

Where can we go to be outside the reach of the hand of God? (8-10-14)

If you read the Scriptures, you will learn that there have been people from the beginning of time who tried to hide, run away from, and avoid facing God.

In the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they hid themselves among the trees of the garden. In Genesis 3:8-24, God called to Adam and asked "Where are you?" Adam said, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked so I hid myself." God then started probing so that these two people could confess their sins and though they were driven from the garden, God made them clothing from animal skins and placed Cherubim's with flaming swords to keep people from eating of the tree of life lest they eat of it and live forever in their sinful state of being. God knew where they were but He called to them to give them hope as well as punishment for their transgression.

In Genesis 4:9, God confronted Cain after he had killed his brother, Abel. He asked Cain this question, "Cain, where is your brother, Abel?" Cain lied to the Lord by saying, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

God asked, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." God went on to tell him that he would be a vagabond and a wanderer the rest of his days. He would never have a place to call home and the ground would never give a bounty if he tried to plant crops. Cain told the Lord that his punishment was more than he could bear for he was being driven out from the face of the Lord, driven from the place he called home and also that crops would not grow if he planted them. Cain was afraid that someone would kill him, so God put a mark on him so no one would slay Cain. Jonah tried to run away and hide from the Lord. In Jonah, chapter 1, the voice of the Lord said to Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh that great city and cry against it for their wickedness is come up before me." But Jonah rose up and went to Joppa to flee from the presence of the Lord. He found a ship going to Tarshish and paid a fare to get aboard. The Lord sent a great wind into the sea and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so the ship was about to be broken. The crew started throwing cargo overboard and they cried out to their god, but Jonah was asleep in the bottom of the boat. They woke him up "What meanest thou, O sleeper! Arise and cry unto your God lest we perish!". They began to question him and when they found out that he was running away from God, they asked what they could do to correct the situation. They were afraid and didn't want to throw Jonah overboard, but he told them that it was the only hope they had to calm the storm. They threw him overboard and the wind and water became calm. The men feared the Lord greatly and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. Verse 17 says that the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah and he was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights. Jonah did some praying during that time and when he was ready to

obey the voice of God, the fish spit him out on dry ground. Jonah once again got his marching orders and this time he obeyed the voice of God and the people of Nineveh repented of their wickedness and God didn't bring destruction to the people because of their change of heart. Even Jonah learned some valuable lessons throughout his ordeal. God showed him the merciful, loving side of his character and explained to him that Nineveh had sixty thousand people that couldn't discern between their right hand and their left and also many cattle. Shouldn't he show mercy to them?

King David, after committing adultery with Bathsheba, hid his sin. When she told him that she was pregnant with his baby, he tried to send Uriah home to be with his wife, but that trick failed. Because Uriah was a faithful soldier, the king felt compelled to have him killed in battle to hide the fact that David had taken his wife while he was fighting the king's battle in war. The Lord sent a prophet to confront David and though David confessed and received forgiveness, there was a different atmosphere in David's household from that day forward. A sword never left David's house and there was calamity among his family members and much sorrow.

David wrote Psalms 139. In this Psalm David talks about the knowledge of God for the Lord knows us before we are born. He forms us in our mother's womb. He knows our thoughts and everything about us. In verse 7, he asked this question, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in hell, behold you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall they hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." In verse 23 he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

In Deuteronomy 31:6, the Lord said, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is he that doeth go with you; he will not fail thee, nor forsake you." In Hebrews 13: 8 tells us the Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. In Hebrews 13:5, it says to let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have; for He hath said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is our helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. When Stephen was being stoned, he looked up into heaven and declared, "I see Jesus standing at the Father's right hand." See Acts 7:55. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and Jesus was there to receive him into his Father's house. In verse 60, Stephen prayed that the sin would not be held against those who were doing the evil deed of stoning him.

Sometimes people were sent to the aid of God's people. Philip was sent to help the Ethiopian understand the book of Isaiah and the gospel message. An angel was sent to deliver Peter out of prison when he was scheduled to be killed. Jesus revealed himself to Saul who persecuted the church. He was changed to Paul, the Apostle. Whatever your situation is right now, know that Jesus Christ has his eyes on you for he loves you.