

No Fear?



“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [Proverbs 9:10 - KJV]

Many people fear many things... and then there are fools and liars who claim they are not afraid of anything. A lot of people think that fear is always something to be avoided, something unhealthy or a sign of weakness. But fear is not always bad. Fear of punishment can keep us out of trouble and out of jail. Fear of disease and death can cause people to take better care of their health and to seek treatment from a doctor when feeling ill. Fear of God’s wrath (eternity in hell) can cause people to seek peace with God before it is too late: “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6). The Bible describes fear of God in a very FAVORABLE light:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” [Proverbs 1:7 - KJV]

Since many people want a sugar daddy god, and don’t understand God’s wrath and His hatred towards sin, they try to interpret “fear” in the above verse to mean nothing more than a *holy respect* for God. The problem with that interpretation is as follows:

1. You can’t properly respect God when you have no clue as to how holy and righteous He is and the depth of His hatred for sin and the degree of His anger towards the ungodly. Those who respect and reverence God for the RIGHT REASONS are those who have the correct understanding of the attributes of God that describe His nature - His attitude towards sin and rebellion.

2. To those who don’t truly know God, the idea of fearing or dreading God does not make sense, especially when the person has been erroneously told their whole lives that God loves everybody and that God is a god of love. Those people don’t know who or what God loves. They don’t know that God loves righteousness (and the righteous) to a degree that compels Him to hate sin (and sinners) to an equally staggering degree.

3. Fear is not necessarily a “bad” thing, even though our society thinks so (because they don’t like anything that can “damage” a person’s self-esteem). Fear can be a healthy thing. It can contribute towards self preservation. And in the realm of salvation, it is a sign of the proper understanding of who God is... a god about whom scripture says:

“But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” [Luke 12:5]

4. The Bible does not allow US to decide what the word fear in Proverbs 1:7 and Proverbs 9:10 means. The original Hebrew word is primarily referring to **dread**, which is why it is never translated as respect or reverence in the 45 times that it appears in scripture:



5. Even in many of the modern Bible translations, Proverbs 1:7 9:10 stills contain the word “fear” and not “respect” or “reverence”:

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| NASB: | The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. [Pro 9:10] |
| NKJV: | The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. [Pro 9:10] |
| NIV: | The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. [Pro 9:10] |

6. The Bible versions that are to be trusted the least (paraphrased Bibles and the most recently published Bibles) are precisely the versions that are undermining the true meaning of the “fear of the Lord” and are replacing that phrase with wording that is more in line with modern “warm and fuzzy” thinking about who God is and what He is like, using wording that eliminates “unfriendly” words like **fear**:

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| Contemporary English Version: | Respect and obey the LORD! This is the beginning of wisdom. To have understanding, you must know the Holy God. [Pro 9:10] |
| New Century Version: | Wisdom begins with respect for the Lord, and understanding begins with knowing the Holy One. [Pro 9:10] |

We have just looked at word meanings and Bible translations, and determined that the “phrase “fear of the Lord” means far more than just having respect for God, in spite of what modern preachers and teachers say - those who don’t like the idea of a HOLY God who hates not only the sin but the sinner (see Psalm 5:5-6 & Psalm 11:5-6 for example). Let us now look at why we really need to FEAR God. Let us look at the verse again:

“Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

That word knowledge refers to: perception, skill, discernment, understanding and wisdom.

When we fear God it is because we are beginning (by God's grace) to understand that He is a holy and righteous God whom we need to fear:

"Vengeance is mine; **I will** repay, saith the Lord." [Romans 12:19]

Please take note that God did not say "I might repay", or "I may repay". God promises to repay the sinner for the wages of his sins. Is that not a sobering thought? How many sins have you committed all your life? Probably millions upon millions of sins according to the Bible, considering what God calls sin - all our evil thoughts, words, and deeds:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the **thoughts** of his heart was only evil continually." [Genesis 6:5]

"But I say unto you, That every idle **word** that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." [Matthew 12:36]

"Give them according to their **deeds**, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert." [Psalm 28:4]

Most people have no idea how holy God is. They think that by saying a few prayers or by doing a few good deeds, God will be happy with them and that He will forget all about their violations of His commandments, day in and day out, every day of their lives. However, God is insulted by this idea, that we think we can somehow pay for our sins or contribute towards our salvation:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." [Isaiah 64:6].

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, **have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**" [Romans 10:3].

There is absolutely no way that we can pay for our sins. They must be completely removed, completely blotted out and that is something that only God can do. That is something that God the Father does through God the Son - Jesus Christ - who paid the penalty for sin for all those He came to save. **Are you one of those Jesus came to save? How do you know?**

God must punish sin and that punishment is as severe in proportion to how holy and righteous God is. An eternal punishment is the only just punishment for violating the laws of an infinitely holy God. What fools we are when we

think that our meager efforts to appease God will gain us entrance into heaven. Would you offer a penny to an artist for his priceless masterpiece? Would you, after murdering a man's son, think you could make up for that vicious act, by telling the man that you will not murder any more of his children, you are planning to turn over a 'new leaf'? Well, these ridiculous analogies do not even begin to compare with what we are trying to do with God Almighty, OUR Creator whom we owe everything to (including perfect obedience all the time), when we try to earn our way to heaven through religious rituals, good deeds, prayers and similar self-righteous efforts on our part.

Looking back at Proverbs 1:7, we see that it says: "fools despise wisdom and instruction." Isn't it interesting that people that do not fear the Lord are called fools by God? Why is that? Well the Bible explains: "it is abomination to fools to depart from evil." [Proverbs 13:19]. Fools are those who do not think that it is necessary for themselves to fear God. Fools think that there is no God: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." [Psalm 53:1]. Fools think that God does not see them, but the Bible says: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." [Proverbs 15:3]. Fools think that God is all loving and all forgiving regardless of whether a person repents of his sins. But that is not what the Bible says:

"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." [Luke 13:3]

Contrary to popular opinion, God does not love everybody unconditionally. In fact, God hates many people:

"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: **thou hatest all workers of iniquity.**" [Psalm 5:5]

The Bible makes it very clear WHY we need to fear God:

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." [Luke 12:4-5].

We must fear God because He has power to cast us into hell for all eternity. But what about you personally? Isn't it just murderers and other openly wicked and rebellious people who need to fear God and need to fear hell? No, my friend, it is not just those kinds of people. God considers everyone ever born as a hopelessly lost hell-deserving sinner:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that

doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" [Romans 3:10-18]

Notice the last sentence above - "there is no **fear of God** before their eyes"! Most people who are not saved, who are not ready for heaven, have no fear of God - because they have no idea how much God hates sin. They have no idea that they are one heart-beat away from being hurled into eternal hell. They are comfortable in their sins and comfortable with their self-righteousness. They use their own standards for righteousness instead of God's so they have this false sense of security that all is well. They say:

"After all, I am not as bad as so-and-so. Surely God will accept me. God forgives. We just have to be sorry for what we have done."

Do people really believe their own lying hearts? Can you go to a judge in traffic court and get away with a speeding ticket by using the same logic. Could you get away with saying:

"Well your honor, I am not as bad as other drivers. I could have been driving 100 miles per hour in the 25 mile an hour zone, but I was only driving 75 miles per hour. I am sorry for what I did. I believe you are a forgiving judge and so I believe you will not hold me accountable for anything I do."

This is the attitude many people have about God and His handling of sin, mainly because they do not see themselves the way God sees them. God says that we are separated from Him from birth, we are born with a corrupt sinful nature:

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." [Psalm 58:3]

When God speaks of the wicked He is speaking of all the unsaved no matter what the rest of society may think of certain "religious" or "holy" individuals. God must convert us and give us a new nature so that we are fit for heaven:

*"And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted**, and become as little children, **ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**" [Matthew 18:3]*

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart

of flesh." [Ezekiel 36:26]

You may be wondering, well how do I set things straight with God. How do I pay for my sins? It is not like paying a traffic ticket is it? Well in a sense, it is. God has provided two ways for sins to be paid for:

1. Either we spend eternity in hell paying for our sins ourselves,
OR
2. Someone pays for our sins for us.

A divine sinless Saviour is the only one capable of paying the price (the penalty for sin) we owe:

"For the Son of man [Jesus Christ] is come to seek and to save that which was **lost.**" [Luke 19:20]

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and **to give his life a ransom for many.**" [Mark 10:45]

Notice that the Bible says that Jesus Christ came to earth to shed his blood and die as payment (a ransom) for the salvation of LOST sinners. And **all of us are lost sinners** until and unless God saves us.

If you have never come to realize that you are a lost ungodly sinner, then you most certainly are lost, since only a saved sinner can truly see and understand his need to be saved. If you, by God's grace, realize that you are a lost hell-deserving sinner, in need of God's salvation from the wrath to come, cry out to God that He might have mercy on your soul. Repent of (turn from) your sins while there is still time. Flee to Jesus, that He might be **your** Saviour from the punishment **that you deserve** for your sins. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near:

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." [Luke 18:13]

So, are you afraid - afraid of God and His wrath that will surely be poured out on unrepentant sinners on Judgment Day? I hope so. Remember, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge"!

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." [Isaiah 55:7]

