

Article of the Month

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Fleeing Away

The Holy Scriptures are wonderfully filled with colorful descriptions and expressions. We would like to rejoice in just one of these in this article. A significant number of Scriptures refer to fleeing. “Flee youthful lusts” is Paul’s admonition to Timothy. This reference shows something worthy of running away from.

We will not here pursue a large sampling of the uses of “fleeing.” We will just touch upon a few of them that will help us appreciate the expression. A glance through an exhaustive concordance will give any student ample opportunity to look into this subject in depth.

The Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) words are quite similar in meaning. The Hebrew (Strong’s #5127) means to flee or escape — in other words, “to run away from.” The Greek (Strong’s #5343) means the same. It is interesting, however, to look at the Greek word. In English it is spelled PHEUGO, or, in a more English way, FUGO. We get from it our English word “fugitive” which is someone on the run.

Let’s look at a few uses in each Testament. Then we will look at two prophetic uses because one of them is *in progress*; the other is in the *near future*.

Old Testament

In The Song of Solomon 2:17 and 4:6, we have the expression used in a very descriptive way to picture what happens at sunset. Both verses say “Until the cool of the day when the shadows **flee away**.” Well, shadows, of course, don’t run away! But the colorful language is so gratifying in making its point. When the sun is down, there are no more shadows. These two passages show us the intent of fleeing away. It virtually means to disappear.

In Jeremiah 51:6, the expression is used as an admonition of warning. “Flee from the midst of Babylon. And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the Lord’s time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her.”

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Jeremiah is predicting what the Revelator (Rev. 18:4) would later state. There comes a time in Christian history when churchianity has become so very non-representative of God, that He warns His true followers to abandon the old system of erroneous doctrine and practice. We are, actually, in that day now. The point (as related to our topic) is that RUNNING AWAY — even from something that has been long-venerated — is sometimes necessary. The early disciples, likewise, found it necessary (upon Jesus' instructing them to do so) to RUN AWAY from Judaism.

New Testament

In I Timothy 6:11, after Paul's having listed a number of undesirable practices for Christians, we have his statement to Timothy, "But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness." Thus Paul has listed things to FLEE FROM, but also things to CHASE (pursue). Clearly our Christian path involves RUNNING from some things and toward others.

James 4:7 is a wonderful vision to behold. It lets us know that we can send the Devil FLEEING! James gives us the formula to create this pleasant vision. It is a two-part formula: (1) SUMBIT our wills to God's Will as we find it in the Scriptures. (2) RESIST the things the Devil presents to us. The result: "He will FLEE from you!" It is a pretty picture to contemplate.

Two Prophetic Usages

(1) There is a verse (Revelation 20:11) which depicts the period from the onset of Jesus' *secret second presence* and the time when his earthly rule is made manifest among men. (This same period is depicted in more detail in Revelation 11:15 into the first phrase of verse 18.) We are now living in this momentous time. The Revelation 20:11 verse depicts this time as when "earth (society) and heaven (the religious world) **fled away**." We are seeing this happen over the past century. All of man's earthly systems are crumbling into failure. "Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after the things they see coming on the earth" as Jesus predicted. We may not (while we live in the midst of these occurrences) have realized what is happening, but, with all of the exposures of man's corrupt practices, the old way of doing things is out of necessity and out of shame RUNNING AWAY — trying to escape exposure of its true colors.

Ultimately, as the verse also explains, "no place was found for them." Thus, once the way mankind does things crumbles into failure, there will be no place for such old terrors, corruptions, mis-uses, and failures. AT THAT TIME, the peaceable kingdom of God and of Christ will be made manifest in the earth. (See Psalm 46:10.)

(2) Isaiah 35 shows what will replace the old collapsed order (or, perhaps, "disorder" would be a better word!). The entire 35th Chapter of Isaiah is exciting reading. But verse 10 centers in on our phrase, "flee away." Once man's inefficient and evil way of

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doing things collapses, a “new road” will be opened. Isaiah 35:8 calls it “The Highway of Holiness.” Verse 10 then shows the resurrection of the dead and the whole eternal future of a restored human race:

And the ransomed of the Lord will return
And come with joyful shouting to Zion.
With everlasting joy upon their heads,
They will find gladness and joy.
And sorrow and sighing will
FLEE AWAY!
