled a great distance on the strength of that food (for forty days and forty nights). The **angel** was the instrument through which God provided for His prophet. He does the same for us, using **angels** to perform the specific tasks necessary to

sustain our lives. Other examples include, **Exodus 14:19**, *“And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.”* And we meet the **angel** again in verse 20, *“Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared”* (**Exodus 23:20**). This angel is God’s general, who leads God’s people into the Promised Land. In fact, the angel’s presence is the Lord’s presence. Therefore, the Lord Himself camps among His people, fighting for them and with them.

This is confirmed in **Deuteronomy 1:30**, *“The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”* And this brings us to the second Covenant Promise.... **The Lord your God goes before you.**

The Children of Israel refused to enter the Promised Land because they didn’t trust God. The result was 40 years of wandering, and a lost opportunity for an entire generation. From their perspective the problems ahead of them were bigger than the **power** behind them. In the midst of their storm, and in their eyes it was a “giant” of a storm, they had to make a choice: Will we trust the Lord our God? Most of us are faced with the same choice today. So remember, the Lord our God, who carried us this far, is not going to let us down now!

The same Lord who has been carrying you since that moment you put your life in His hands has **gone before you**. There hasn’t been a single minute that you have been out of His loving care. I know that there have been times when it seemed like the storms were going to overtake you. In fact, you may feel like that right now. But let me assure you of this fact: “The **power** behind is far greater than the problem ahead.” The Lord your God, who fought past battles, has gone ahead of you.

This covenant promise is repeated in **Deuteronomy 9:3**, *“Therefore understand today that the Lord your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you.”*

Most of us are familiar with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities whose people lived such sinful lives that an angel was sent to warn Lot to get out of the city with his family before it was destroyed (**Genesis 24:19**). Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from heaven; and He destroyed those cities and all the valley and its inhabitants. Again many of us are familiar with the story of the prophet Elijah and his contest with the 800 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. It seems that the people of Israel could not decide which God to follow: Jehovah Almighty or Baal (**1 Kings 18**). To settle the dispute each side was to build an altar and place a sacrifice on the altar for the god to consume. The prophets of Baal went first, dancing and praying, even cutting themselves and crying aloud all morning for their god Baal to receive the bull sacrifice, but there was no answer.

Then Elijah built his altar and placed the bull sacrifice on it and just for good measure, he dug a trench around the altar and filled it with water and saturated all the wood for the fire and the meat itself with water. Then Elijah prayed to the Lord and asked Him to receive this sacrifice so the people might see that He, the Lord, was the only true God. Verse 38 reads, *“Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.”* Our God is awesome! He is a consuming fire! What lies ahead in our lives is the Lord our God as a consuming fire! How reassuring is that? *“A fire goes before Him, And burns up His enemies round*

*about*" (**Psalm 97:3**). No power is greater than our God.

Not only does the Lord go out before us as a consuming fire, He is also with us (in our circumstances), and He will never leave us or forsake us! *"And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed"* (**Deuteronomy 31:8**). What is very apparent in this verse is that God's presence in the future and God's presence in the present demands that we should never be fearful or unsettled. In the Bible, the word, "fear," often means a destructive fear, as of the fear of men or events. This is the kind of fear that love casts out and the kind of fear that is a snare. Anxiety and fear should have no place in our lives.

So what lies ahead for you right now? The Lord your God lies ahead! **Psalm 145:7** declares, *"Great is our Lord, and mighty in power."* There is none greater or more powerful than our Lord. Hallelujah!