

## FEAR OF THE LORD PT. 2

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### Table of Contents

- The Fear of the Lord
- Fear Him

#### *Scriptures Cited:*

1 John 4:16, John 4:24, Proverbs 8:13, Isaiah 11:1-2, Isaiah 7:14-15, Exodus 20:1-17, Exodus 20:18-20, Deuteronomy 4:9-10, Deuteronomy 4:23-24, Deuteronomy 5:25-29, Luke 12:4-5, Acts 9:31, Romans 11:19-22, 2 Corinthians 5:11, Hebrews 10:31, Psalm 19:9

As we conclude this set of lessons, it is my sincere hope that all who have been reading, have been edified by the things shared in these lessons. Over the last few lessons, we have been studying knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. And we have dedicated a lesson for each of these topics, looking into what the scriptures have to say.

If you recall, we first introduced these topics in the lesson called "[Fear of the Lord Pt. 1](#)". But in that introduction, we really didn't talk about the fear of the Lord; our focus was on knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. So this lesson will be a kind of "bookend" to the whole set of five. We will again look into the scriptures, but this time with our focus on the fear of the Lord.

## THE FEAR OF THE LORD

We have already seen through the scriptures that knowledge, wisdom, and understanding all begin with the fear of the Lord. Knowing this may help us to understand why the world is in the current condition that we see it in... Or why it seems that people today have no true knowledge, living without any wisdom and without understanding. It may be because society overall has lost its fear of the Lord.

As we begin this study to help us better understand the fear of the Lord, we will first see if we can define the term. Fortunately, one of the great things about the Bible is that sometimes it gives us direct definitions. For example, even as big and overwhelming as God is... expansive and hard to understand (there are so many facets of God), we have a scripture that plainly states for us: "God is love..." (1 John 4:16). This is one of my favorites, and it is very straightforward. We also see it in scripture that "God is a Spirit..." (John 4:24) - again, clearly stated for us. Verses like these are great for helping us know and understand.

So in studying the fear of the Lord, there are many scriptures that talk about it from different angles, but in Proverbs chapter 8 verse 13, we have one of those plainly stated definitions that tell us what the fear of the Lord actually is.

### **Proverbs 8:13**

*<sup>13</sup> The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

So, we have this verse as a starting point - a plain straight-forward definition. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil..." And you can see how from just that, springs knowledge, and wisdom, and understanding. We will continue by looking at a few things about the fear of the Lord from the Old Testament, prophetically written about Jesus because He is our example.

So we will again look at a scripture that we previously read in Isaiah chapter 11. We know that Jesus received the Spirit of the Lord (the Holy Spirit) after His baptism. He came out of the water and the heavens opened up unto Him. And it says the Spirit came down in the form of a dove. But the prophetic telling of that, or explanation is actually in the book of Isaiah chapter 11. Beginning with verse 1, it reads:

### **Isaiah 11:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: <sup>2</sup> And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

This verse shows the importance of having the fear of the Lord... it wasn't something that Jesus would lack. He would also walk in the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

If we go to another place in Isaiah, we will see something written within another well-known prophecy, that may get overlooked. In Isaiah chapter 7, this is again speaking prophetically of Jesus. We will begin in verse 14, but our focus will be on verse 15.

## Isaiah 7:14-15

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

<sup>15</sup> *Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.*

We are all pretty familiar with verse 14 because it is also referenced in the New Testament. But in verse 15 we see that it was even prophesied, that from the beginning Jesus would know to refuse the evil and choose the good. And when we read the 'definition' of the fear of the Lord given in Proverbs, it said that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. And here we see that Jesus would know from the beginning *to refuse the evil and to choose the good*.

So, keeping in the vein of the fear of the Lord, I want to look at one of the first places where we see it on full display - and that is in the book of Exodus. After the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, they came to the mountain where they were receiving the commandments from God. In Exodus chapter 20 verses 1 through 17, we have the ten commandments listed. And right after that, we will pick up from verse 18. As we read, keep in mind the theme that we are talking about here - the fear of the Lord.

## Exodus 20:18-20

<sup>18</sup> *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. <sup>19</sup> And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

<sup>20</sup> *And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

So, it is interesting that in verse 20 Moses says "Fear not", but then on the other hand he explains 'so that the fear of God would be before your faces'. And I think what he is basically saying there is 'Fear not, God is not trying to kill you, but He is showing you His great power and His might with all these thunderings and the voice of God', (which they were not able to bear). And the reason God did this was so that they would fear and "sin not".

As the children of Israel were about to enter into the promised land, there was a retelling of this event which we can read in the book of Deuteronomy. By looking at this retelling we can gain a little more insight on what we just read in Exodus, because it is told here in hindsight. In Deuteronomy chapter 4, starting in verse 9 we read:

## Deuteronomy 4:9-10

<sup>9</sup> *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;*

<sup>10</sup> *Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.*

So there we can see that the reason God brought them to the mount and spoke to them the law, was that **they might learn to fear Him**... because with the fear of God comes obedience. And He basically said that it is for your own good; it is that you might live. Fear the Lord that *you* might live.

## FEAR HIM

Staying in Deuteronomy chapter 4, if we skip over to verse 23 we will see one of the many reasons we should fear the Lord.

## Deuteronomy 4:23-24

<sup>23</sup> *Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.*

<sup>24</sup> *For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*

We normally focus on the goodness of God, and we speak of His grace and His mercy. But there is also *this* side of God, which we need to know and fear. In truth, He is more powerful than we could ever imagine. And as we are living this very moment, we are literally in His hands. So, we need to be fearful and reverent of Him, being respectful to do what He has commanded us to do.

Now if we go to one last place in Deuteronomy, we see Moses reminding the children of Israel of how they responded when God was speaking to them. This is referring to the same event that we saw in Exodus. In Deuteronomy chapter 5 and starting in verse 25 we read:

## Deuteronomy 5:25-29

<sup>25</sup> *Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.* <sup>26</sup> *For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?*

**Note:** And now this is what they said to Moses...

*<sup>27</sup> Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.*

*<sup>28</sup> And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.*

**Note:** Now we will read God's will for His people.

*<sup>29</sup> O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

So we can see once again that when the people were scared because God was speaking to them directly, He basically said 'Yeah... you've spoken well.' His original desire for them to live and sin not, was expressed and obviously received based on their response. And to this, God said 'Oh, that they would keep that fearful heart'. We can see God wanting them to remember the great and powerful encounter when He spoke to them directly, so that they would keep His ways. And that would be for their own good - that things might go well for them, and go well for their children forever.

So, we will just leave it there for now, as far as what the Old Testament says regarding the fear of the Lord. It is interesting that some people think that the 'God of the Old Testament' is not the same God of the New Testament. They say that the Old Testament was wrath and anger, and the New Testament is mercy. But let's look for ourselves at a few things in the New Testament about this fear of the Lord. We will first go straight to the words of Jesus in Luke chapter 12, because we know that His word is definitely confirmed and true. Starting in verse 4, we have a straight-forward warning from Jesus:

#### **Luke 12:4-5**

*<sup>4</sup> 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.*

*<sup>5</sup> 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.*

We can clearly see this warning in the New Testament, where Jesus is saying that we should fear the Lord because of His great power. God is not like men, who can only destroy the body; He can keep going.

So let's now go a little bit further and see a description of the early church found in Acts chapter 9. For context, this comes right after Paul had been converted and had begun his preaching. Acts chapter 9 verse 31 reads:

### **Acts 9:31**

*<sup>31</sup> Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

So, here we see an account given of the early church, that even they walked in the fear of the Lord. Even under the new covenant, we are to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Now we will read something that Paul wrote to the church in Rome. In Romans chapter 11, Paul teaches that the Gentiles had been grafted into the original tree of 'God's chosen people'. Starting in verse 19, we read something interesting, where Paul contrasts the unbelieving Jews (branches broken off) with the believing church (branches grafted in):

### **Romans 11:19-22**

*<sup>19</sup> Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.*

*<sup>20</sup> Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:*

*<sup>21</sup> For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.*

**Note:** And then verse 22...

*<sup>22</sup> Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

I find these verses interesting because they speak about God's goodness and grace, and that we have been brought into His great promises through faith. But it also warns the church not to be high-minded, and to stay in that fear of the Lord. We have to always keep in mind both the goodness *and* the severity of the Lord. Yes, we serve Him out of love because of His goodness, but we also serve Him out of this fear and reverence, because of His "severity".

That was Paul speaking about the fear of the Lord to the church in Rome. We will see him say something similar to the church in Corinth. Going to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 11, we read:

## 2 Corinthians 5:11

<sup>11</sup> *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,*

**Note:** Some translations say 'the fear of the Lord'.

*we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

So, what Paul is saying here is that the reason we spread this gospel is because we know that God is worthy to be feared. We know that those who are not in right standing with God have a bad future awaiting them. And since we know the terror of Lord or the fear of the Lord, we go out and we persuade men. We try to get people to see the error of their ways, and the consequences they will face if they do not turn to God.

Lastly, we will go to Hebrews chapter 10 verse 31, where the scripture sums it up very clearly.

## Hebrews 10:31

<sup>31</sup> *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

And that is the truth. That's the truth. We don't want to be on the wrong side of God. We want to be mindful of His power, His might; that He holds all things in His hands. And He has laid down instructions for how we are to walk - which show how *He* desires us to live.

And so, hopefully that wrap things up. It can be a bit of a rough message when we study the severity of God and that side of things, but it is necessary for us to know *who* we are truly worshipping. Normally people like to hear the 'good side', but we should be mindful of God in His fullness. When we are mindful of that 'other side' and have the fear of the Lord - it is the beginning of knowledge. It is the beginning of wisdom, and it leads to understanding.

When we understand the fear of the Lord, it leads us to the question: what must we do? We saw that in the Old Testament, the children of Israel were told to keep the ten commandments. And now, because of what Jesus has done for us, we are told to believe the good news of the gospel - the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when we truly believe it in our hearts, that belief will express itself in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

When we believe the true gospel, our minds are changed. This is fundamentally what it means to repent. When that belief of the gospel is expressed in our words - it is a confession, showing that we are in agreement with God. And the initial way that belief becomes action is when we obey the gospel, by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins. And that belief continues to be seen in our lives, as we live by His Spirit.

So, with that being said, if you are someone who has not obeyed the gospel according to the scripture, it is my hope that you would consider the fear of the Lord. If you have any questions about the lessons, feel free to [contact us](#) as we continue walking in knowledge, wisdom, understanding... and in the fear of the Lord.

### **Psalm 19:9**

*<sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*