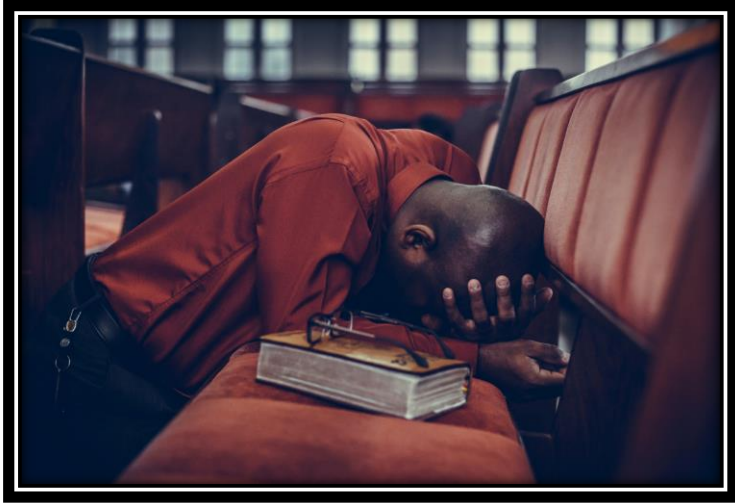


MESSIAH THEOLOGY

VOLUME XIII:

THE FEAR OF THE LORD



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OF:



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Samuel Martins on Unsplash*

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Chapter 1: The Missing Ingredient

We live in an age of powerful free Bible apps, enormous stadium-like mega-churches, seemingly omnipresent Christian radio stations, heaps of always-available Bible teachings, pastors devoted exclusively to creating and performing worship music, and globally recognized worship leaders. But something very important is increasingly missing from the messages and the songs being produced in this modern Christian culture.

The missing ingredient is made evident when we hear headlines reporting on the staggering immorality displayed by the disgraced former leader of the third-largest church in Canada¹. Meanwhile, that same immoral pastor tellingly tattooed on his forearm the actual Bible verse that records GOD Himself forbidding tattoos. And that rebellion declared how irreverent this imposter was long before his filthy wickedness was exposed.



The missing ingredient is made evident when we tune in to the Atlanta mega-church pastor whose sermon described the Word of GOD as “ancient declarations of superstitious men”². Plus, that same deceiver

¹ <https://religionnews.com/2022/08/15/bruxy-cavey-credibly-accused-of-sexual-abuse-in-two-more-cases/>

² <https://sermons.love/andy-stanley/10456-andy-stanley-somebody-had-to-tell-it.html>

encouraged an audience of over 38,000 Christians to “unhitch” from the first 39 Books of the Holy Bible; the same books JESUS used to win every argument, including the one He had with the devil in the wilderness. Meanwhile, this false teacher contradicts JESUS even further by teaching that the Ten Commandments do not apply to Christians any longer.

And honestly, nobody in your family knows this yet, but you have your hand on the doorknob. I mean, you're about to step away and outside of faith and you're not sure how your family's gonna respond, your friends are gonna respond, maybe even your employer is gonna respond, but you're just leaning that way. And if that all there is to this is the Bible tells us so, then we shouldn't be surprised. And you should be honest with yourself. I mean, **if in fact the Christian faith balances precariously on the edge of ancient declarations of superstitious men, well then why not?** Why not?

But as it turns out and the reason we're talking about this, and maybe this is new, or maybe this is a reminder, or maybe it's just something you've heard before, but you need to hear it again, or maybe it's the thing you've always believed, but you need some more terminology, the truth is **Christians are not expected to believe what we believe based on a collection of ancient manuscripts written by men who never met each other over the course of hundreds of years in a time when everybody was superstitious and everybody believed in the gods and there was no modern science.** That the foundation of our faith... And we talk about this a lot here. The foundation of our faith is far more substantial than that. It's far more sustainable than that. It's even, as we're gonna discover, it's even investigable, investigable, which is actually a word. I don't like it. I like the word investigatable, but as it turns out, that is not actually a word.

And the people who keep me between the lines grammatically said, "You can't use your word. You have to use the actual word". So this is it. So, and the good news is the Christian faith is investigable, which means we are invited to kick the tires. And you're invited to ask those hard questions. And as those of us who are Christians, we don't have to look the other way and shrug and go, "I don't know, it's a mystery". And soon as we start talking about faith, we just have to take it by faith. Which when you say that, even when you think that there's something on the inside of you that says, "You know what? That works for me but it's not working for my son-in-law and it's not working for my daughter, and it's not working for the people at work, and it's not working for the people who ask me those hard questions". But it's just what you got, it's what we were raised with, it's basically what we were told. **But the Christian faith does not rise and fall based on the accuracy or the in errancy of 66 ancient documents that we call books of the Bible.** It rises and falls on the identity of a single individual, Jesus of Nazareth.

The missing ingredient is evident when we see events like “drag bingo night” orchestrated at the First Christian Church of Katy Texas, an event held to raise money for the church’s clothing boutique for trans-youth.³ Their website also boasts of their supportive and affirming involvement with local gay-pride parades, same-sex married couples, transgender youth, and much more.⁴

The missing ingredient was made evident when a United Methodist Church in Allendale Florida welcomed a man dressed in drag to the pulpit to deliver a sermon to the children as well as to the congregation. Later, the entire United Methodist denomination boasted through its official media outlet how that man became their first “drag queen” certified as a candidate for UMC ordination.⁵

³ <https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2022/09/25/drag-bingo-event-at-katy-church-stirs-up-controversy/>

⁴ <https://www.fcckaty.com/lgbtq-ministries/>

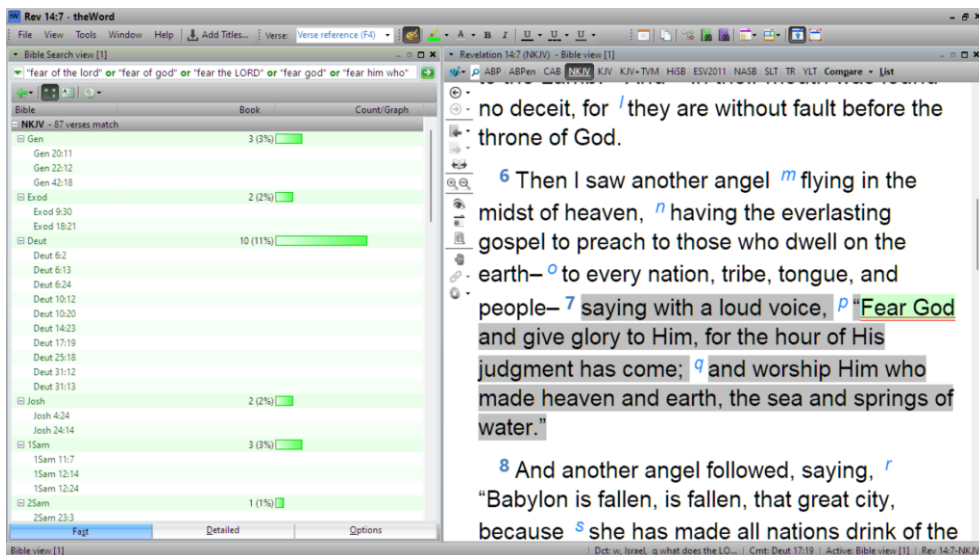
⁵ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/drag-queen-leads-childrens-sermon-at-united-methodist-church.html>

And the missing ingredient is made evident when we learn the sordid, sin-filled accounts of disgraced church leaders like Ted Haggard, Jim Bakker, Bill Gothard, Andy Savage, Tony Alamo, Eddie Long, Jimmy Swaggart, Marcus Lamb, Ben Courson, Carl Lentz, Peter Popoff, Bill Hybels, Brian Houston, Ravi Zacharias, Jerry Fallwell Jr., and many, many more.

If you haven't guessed it yet, it's time for a hint. The missing ingredient in many modern Christian's faith, a deficiency that is leading many Christians down the deadly road of apostasy, is called the origin of wisdom in the Bible.

And this missing ingredient is the fear of the LORD.

Meanwhile, if you search the Scriptures for the phrases “fear of the LORD”, “fear of GOD”, “fear the LORD”, “fear GOD”, and “fear Him” (in reference to GOD), you will find that there are at least 87 passages of the Bible that teach directly that we should fear the LORD.



However, we must note how that impressive list does not include the 7 passages where JESUS⁶ spoke of the “gnashing of teeth”⁶, the

⁶ Matt 8:12, Matt 13:42, Matt 13:50, Matt 22:13, Matt 24:51, Matt 25:30, Luke 13:28

passage where Paul commands us to **“work out our⁷ own salvation with fear and trembling”⁸**, the passage where Paul discussed his persistent motivational awareness of **“the terror of the LORD”⁹**, the passage where Peter instructed us to **“conduct ourselves¹⁰ with fear”¹¹**, or other passages that teach us to fear the LORD, such as the four that describe our GOD as **“a consuming fire”¹²**.

The fact is, from cover to cover, the Bible encourages the entire earth to cultivate a healthy fear of the LORD. Therefore, the Book of Revelation includes that principle in what Scripture calls “the everlasting gospel”.

The Apostle John records: **Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”¹³**

The first two words of the Biblically described “everlasting gospel” are **“Fear GOD”!** And, despite the deceptive claims of the false teachers who populate many of the popular pulpits in this world’s present age, the concept of the fear of the LORD is not an “Old Testament” principle!

But before we learn just how accurate the Psalm truly is that states **“the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever”¹⁴**, we should compare just how frequently and consistently Scripture emphasizes the fear of the LORD compared to how much of the modern church downplays this fundamental doctrine.

⁷ “Your”

⁸ Philippians 2:12

⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:11

¹⁰ “Yourselves”

¹¹ 1 Peter 1:17

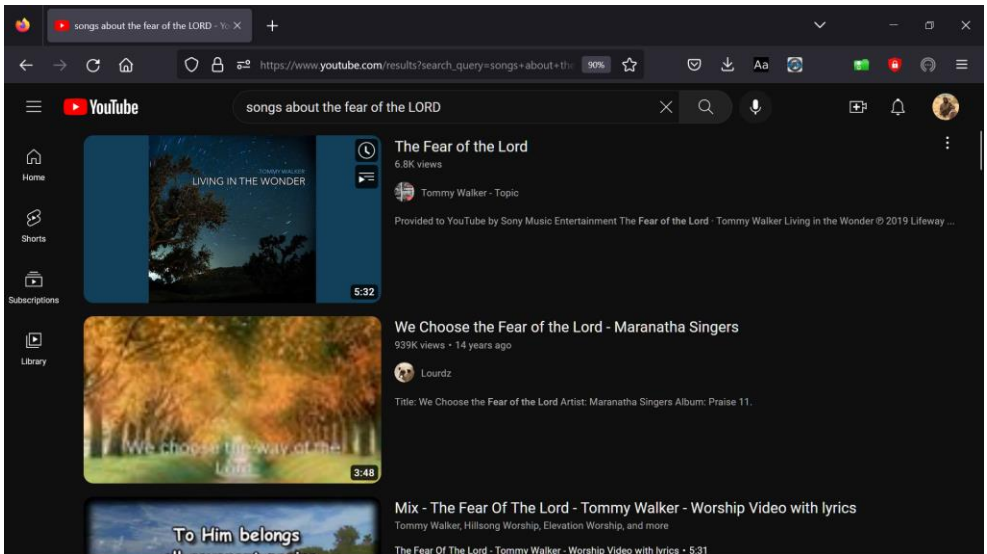
¹² Hebrews 12:29, Deuteronomy 9:3, Deuteronomy 4:24, Exodus 24:17

¹³ Revelation 14:6-7

¹⁴ Psalms 19:9a

We have proven that many passages of the Bible actively promote the fear of the LORD by name, and many others encourage the fear of the LORD in less direct ways. But now let us perform an internet search for Christian songs that specifically mention and promote the fear of the LORD, as the Bible does.

A search for videos with the query: “songs about the fear of the LORD” will bring you to a handful of songs. Two of those songs are based on Proverbs chapter 1. The first was written in 2014 by Tommy Walker, and the second was published in 2019 by the Spencer Family. A third song loosely based on Psalm 25 and the opening verse of Psalm 112 was released in 1999 by the Maranatha Singers. Meanwhile, two more songs that bear the title “the Fear of the LORD” exist, but they either don’t specifically mention the fear of the LORD beyond the title, or they don’t actually promote it.



Sadly however, there are many more songs (even within that search) written by Christian artists with titles like: “No Fear”, “I Will Fear No More”, “I Will Not Fear”, “Why Should I Fear”, and so on. Yes, you will find that modern Christian songs contain lyrics like: " You never let me go so I will not fear"¹⁵. However, the MESSIAH taught us: “**I will show**

¹⁵ <https://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/i-will-not-fear-jesus-culture/>

you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”¹⁶

Additionally, a search of Hymnary.org, a comprehensive index of hymns and hymnals, reveals only three actual songs¹⁷ that include references to the fear of the LORD; one written by J. Hart in 1762, one by C. Gabriel in 1896, and one by F. Breck in 1899.

So, when we exclude all of the Scripture readings found in hymnals that may mention the fear of the LORD, these are the three hymns we find. So, we were only able to locate three hymns and theoretically 5 contemporary songs written about the fear of the LORD, even though the Bible speaks positively about it, and very directly, from cover to cover.

Now, at this point, you may be asking yourself several different questions. You might be asking: “How has satan led Christians away from the fear of the LORD?” You might be asking: “What is the fear of the LORD?” You might be wondering: “Why should we fear the LORD?”, You might be asking: “Is the fear of the LORD optional?” Or you might be thinking: “Should everyone fear the LORD?”

But most of all, our prayer is that you will be asking yourself this question: “How can I know if I am walking in the fear of the LORD as the Bible tells me to?”

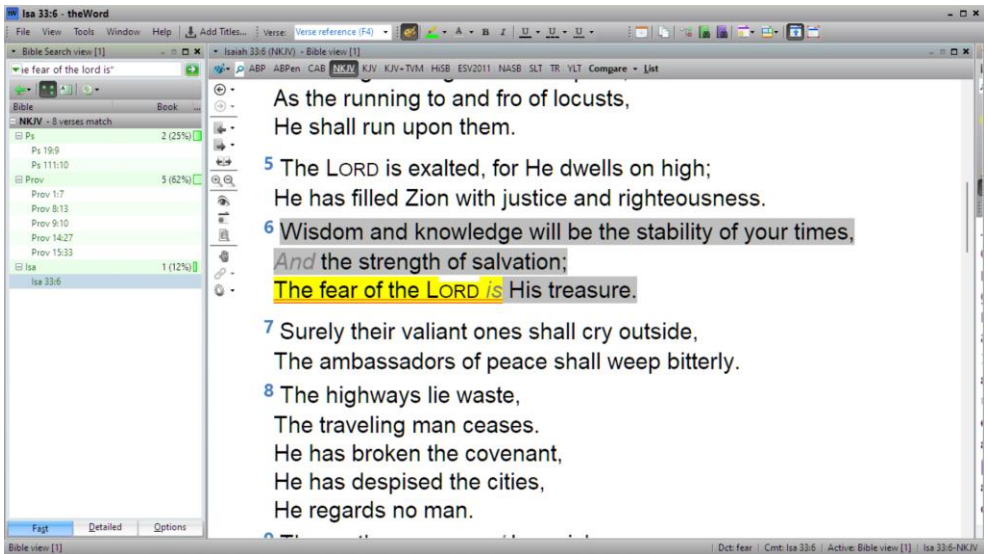
The fact is, these are all great questions that we will be answering together directly from the Word of GOD. And the best way to get answers is to start with plenty of questions!

So, now that we understand there is an obvious lack of the fear of the LORD in modern Christian culture, we should also note that this missing ingredient is a critical cure for the disease of apostasy. Thus, with that foundation established, we can discover what Scripture has to teach us about this very important doctrine.

¹⁶ Luke 12:5

¹⁷ Not counting Scripture readings

Let's begin by allowing the Bible to answer the question: "What is the fear of the LORD?" And to do this, we can search out the phrase "the fear of the LORD is". In the New King James translation (and in most other translations) by doing this search we will locate 8 passages. 5 of them will be from the Book of Proverbs, 2 will be from the Book of Psalms, and 1 will be from the Book of Isaiah.



The passage in Isaiah equates the fear of the LORD to a *treasure*, the passage in Proverbs 14 equates the fear of the LORD to a *fountain of life*, and the passage in Psalm 19 declares that the fear of the LORD is *clean*, and *it endures forever*. These passages clearly and enthusiastically recommend the fear of the LORD as an eternal doctrine that brings life and everlasting riches, but these three texts do not technically define the fear of the LORD.

If we examine the text in Proverbs Chapter 1, we see that the fear of the LORD is "**the beginning of knowledge**". But that is not technically an accurate translation of that passage. No, the word the best Hebrew scholars chose to translate that passage into Greek, for the Septuagint that the Apostles relied on, does not mention "**knowledge**", but "**wisdom**", and this matches Proverbs chapters 9 and 15, and all three then tie the fear of the LORD to wisdom.

Also, the word translated as "**beginning**" in the passage, more accurately means (in this case) "**origin**" or "**source**". So, according to

Proverbs chapters 1 and 9, and Psalm 111, the fear of the LORD is the “**origin**” or the “**source**” of wisdom.

Thus, Proverbs 15 explains that the instruction of wisdom is the Fear of the LORD. Obviously, based on these passages we can safely conclude that no one can be wise until they gain the origin of wisdom, which is the fear of the LORD, but these passages have not yet fully defined what the Fear of the LORD is.

For that definition, we must turn to Proverbs 8:13. There, it is written: **The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.**¹⁸

Speaking of fear and hate, those with an unhealthy fear of spiders might hate spiders. Those with an unhealthy fear of snakes might hate snakes. But those who have a healthy fear of spiders avoid being bitten by dangerous spiders that have the ability to harm them. And those who have a healthy fear of snakes avoid being bitten by dangerous snakes that have the ability to harm them.

Similarly, a healthy fear of electricity does not cause us to hate electricity, nor does it prevent us from plugging electrical cords into outlets. But it does prevent us from doing dangerous things with electricity like trying to plug in a metal fork! Likewise, a healthy fear of fire does not prevent us from lighting a fire in a fireplace, but it does prevent us from doing dangerous things with fire like lighting one in the middle of a couch!

So, unhealthy fear is an irrational fear that causes us to avoid things that can be beneficial, safe, or even necessary. But a healthy fear is a rational fear that causes us to avoid dangerous situations with anything that can cause us great harm or pain if we approach it carelessly.

Therefore, the fear of the LORD is based on the recognition that GOD is holy, He is just, He is righteous, and He is pure, and sin cannot exist in GOD’s presence. For this reason, the Bible teaches: **“You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with**

¹⁸ Proverbs 8:13

You.¹⁹ So, evil is what creates a dangerous situation when it comes to our holy GOD!

Meanwhile, we need to note that the Bible does not say: “the fear of the LORD is to hate the LORD” because that would be one very unhealthy, and completely irrational fear. Instead, the Bible teaches us to hate the things that the LORD hates so that we don’t find ourselves in the dangerous position of being an enemy of GOD!

The fact is, that GOD is absolutely, totally, and completely opposed to evil, and if we don’t want to experience the dreadful, eternal, crushing weight of GOD’s furious hatred of evil, we must hate what GOD hates with an equal intensity!

Meanwhile, many people think that GOD does not hate anyone or anything, but that is not Biblically true at all. Scripture declares about GOD: **The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.**²⁰

Hell exists because GOD plans to cleanse the heavens and the earth of all of those who hate him by practicing sin. And make no mistake, practicing sin is hating GOD, while loving GOD requires us to hate sin. So, because everything boils down to love and hate, along with sin and righteousness, the Scriptures teach that the fear of the LORD is to side with GOD and to hate evil.

Likewise, because practicing evil is equal to hating GOD, Scripture proclaims: **He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.**²¹

Everyone who walks in sin hates our righteous, holy, glorious GOD, and all those who walk in righteousness prove they love and fear GOD. So, the fear of the LORD does not repel us from GOD, the fear of the LORD repels us from sin! Therefore, the writer of the Proverb

¹⁹ Psalms 5:4

²⁰ Psalms 5:5-6

²¹ Proverbs 14:2

declares: **“pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate”**.

Do you hate pride? Do you hate arrogance? If a protagonist demonstrates pride in a movie, do you turn that movie off? Do you try to rebuke those who demonstrate pride in a conversation? Do you turn away from people who walk in the abominable sin of pride?

Ask yourself this question: Do I love evil? Do I tolerate evil? Or, do I hate evil? Those who love evil are drawn towards evil; they are amused by it, and they practice it. Those who tolerate evil, allow demonstrations of evil to manifest and persist in their lives without taking a stand against it. But those who hate evil, they stand against evil, they turn away from evil, they refuse to be near evil, they refuse to look at evil, and refuse to hear it.

Without a doubt, GOD hates evil, so Scripture frequently uses the word “abomination”, which means “a hated thing”. And since evil is doing what GOD has commanded us not to do, the Bible teaches: **One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.**²²

What is the last thing you remember turning away from in disgust? Was it a stomach-churning scene of gore, an immodestly dressed person, or a violent, sinful act? Think of how you felt as you turned away to avoid seeing something you hate, and picture this next verse.

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.²³ The fear of the LORD leads us to act toward evil as GOD does! He turns His face away from evil, He rebukes evil, and one day He will rid the earth of every form of evil. Therefore, if we fear the LORD, we should hate evil in similar ways by rebuking it, and if those committing it do not repent, then we must turn away from them.

That is why Paul wrote: **But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of**

²² Proverbs 28:9

²³ 1 Peter 3:12,

money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!²⁴

Those who lack the fear of the LORD do not turn away from such people. Instead, they maintain relationships with them, but that is why Paul began that passage with a warning that the last days are characterized by these behaviors and they would be **“perilous”** or **“dangerous times”**.

Why are these last days so **“perilous”**? Because Paul also warned: **“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good morals.”**²⁵ Similarly, Paul explained: **Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**²⁶

Christians who truly fear the LORD, understand what Paul was commanding when He wrote: **“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.²⁷

But when the fear of the LORD evaporates from a Christian culture, Christians no longer obey these plain instructions. They will refuse to hate evil, they will refuse to come out from among the wicked, they will refuse to recognize the Biblical call to holiness, and they will continue maintaining relationships with Laodiceans and Pagans without concern or the fear of the LORD.

²⁴ 2 Timothy 3:1-5

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:33

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 5:6

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1

Meanwhile, the Bible guarantees those relationships will contaminate a Christian, and corrupt their morals! So, the first key answer we must file away in our hearts and act on regarding the fear of the LORD, is: it means we must actually and demonstrably hate and even shun all forms of evil.

Evil is a detestable stench in the nostrils of GOD, and we don't want even a whiff of that foul odor to contaminate our souls, because our souls belong to our holy King. Because of the cross and the grace of the LORD, the things we once loved, we now hate; and the things we once gravitated towards should now repel us. Truly, that is the first level of the definition of the fear of the LORD. And we see this component demonstrated when Isaiah writes his account of his appearance before the LORD.

He explained: I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."²⁸

Did you notice that in the LORD's presence, Isaiah became immediately aware of (and even ashamed of) certain things his mouth had spoken previously? Like Adam hiding from the LORD's presence in the garden, the holy prophet, whose mouth was used by GOD to declare the word of the LORD, was immediately and overwhelmingly aware of the sins of his tongue.

So, living in the fear of the LORD means that we conscientiously consider: when we come face to face with the LORD in all of His glory, is there anything we will be ashamed of? If there is, now is the time to ask GOD to help us cleanse our lives of every form of iniquity!

²⁸ Isaiah 6:1-5

Or in more general terms, the fear of the LORD should be a constant motivation for every Christian to live a life of faithful righteousness and obedience, so we can stand blamelessly before our glorious Creator, and not be undone by His awesome presence.

But Isaiah was not only undone by his own lips, he noted that he dwelled in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and his neighbors had contaminated his speech. That is why the Bible does not only call us to righteousness, but also to holiness.

You see, holiness is the state of being set apart to GOD through obedience to His Word, by the power of His Spirit, through the blood of His Son. And the phrase “set apart” indicates the “separation” and “division” the Bible calls “sanctification”.

So, the fear of the LORD must also lead us into the state of being that the Bible calls “holiness”, where we actually and intentionally come out from and separate from those who don’t obey the Word of GOD.

Please imagine with me that you have a friend named Joe who is a skunk trainer. He spends 40 hours a week in the presence of several skunks and even keeps one at home as a pet. Now ask yourself, does Joe smell bad? Then ask, does Joe actually realize anymore that he smells bad?

You see, sin has a spiritual stench, far worse than the worst earthly smell. When we tolerate and live close to it, we don’t smell its spiritual stench anymore. But when we stand before GOD, even if we have not been actively and knowingly practicing sin, if we have been comfortable living with sin all around us, we are spiritually going to stink like a skunk trainer in the presence of GOD! That is why GOD commands us to be separate and to come out from the world around us.

In fact, Scripture instructs: **Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the LORD.**²⁹ So, a true,

²⁹ Hebrews 12:14

Biblical fear of the LORD will lead us to obey these verses because we will hate evil and we will obediently separate ourselves from it.

But this leads us to the second level of defining the fear of the LORD, which is understanding what is evil compared to what is good. JESUS said: **“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”**³⁰

Likewise, Paul wrote: **“GOD will render to each one according to his works: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.”**³¹

Obviously, every single person will be judged on the Biblical standards of what is good and what is evil, so understanding those standards is key to fearing the LORD. After all, JESUS warned: **“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”**³²

And JESUS made the standard clear when He said: **“If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”**³³

John made the standard clear when he wrote: **Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**³⁴

³⁰ John 5:28-29

³¹ Romans 2:6-11

³² John 12:48

³³ Matthew 19:17

³⁴ 1 John 2:3-4

Paul made the standard clear when he wrote: **Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.**³⁵

And the last book of the Bible makes the standard clear when it declares: **Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.**³⁶

Brothers and Sisters, no one can know what GOD hates and considers “**evil**” until they know the commandments of GOD! And this means, no one can truly “**hate evil**” until they know GOD’s commandments, therefore, no one can “**fear the LORD**” if they don’t know His commandments!

Now, let this next passage sink deep down into your ears into the deepest part of your soul. It is written: **“What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”**³⁷

And Moses repeated the basis of this passage over and over again, to try to help GOD’s people understand how important it was, so we will let Moses repeat it to us today. He wrote: **“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”**³⁸

How can a Christian that dismisses one or more of GOD’s commandments claim to fear Him? How can a Christian who denies working on the Sabbath is still evil claim to walk in the fear of the LORD? How can a Christian that uses the LORD’s name as an expression of anger, surprise, or any other emotion, while not actually praying to Him claim to fear Him?

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:19

³⁶ Revelation 14:12

³⁷ Deuteronomy 10:12-13

³⁸ Deuteronomy 13:4

No one who is ignorant of the commandments can fear the LORD. And no one who disobeys the commandments can fear the LORD. Therefore, to devour souls, satan deceives the whole world into forgetting, dismissing, or disobeying GOD's Commandments. Then he also leads churches to believe in a non-existent god who has no standards, whom they should never fear.

We can label these two highly successful soul-stealing campaigns of the devil: Operation "Fearless Faith", and Operation "Cancel the Creator's Commandments". But in the church, these devilish schemes devour souls with false phrases like: "Your salvation is eternally secure", "When GOD looks at you He sees JESUS", "the Sabbath was only for the Jews", "that's part of the Old Testament", "JESUS did away with the Commandments" and "GOD loves you with an unconditional love".

All of these false doctrines were designed by satan to rob the Church of the fear of the LORD, and every one of them should remind us of how Scripture records the slimy serpent once deceived Eve, the mother of us all. The Bible records satan's deadliest lie with the simple phrase "**you will not surely die**".³⁹ That is a perfect, succinct summary of every one of those devilish doctrines we just mentioned.

Like Paul told us in Romans, GOD essentially told Adam and Eve, "**the wages of sin is death**"⁴⁰. But satan lied and contradicted GOD to lead Eve and Adam into sin. And when Eve accepted that lie into her heart, in her own eyes, it justified deliberate disobedience to GOD and the abandonment of the fear of the LORD.

Meanwhile, millions of Christians around this world keep believing that same lie that is constantly being repackaged, and they think the wages of sin are no longer "death" as long as they said a prayer, walked an aisle, made a profession of faith, or believe the right things. So let me reassure you today, if you continue to practice sin, you will surely die, no matter what you believe.

³⁹ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die." Genesis 3:4

⁴⁰ Romans 6:23

If you are practicing sin, JESUS will have His holy angels open wide all of His heavenly books, He will pronounce eternal judgment upon you for every sin you refused to repent of, and He will cast you into the everlasting fires of hell created for the devil and his fallen angels.

In that terrible place, all those who refused to repent of their sins to obediently follow JESUS in faith to receive His glorious grace will be tormented day and night, forever and ever, with no rest, no companionship, no peace, no joy, no love, and no satisfaction.

Their flesh will eternally burn, their souls will be filled with horror beyond description, every nerve ending will scream in terror without end, they will thirst but never drink, they will hunger but never eat, and there will be constant weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Yes, all of these unimaginable horrors will be experienced by every unrepentant sinner because they sided with GOD's enemy satan in the Divine war against sin.

But know this: GOD does not desire that a single person end up in that horrifying lake of fire and brimstone! The Father sent His Son, and after He laid down His life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, the Son rose from the grave and ascended into heaven. Then, He sent the HOLY SPIRIT to teach us and guide us in His way. But all of this was done to save us from that terrible destiny if we will only listen to the plea of heaven being proclaimed through the holy Bible!

However, to determine who will faithfully love Him for eternity in the paradise we know as heaven and who will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, GOD allows satan to seek out and ensnare all who will not hold fast to GOD and His Word.

This is why GOD has said: **“Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”**⁴¹

GOD does not want us to fear Him because He wants to harm us! No, GOD wants wonderful things for us! However, He also has firm,

⁴¹ Deuteronomy 5:29

absolute standards that we must embrace and hold onto if we are to dwell in His glorious presence!

Sadly, some people wrongly believe that JESUS came to dismantle the standards so people can inherit heaven without keeping all His Commandments. This group fell for the satanic operation we labeled “Operation Cancel the Creator’s Commandments”.

Others wrongly believe that JESUS died to blind GOD to our rebellion against His standards, so people can inherit heaven without keeping all His Commandments. This group tragically fell for the satanic operation we labeled: “Operation Fearless Faith”.

But thanks be to GOD, others correctly understand that JESUS came to offer His own blood as a cleansing sacrifice for sin, so that we would be drawn to GOD’s loving-kindness, repent of our sins, and keep His Commandments because we love Him and understand His commandments are what makes heaven so wonderful!

Those first two groups let satan deceive them with a false gospel, but the third group believes the true gospel the Apostles faithfully preached. For example, Paul summarized that everywhere he went, he taught this specific message: **“They should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”**⁴²

Plus, Luke gave us an example of Paul teaching that very message, recording that the Apostle publicly taught: **“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”**⁴³

Since repentance involves agreeing with GOD’s Commandments and turning from sin, we can spot the true gospel and those who fear the LORD through the gospel of repentance! And those who obey JESUS, know **“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.”**⁴⁴

⁴² Acts 26:20

⁴³ Acts 17:30

⁴⁴ Luke 24:47

Likewise, they know that He instructed us to: **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”**⁴⁵ So, those who rightly fear the LORD are on a mission to make disciples who die to sin and observe all that JESUS commanded!

And a true disciple of JESUS knows that Luke recorded: **“...He began to say to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”**⁴⁶

JESUS told His disciples that He called friends to fear the one who has the power to cast into hell. That is the fear of the LORD, it endures forever, it is a fountain of life, it is the origin of wisdom, and it is the message the HOLY SPIRIT never wants you to forget on this side of eternity! **Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**⁴⁷

In his mission to steal, kill, and destroy, satan wants to rob you of the fear of the LORD. Stand fast, resist him, and always remember that it is written: **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.**⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Matthew 28:19-20

⁴⁶ Luke 12:1-5

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:12

⁴⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Chapter 2: Misplaced Fear

Since the third chapter of Genesis, the devil has been trying to eradicate the fear of the LORD from the earth because he knows it is one of the most powerful weapons we have to fight against sin. Satan told Eve, **“You will not surely die”**⁴⁹ to contradict the first recorded warning GOD ever issued, and satan continues to use this lie to contradict the warnings of GOD and lead people down the broad and deadly path of iniquity.

But GOD is so good to us! He provides us with warnings just like a good earthly father teaches his children not to play with matches, not to talk to strangers, or to look both ways before crossing the street. However, one major difference is, our heavenly Father warns us about much more serious things that are *eternally dangerous*, rather than things that can simply lead to temporary physical harm.

Sadly however, one of satan’s subtle secondary deceptions is to trick us into focusing our fear on temporal hazards like fire, traffic, or strangers more than we fear sin and GOD’s everlasting judgment. And when we become more concerned for our temporal, physical safety than we are concerned about our eternal, spiritual safety, we can spot that we have been tricked into focusing our fear on the wrong issues.

Genetically modified foods, authoritarian medical programs, chemicals in the sky, contamination in the water, certain ingredients in our foods, global conspiracies, financial instability; do these things concern you more than sin does? If so, you are in a very dangerous place of disobedience to JESUS!

At their very worst, these things can only kill the body! Therefore, they are most certainly a part of what JESUS was telling us not to fear when He said: **“My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”**⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Genesis 3:4

⁵⁰ Luke 12:4-5

About this commandment JESUS gave us, every year at Tabernacles, we are reminded to think of our bodies as JESUS and His Apostles thought of their bodies; that they are just tents!

For example, Paul wrote: **“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this, we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.”**⁵¹

Likewise, Peter explained: **“Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”**⁵²

So, each fall we consider: if a bear was attacking our fabric tent would we risk our lives to preserve even the finest of fabric dwelling places? Obviously, the answer is no! And each year we compare the fabric tents of Tabernacles to the physical bodies we are currently living in. Likewise, we compare our lives (a more valuable possession we would not risk to save our fabric tent) to our souls.

This metaphor is meant to help us see that our physical health is much less important than our spiritual health. It is true that we are not our own, we have been bought with a price, and we should glorify GOD in our bodies⁵³. But the passage that concept originates from was a warning against sexual immorality, not physically unhealthy foods or habits.

Yes, Paul wrote: **Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;**

⁵¹ 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

⁵² 2 Peter 1:13-14

⁵³ 1 Corinthians 6:20

therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.⁵⁴

So, the sin of sexual immorality was what Paul was telling us to flee from in the fear of the LORD, not food or physical threats! It is good to avoid genetically modified diets, physically unhealthy foods, or physically dangerous chemicals, but it is *infinitely* more important to avoid spiritual dangers, such as sexual immorality, idolatry, drunkenness, slander, lying, insubordination, blasphemy, profaning the Sabbath, and every other type of wickedness.

Therefore, Paul taught: **Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**⁵⁵ And: **“...the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”**⁵⁶

Truly, JESUS and His Apostles want us all to fully internalize and remember the fact that our souls are far more important than our bodies, every day of our lives. But we have to maintain a spiritual, eternal, Biblical mindset to remember such things.

Meanwhile, this is why the MESSIAH taught: **“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”**⁵⁷

JESUS knew that all of satan's lies eventually have to breach the steadfast defense the fear of the LORD provides, so the MESSIAH strengthened and built up that barrier by teaching about eternity, hell, and the fear of the LORD with great frequency and intensity.

Our LORD knows how satan deceives people. He knows perfectly well how the devil tricks people into believing they can secretly say and do wicked things without anyone knowing, so JESUS warned that what we do in the dark will be revealed by the light, and the words that we whisper in secret will be shouted from the housetops.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:13

⁵⁶ Romans 14:17

⁵⁷ Matthew 10:28

⁵⁸ Luke 12:2-3

Likewise, because JESUS knew that satan would tempt us to misplace our fears and priorities, and forget hell and eternity, He taught us: **“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”**⁵⁹

So, the Bible is clear: we must value our spiritual health *infinitely* more than we value our physical health, and we must always remember that sin has eternal consequences. But the carnal, fleshly, satanic world around us lulls us into temporal, fleshly thinking that incorrectly values physical health more than spiritual health.

Thus, because JESUS knew perfectly how misplaced perspectives, priorities, and values would be such a pervasive and dangerous issue, He also taught: **“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**⁶⁰

Like love, fear is a value system based on priorities. And, within most value systems based on priorities, GOD must occupy the top position. However, we can only prioritize things properly when we have a Biblical worldview, so JESUS teaches us the fear of the LORD by teaching us how to properly rank certain items.

For example, JESUS teaches us to value our souls more than our physical lives. And this is very similar to how JESUS teaches us not to fear people who can only kill our bodies. Instead, He tells us we should fear the One who can cast both body and soul into hell. If we get these priorities out of order, sin and hell can be the consequences we might face.

Meanwhile, the fleshly-minded, carnal, satanic world system wrongly teaches that the physical life you have in this present evil age should be your primary concern. And this message is designed to make us stumble into sin.

⁵⁹ Matthew 5:29-30

⁶⁰ Matthew 16:25-26

To protect us from such messages, Scripture teaches us to view this life as a journey through a desolate wilderness on our way to a glorious Promised Land. This is why Scripture teaches us to think of ourselves as pilgrims on a journey to GOD and His Kingdom.

Then, once we realize that the Exodus journey is the way we are to view our lives, we understand how important it is to remember that not everyone who set out from Egypt made it into the Promised Land.

About this, Jude wrote: **But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**⁶¹

The fear of the LORD teaches us that salvation is a path or a road that begins with the blood of the Passover lamb, but we must continue on the road to salvation until we reach the finish line, which is the promised land of GOD's kingdom. Those who did not make it to the land of promise in Exodus demonstrate why we must earnestly and consistently keep an *eternal* perspective, and value the future more than the present just as we must value our souls more than we value our lives.

Therefore, Hebrews explains: **“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’” Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**”⁶²

Think of the jaw-dropping miracles the children of Israel saw in the book of Exodus. Much like the plagues that will soon be coming to this planet as described in the book of Revelation, they saw and heard amazing things that should have forever imprinted on them the fear of

⁶¹ Jude 1:5

⁶² Hebrews 3:7-13

the LORD. But they quickly forgot the awesome works of GOD, and many of them went astray into sin.

Now, as we read passages about their failures, we must remember that the word Exodus means **“the way out”**, and long before the term Christianity came into being, being a disciple of JESUS meant we were members of **“the way”**. Meanwhile, the name of the second book of the Bible and the name the Apostles applied to our faith, comes from the Greek word **“hod-os”**, which means **“way, road, or path”**.

Please consider, JESUS used that special word when He described the salvation journey by saying: **“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”**⁶³

The gate or ramp onto the narrow road is repentance and faith in JESUS. But those who refuse to enter that gate remain on the deadly broad road of sin. And the fact is, the broad road of sin is paved with the misplaced loves of temptation; loves like the love of money, the love of self, and the love of pleasure. The broad road calls to us with deceptive billboards of temptation that appeal to the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life. But the broad road of sin always ends in eternal destruction, and those who fear the LORD never forget this truth.

With these facts in mind, we can read on in Hebrews, where it is written: **“For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice”, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”**⁶⁴

⁶³ Matthew 7:13-14

⁶⁴ Hebrews 3:14-19

When they began their journey on the road to salvation, the power of the LORD was fresh in their minds, their zeal for Him consumed their fears, and they were ready to follow and obey Him.

But as soon as troubles appeared on the road, they feared the challenges more than they feared GOD. Also, when temptations came, they demonstrated that they loved the temptations more than they loved GOD. So, their misplaced love along with their misplaced fear led them to an exit ramp on the highway of salvation. And that ramp took them right back down to the broad road of sin that always leads to destruction.

Therefore, Hebrews details how the fear of the LORD fits in, by declaring: **“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”**⁶⁵ And: **“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”**⁶⁶

Hebrews exhorts us to continue on the road to salvation until we reach the finish line of eternal rest in the kingdom of GOD. But we must ask: How did many of the children of Israel stumble during their journey through the wilderness to the promised land? They let troubles overwhelm their fear of the LORD and temptations overwhelm their love for GOD.

Thus, Paul wrote: **Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.**⁶⁷

Paul compared their baptism into “the pillar of cloud” to our baptism into the HOLY SPIRIT. Likewise, he compared their baptism into the Red Sea and Moses to our baptism into water and JESUS.

⁶⁵ Hebrews 4:1

⁶⁶ Hebrews 4:11

⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:1-9

Then, Paul compared the manna they ate in the wilderness to the bread we eat in remembrance of the body of our LORD. Plus, he compared the water they drank from the rock in the wilderness to the cup we drink in commemoration of the LORD's death.

But after making these clear parallels between the Exodus and the road to salvation in the New Covenant, Paul warns that GOD was not pleased with most of them, and their corpses littered the wilderness.

Then Paul added: **Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.**⁶⁸

All of these judgments found in Exodus were recorded for our benefit. GOD desires us all to consider the wrath and destruction they faced, and consider those judgments as a warning to all who would follow in their evil footsteps. So, we must not lust after evil! We must not commit sexual immorality! We must not test GOD! And we must not complain when we face difficult situations! These sins are exit ramps from the highway of salvation, and they lead us down to the broad road that leads to destruction!

Therefore, Paul concluded by explaining: **Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**⁶⁹

Through Paul, GOD warns us that what happened to the children of Israel can also happen to us. If we fear the challenges of life more than we fear GOD, we can fall. Or if we love the pleasures or riches of this life more than we love GOD, we can fall. So, we need to both love and fear GOD above all else.

⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:6-10

⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:11-12

Long ago, an ungodly man named Machiavelli asked if it was better for a leader to be feared or to be loved. But he incorrectly answered that question, because he wrongly assumed that fear and love rarely coexist in one person. However, fear and love are **not** mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are mutually necessary!

Please consider how fear and love are interchangeable in this sentence: “whatever we fear the most, we will serve” or “whatever we love the most, we will serve”. Depending on the situation, both of those statements are true.

If you love money more than GOD, will you obey this command of our LORD? **“Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”**⁷⁰

JESUS made the answer clear when He said: **“No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other, or else he will be devoted to the one, and he will despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”**⁷¹

Now please consider: if you fear suffering or death more than you fear GOD, will you obey this command of the Savior? **“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**⁷²

Because JESUS knows we require the fear of the LORD to be faithful until death, He taught: **“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”**⁷³

Because fear is more of a gut reflex while love is a conscious choice, in certain situations fear can be more useful than love to keep us from exiting the highway of salvation towards sin. But in other situations that don't evoke strong emotions, love is more useful.

⁷⁰ Mark 10:21

⁷¹ Matthew 6:24 CAB

⁷² Revelation 2:10

⁷³ Matthew 10:28

Yes, in standard situations when temptation is based on what we choose to value most, love leads us to serve GOD faithfully. However, in difficult situations when things are more intense and strong internal forces tempt us to value our lives more than our souls (or to value sin more than we value GOD), fear leads us to serve Him faithfully.

So those who faithfully serve GOD, both love and fear Him above all else, because this leads them to serve Him faithfully in both hard and easy times.

Or said another way, Scripture teaches that every Christian can either walk after the lusts of the flesh or they can walk after the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT. Thus, until we cross the finish line on the road to salvation into our eternal promised land, we must crucify and resist the flesh as we surrender to the SPIRIT.

This means that we need the fear of the LORD to operate an “exit closed” sign to keep the flesh from grabbing the steering wheel and taking us down an exit ramp to the broad road of sin. With the flesh restrained, our renewed inner spiritual being that is ready and willing to surrender to the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT can rely on love for motivation.

Thus, Paul speaks to the fear of the LORD when He writes: **Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**⁷⁴

Eternal life or the second death of eternal damnation? The choice seems easy until our daily lives distract us! Then, satan tricks us into forgetting to live with eternity in mind. Thus, with eternity forgotten, we tend to set our fear in the wrong things, we tend to set our love on the wrong things, or we tend to set our hope on the wrong things. Then when strong temptations come, those misplaced values lead us to depart from the way of salvation, simply because our mindset was unbiblical.

This is one key reason Scripture commands: **The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.**⁷⁵ Only those with a Biblical, eternal, spiritual perspective can

⁷⁴ Romans 8:12-13

⁷⁵ Isaiah 8:13

obey this verse. But those with a worldly, temporal, fleshly perspective will always refuse to fear the LORD as Scripture commands.

Now, which perspective do you think Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah relied on within the following situation? Did they have an eternal, Biblical perspective or a temporal, worldly perspective? Did they fear the earthly king they could see with their eyes; or did they fear their heavenly King they had never actually seen?

It is written: **Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? “Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”**⁷⁶

One of the most powerful human kings in all of history was furious with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for not worshipping his idol. Now consider what perspective they must have been operating from as they answer Nebuchadnezzar.

Scripture tells us: **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”**⁷⁷

They knew GOD *could* deliver them, but they did not yet know if He *would* deliver them. So, they made sure that Nebuchadnezzar knew that either way, they were not going to fear anything more than they feared the LORD.

⁷⁶ Daniel 3:13-15

⁷⁷ Daniel 3:16-18

GOD did choose to deliver them that day, but they did not know if He would until they were tossed into the fiery furnace. Meanwhile, their actions regarding the fiery furnace demonstrated that they feared the LORD above all else.

Would you rather die of hunger than steal? Would you be willing to lose your job if they would not give you the Sabbath off? Are you ready to endure persecution for the sake of JESUS and the Word of GOD? Would you rather die than sin against your LORD? Would you endure suffering without denying His name or violating His commandments?

If you don't fear the LORD, or if you later misplace your fear of the LORD on something less eternal, you will fail to remain faithful to your GOD! But if you fear the LORD above all else, and refuse to allow that fear to shift or waver, you will endure to the end and be saved!

Enduring to the end on the highway of salvation is very important, and we know this because JESUS ended one of His warnings about such things with a promise about it. He said: **“Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many, and because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”**⁷⁸

The way of the LORD most certainly does lead to salvation, but we must continue on it until the finish line in order to be saved! However, false prophets and false teachers don't teach that salvation is found at the *end* of the road. Instead, they incorrectly teach it is found at the *beginning*!

Therefore, false prophets and false teachers who have no fear of the LORD preach demonic doctrines of lawlessness, which lead to love growing cold. And their lawless lectures lead to love growing cold because GOD's laws are the DNA of love! Thus, by listening to false teachers, many fall away by exiting the highway of salvation as they choose the broad road of sin. And there is no love for GOD on that path of perdition!

How can we claim to love GOD if we worship other gods, pray to graven images, take His name in vain, profane His holy Sabbath, dishonor the parents GOD gave us, murder others made in the image of GOD, treat GOD's design for marriage with contempt by being

⁷⁸ Matthew 24:11-13

sexually immoral, take what GOD has not given to us, contradict what GOD knows to be true, or covet what GOD has given to our neighbor?

You see, no one can love GOD and violate His Commandments at the same time! So, the highway of salvation's guardrails are the commandments of GOD, and those protective principles prevent all those who fear the LORD from exiting the road to heaven!

While love and hope propel us forward, the commandments define the edge of the road so we don't take an exit ramp into sin! But once we understand and believe that salvation in JESUS is like a road or a highway that we must continue on with perseverance, one of the most dangerous threats to us continuing on that blessed road is: false teachers.

For this reason, the same Bible which tells us to: **“Work out our own salvation with fear and trembling”**⁷⁹, **“Conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear”**⁸⁰, **“Fear God”**⁸¹, and **“Cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”**⁸² also frequently warns us to beware of false prophets and false teachers.

When we see those words in the Apostolic Scriptures, the single word they used that we translate as “false prophet” was “pseudoprophetes⁸³”, and the single word they used that we translate into English as “false teacher” was “pseudodidaskalos⁸⁴”. You see, both of these words begin with the prefix “psuedo”, a prefix we still use in English! And that Greek word means: “lying, deceitful, or false” So, a false prophet or teacher is a deceitful or lying person who takes on the role of prophet or teacher.

Meanwhile, a prophet is one who claims to be delivering a message from GOD that is fully backed by GOD's absolute authority. While a teacher is one who claims no authority beyond an accurate ability to

⁷⁹ Philippians 2:12

⁸⁰ 1 Peter 1:17

⁸¹ 1 Peter 2:17b

⁸² 2 Corinthians 7:1

⁸³ psyoo-dop-rof-ay'-tace

⁸⁴ psyoo-dod-id-as'-kal-os

explain the authoritative messages GOD has already delivered to mankind through His prophets.

Therefore, a false or pseudo-prophet will claim to speak for GOD, even though GOD did not send them. And a false or pseudo-teacher will claim to accurately teach GOD's Word, while they fail to teach it accurately. Both the false prophet and the false teacher may think GOD sent them and that they are accurately representing His Word, or they may know that they are lying. But the Bible warns: **Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**⁸⁵

Every year that passes, more false teachers spring up in the world, deceiving others while they themselves are deceived. GOD knows if they are evil liars or deceived imposters, and He will sort them all out in the end. But, in the meantime, JESUS commands us to careful not to listen to false prophets or false teachers.

So, to sort them out, He taught us: **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”**⁸⁶

While we can prove beyond all reasonable doubt what JESUS means by His metaphorical references to fruit, we don't have time to prove it today. But please understand that Scripture very plainly explains fruit is a metaphor for works.

Therefore, good fruits are righteous deeds done in obedience to GOD in the power of the SPIRIT. And evil or bad fruits are sins committed by those who are disobedient to GOD and walk after the flesh.

So, once again the commandments determine the difference between what is good fruit and what is bad fruit, since sin is the violation of GOD's commandments.

⁸⁵ 2 Timothy 3:13

⁸⁶ Matthew 7:15-20

Now, with that knowledge, we can see that JESUS tells us we can spot false prophets by the fruit they produce. So, if a person claims to be a prophet or a teacher of GOD's Word, but they teach against His commandments or they practice sin, they are "pseudo" or false prophets or teachers.

And the apostle John uses that same Greek root word "pseudo" when he writes: **"He who says, 'I know Him', and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."**⁸⁷

If anyone claims to be a teacher or prophet but they don't keep GOD's commandments, they are a liar, they don't know JESUS, and the truth is not in that person. You have been warned!

Therefore: **"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."**⁸⁸ John told us the commandments are how to test every teacher and every prophet because JESUS taught Him the same thing!

And JESUS also taught His prophet Isaiah, who wrote: **To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**⁸⁹

So, Brothers and Sisters, please be careful to never misplace your fears! Remember, salvation is found at the end of the Way, so we must continue in the faith, and endure to the end to be saved!

Fear GOD and keep His commandments! Love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and remember that loving Him means keeping His commandments.

Then, use his commandments to test every prophet and every teacher. Because Peter was used by GOD to warn us: **"There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be**

⁸⁷ 1 John 2:4

⁸⁸ 1 John 4:1

⁸⁹ Isaiah 8:20

blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.⁹⁰

False prophets and teachers appeal to the lusts of the flesh, they promote sinful, temporal, carnal thinking, they discard some or all of GOD's Commandments, and they lead Christians away from the fear of the LORD.

So, please never forget: **The fear of the LORD is the origin of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.**⁹¹

⁹⁰ 2 Peter 2:1-3

⁹¹ Psalms 111:10a

Chapter 3: The Lamb, The Lawgiver, and the Judge

In the last book of the Bible, the Apostle John gives us multiple descriptions of JESUS. He describes our LORD in His priestly role, standing among the seven lampstands. He describes Him in His kingly role, sitting on the throne of heaven. He describes Him in His sacrificial role, as a Lamb that had been slain. He describes Him in His judicial role judging His seven churches. And He describes Him in His conquering role, riding a white horse into battle.

Scripture also describes JESUS as The I Am, the Creator, the Teacher, The Lawgiver, the Savior, The Bridegroom, The LORD, The Word of GOD made flesh, The Son of GOD, The Son of Man, The Last Adam, and much more. Truly, JESUS is GOD, just as the Father and the HOLY SPIRIT are GOD, and He is above all others except His Father in *all* of these ways.

So, because of His exalted role, we don't use that old expression and say that JESUS wears many hats. Instead, we note that the Bible describes JESUS as wearing many crowns! He is above all others except for His Father, in all of these important roles of authority. But when we forget or dismiss some of the positions JESUS occupies, we end up with a distorted view of what it means to be His disciples.

Yes, one way the fear of the LORD has been undermined in the modern Church is by focusing too heavily on certain aspects of Who JESUS is, while forgetting others. Many people are introduced to JESUS as a Sacrificial Lamb, Savior, and occasionally LORD, but they are rarely introduced to Him as Creator, Judge, King, High Priest, and Conqueror. And the role of JESUS most ignored by Christians in the modern, lawless, and evil age, is His role as Lawgiver.

Many people cannot reconcile the idea that JESUS is the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, while at the same time, He is the Lawgiver who gave the world the Laws that describe them as sinners, and the Judge that will impartially cast sinners into hell.

They have been deceived into thinking that the main problem JESUS came to solve was a problem with the Law, instead of mankind's violations of His Law. And this has led the world and the church

deeper and deeper into the condition of lawlessness, a state in which true love for GOD and the fear of the LORD cannot thrive.

So, let us together reconsider what the word “Law” means, how we interact with those involved in earthly “law enforcement”, and use those interactions to better understand how JESUS is equally the Lamb, the Lawgiver, and the Judge.

Imagine three police cars packed with law enforcement officers following your vehicle, watching your every move. Would you decide to illegally exceed the speed limit? Would you choose to make an illegal right-hand turn from the left lane? Or would you refuse to stop at red lights? Probably not!

When we know we are being watched, it often helps us do the right thing. But, as Christians, we are supposed to desire to do the right thing from the heart, even when no one is looking, simply because it is the right thing.

So, Scripture tells us: **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.**⁹²

The Greek word translated into English as “eyeservice” means “**service performed only when those in authority are looking**”. So, this means we should obey all of the traffic laws, even when there are no police around; as servants of JESUS who respect and obey the law.

Meanwhile, the truth is, JESUS sees everything we do and hears everything we say! There are no secrets before the omniscient Judge of the whole earth. For this reason, the Bible warns: **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.**⁹³

⁹² Colossians 3:22-25

⁹³ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

So, those who truly fear the LORD keep GOD's commandments and obey his appointed authorities, even when no one on earth is looking. And we do so because we are to do all things in service to JESUS our LORD, who will impartially judge all people by their works!

But now let us consider: why do we have police? Why do roads have speed limits? What is the purpose of stop signs and stop lights? Are not traffic laws, and those we hire to enforce those laws, meant to protect people, and make it possible to safely travel in vehicles?

Now, before you settle on an answer, please consider: What if someone was violating the law, exceeding the speed limit, making illegal turns, running red lights, and putting your family members in danger? Would you want the law enforced then?

Yes, that is exactly why those laws are in place! So, even if we happen not to like those laws, we are not free to violate them! No, if we happen to disagree with such laws, we are free to petition our appointed leaders that they be changed, but as Christians, we must obey them faithfully, regardless of who is watching!

So, Peter writes: **Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.**⁹⁴

Speed limits, traffic lights, stop signs, and many other ordinances related to driving are implemented to make driving safe and predictable for all of us. And we don't just submit to those laws for the sake of avoiding tickets or fines! No, we submit to them because we recognize they are good! And those who truly fear the LORD, obey, appreciate, and respect such laws!

Meanwhile, the tickets officers impose on lawbreakers as penalties cause insurance rates to go up, and their fines directly impact the pocketbook. So, those financial punishments are meant to remind people that violating the law will cost them so they should keep the laws they previously violated.

⁹⁴ 1 Peter 2:13-14

In other words, lawbreakers must face consequences, so that they will learn to respect and obey the law. Therefore, if lawbreakers disregard the law and afterward, they disregard the fines imposed against them, eventually they will face a Judge who will revoke their right to drive because they have demonstrated an unsafe, lawless mentality.

Now, in very similar ways to the financial penalties people face when they disregard traffic laws, the sacrifices the people made in the Levitical covenant impacted their families financially.

Imagine if livestock was the primary way you made your living, but your best animals had to be taken to the altar to atone for your family's violations of GOD's law. Would that financial cost remind you to stop sinning?

Then, add to the *financial* issues sin caused, the reality that the sacrifices were living animals that had to be killed! Those sacrifices made it clear: "the true cost of sin is death". So, the slaughter of those animals, and the blood the people saw spilled all over the ground helped point the people back to the fear of the LORD!

Meanwhile, for those who disregarded the Commandments of the LORD, and refused to repent and make the prescribed sacrifices, their right to live was revoked! So, we see the worst sin anyone could ever commit was to turn their ear away from hearing GOD's law, by rejecting His judgments, and testimonies!

Thus, Hebrews explains: **Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.**⁹⁵ Yes, no one who truly fears the LORD will reject GOD's law!

Those who fear the LORD know: **One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.**⁹⁶

Also, those who fear the LORD remember that the Bible declares: **Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them, and the hills**

⁹⁵ Hebrews 10:28

⁹⁶ Proverbs 28:9

trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.⁹⁷

Rejecting the law of the LORD and despising His Commandments is leading the world down the path of judgment which will end with seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, and seven bowls! But the wise understand and avoid those judgments because they walk in the fear of the LORD!

They know: **The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.**⁹⁸ Yes, the wise understand that the fear of the LORD leads to the love of His Commandments!

All those who truly know GOD understand that the sacrifices He instituted never replaced or contradicted His commandments! No, the sacrifices were meant to demonstrate that the sinner repented from their sin, understood sin's consequences, and had no intention of continuing to sin. In other words, the sacrifices they made demonstrated they were repenting and submitting to the law.

This is why the Bible declares: **If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.**⁹⁹ If our sins could never be forgiven -if they were written in heaven in a way that could never be erased- it would make sense to give up trying to obey GOD's law. But because GOD offers to forgive the sins of all who choose to repent and obey Him, we fear the LORD and keep His commandments.

In other words, the sacrificial lambs, goats, and bulls did not do away with the law or the fear of the LORD! No, instead they reinforced the law and the fear of the LORD!

GOD knew we would fail to keep His law perfectly, so He provided an altar and sacrifices to atone for our sins! But the sacrifices did not mean that we could keep on sinning! No, the sacrifices were like

⁹⁷ Isaiah 5:24b-25

⁹⁸ Psalms 103:17-18

⁹⁹ Psalms 130:3-4

training wheels, instituted by the Lawgiver so that we could learn to stop sinning!

But regarding those who **refused** to repent and submit to GOD or His appointed authorities, the Almighty has commanded: **“Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.”**¹⁰⁰

Truly, this passage demonstrates how all those who fear the LORD will submit to the LORD’s appointed authorities! After all, those authorities were established to teach the laws of the LORD and enforce them, so the final act of rebellion against GOD is to reject His appointed authorities.

Therefore, Paul warns: **Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.**¹⁰¹

Those who serve JESUS as His disciples submit to the laws and ordinances of GOD and man in the fear of GOD, and they *only* ever disobey a lawful order when it would cause them to sin against GOD!

But when the fear of GOD evaporates from the hearts of Christians due to false doctrines and false teachers, who is left to teach the fear of GOD to the world? If Christians don’t conduct themselves in the fear of the LORD, who will demonstrate it to the sinner?

When Christians violate GOD’s laws, or when they violate man’s laws, especially for selfish, wicked reasons, they blaspheme the Way

¹⁰⁰ Deuteronomy 17:12-13

¹⁰¹ Romans 13:1-4

of Righteousness, and the glorious name of JESUS they claim to represent.

Therefore, we can recognize those who fear the LORD (and those who don't) by how they "speak of" and "act towards" the official protective laws and ordinances of man, and the leaders who enforce them. Those who ignore speed limits, traffic laws, and other similar laws demonstrate they do not fear the LORD, and they will answer for their insubordination on judgment day unless they repent!

Meanwhile, those in authority over the police create ordinances that they must submit to, so they do not abuse their authority. Therefore, the laws that govern police conduct are meant to protect the public from abusive police officers, just as the laws they enforce are put in place to protect the public from reckless drivers.

Truly, laws are instituted for the good of all! The law protects us from murderers, thieves, extortioners, and even those who drive recklessly by speeding, texting, sleeping, drinking, or any other unsafe thing.

Likewise, GOD's law protects us all from the destructive influence of idolaters, blasphemers, those who profane the Sabbath, and those who have no respect for GOD's appointed authorities.

Now, consider: If you intentionally disregard the laws of driving, and a police officer showed you favoritism in such a way that they did not enforce the law, would they be good or bad law enforcement officials?

What if they let you off of a ticket because of your job, the way you look, flattery, a bribe, or because they favored you over others in some different way? Would that be just and righteous in the sight of GOD?

Well, Scripture answers that question by explaining: **"You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."**¹⁰²

So, GOD demands that every appointed authority never show partiality, which means they must enforce the law in the same way with a stranger as with a family member. They must enforce the law

¹⁰² Deuteronomy 16:19

equally, with no regard to appearance, economic status, nationality, or any other factor beyond guilt or innocence.

Also, GOD demands that every appointed authority refuse any compensation offered to them directly from an individual (or party of individuals) that doesn't represent the entire population that happens to be under their authority.

So, any police officer would be sinning against the LORD if they treat those under their authority differently because of how they look, if they know them, or if they hope to (or already have) received some sort of benefit from them. And these rules against partiality and bribery apply to GOD too!

The Bible perfectly describes JESUS when it declares: **“The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.”**¹⁰³

JESUS will not show any partiality as Judge, nor will He accept a bribe! He will judge everyone impartially based on their works, according to His Commandments! He will not judge based on how people flatter Him with praise, or what they claimed to believe about Him! His commandments will be the measurement by which He judges, and He will apply them equally to every soul.

We know this because, about those who apply different standards to different people, Scripture warns **Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the LORD.**¹⁰⁴

If any police officer treats someone powerful, wealthy, famous, rich, poor, beautiful, or of a certain ethnic persuasion differently than they treat others, they are wickedly applying diverse weights and measurements that have nothing to do with the law.

In ancient marketplaces, unjust merchants had two or more sets of weights and measurements they used for different people. If they favored a person, they would use a bigger cup or a heavier weight in order to give them more product for the same price. But if they wanted to cheat someone, they had a smaller cup and a lighter weight they would use to offer them less product for the same price.

¹⁰³ Deuteronomy 10:17

¹⁰⁴ Proverbs 20:10

Sometimes, these systems of cheating with unequal measurements were reversed in certain situations, but the LORD's point is that we must measure all things equally and justly to everyone we deal with.

So, James warned: **My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?**¹⁰⁵

A partial judge is an evil judge! So, treating the sins of one political party as less serious than the other is wicked. And a police officer treating any violations of the law prejudicially based on who committed them is an abomination in the LORD's sight!

This is why society often pictures justice as blind. Not because justice cannot see evil compared to good, but because true justice is blind to all of the irrelevant details regarding the person who committed the crime.

Some politicians who hate the fear of the LORD want to pervert justice by creating different standards for people with different physical characteristics. But that is just as evil as a racist police officer or a merchant with diverse weights and measurements.

Neither, the outward appearance of the officer nor the citizen they are interacting with matters! No, only guilt or innocence according to the law matters in a just society! Anything else involves unjust weights and measurements!

Meanwhile, before we leave behind our discussion of police and traffic situations, we must also consider, have you ever spoken certain four-letter words behind the steering wheel, when some other driver wasn't obeying the traffic laws?

About such things, JESUS warned: **"I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of**

¹⁰⁵ James 2:1-4

judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”¹⁰⁶

So, to protect us from verbally sinning, through His Apostle, the LORD commands: **Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.**¹⁰⁷

Likewise, our Brother Paul added in another letter: **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy language out of your mouth.**¹⁰⁸

Even our tongues must submit to JESUS! But did you know, we will never obey these commands from our hearts until we agree with GOD that violating these verses is evil?

When we repent and agree with Scripture that “hell” is a literal place that we don’t wish anyone to end up in, we will consciously stop ourselves from using that word as an expression of surprise! We will stop telling others to go there! And we will stop comparing difficult situations in this life to the unimaginable horrors of that terrible place.

In other words, when we recognize the severity and reality of hell as described in the Bible, we will understand and agree with GOD that it is not a word to be used lightly.

Likewise, when we repent and realize that the four-letter word that begins with the letter “D” is a reference to sentencing people to hell for all eternity, we will stop using it as an expression of frustration, anger, malice, or any other fleeting emotion.

When we repent and agree with Scripture that teaches us the LORD’s name and titles are so holy the Apostles wrote them differently in their letters, we will stop using any reference to GOD to

¹⁰⁶ Matthew 12:36-37

¹⁰⁷ Ephesians 4:29-31

¹⁰⁸ Colossians 3:6-8

express surprise, frustration, anger, bitterness, or anything else but prayers to (and praises towards) our magnificent, holy Creator!

And when we repent and agree with GOD's Word that sexual immorality is something that defiles and corrupts, we will detest words associated with any form of sexual immorality, and we will cast those words away from our vocabulary and treat them like the abominations that they are!

Yes, when we repent and agree with GOD's Word that teaches us certain body parts should be covered and not discussed, words associated with those unmentionable body parts will become words we avoid using, as is fitting for saints.

So, repentance always means that we agree with GOD's Word when it describes right and wrong, and we choose to side with GOD especially regarding issues that involve sin, such as the sins of the tongue. Therefore, all who truly fear the LORD guard their tongues very carefully because they know He hears every word we say, and He will judge all of our words and deeds impartially!

And this means that He will look at what people have done, not what people believe. If they have practiced sin and refused to repent and agree with His commandments, they will be cast into hell.

If they turned from their sin and asked for forgiveness in true repentance, they will be welcomed into His everlasting kingdom! But JESUS will judge based on facts and the law, just as any good earthly judge must!

Thus, the Scriptures declare: **It is not good to show partiality in judgment. He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," Him the people will curse; nations will abhor him. But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.**¹⁰⁹

If JESUS were to declare the wicked to be righteous, He would be an unjust Judge! But if the wicked repent of their wickedness, ask Him to cleanse them, and choose to follow Him in righteousness, then JESUS can declare them righteous and still be perfectly just! And this my friends, is the true Gospel!

¹⁰⁹ Proverbs 24:23-25

So, after He defeated sin and death, JESUS said: **“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”**¹¹⁰

Just as there is no salvation without JESUS, also there is no salvation without repentance! So, we must agree with GOD that sin is wrong, and turn from it, to receive the remission of sins JESUS offers!

What would you think of even a mall security guard who decided not to stop a shoplifter? But before you answer that question, imagine the security guard worked for you, and they refused to stop certain shoplifters because they were their family members. Imagine such a security guard allowing people to steal from you!

Such a security guard should be fired immediately, just as any law enforcement official who refused to stop lawless criminals from committing crimes should be immediately fired. But, because lawlessness has become such a rampant problem in the world, some prosecutors refuse to stop thieves, government officials refuse to enforce federal laws and entire cities have stated they will not obey lawful legislation enacted by elected officials, simply because they disagree with the laws.

Can you see how lawlessness is infecting every aspect of modern society? When the media treats one side of an argument differently than the other side, that is lawlessness. When law enforcement agents handle disputes over classified documents differently depending on who is involved, that is lawlessness. When crimes are not prosecuted in certain areas of the country, that is lawlessness. And when people fail to show respect to their appointed leaders, but instead they revile them and slander them, that is lawlessness.

When people are no longer ashamed of violating traffic laws, that is lawlessness. When people reject marriage as GOD created it, and practice any form of sexual immorality, that is lawlessness. When people reject the fact that GOD created only two genders, male and female, that is lawlessness. And when people believe that surgery or

¹¹⁰ Luke 24:46-47

wardrobe can change what GOD encoded into our very DNA, that is lawlessness.

Meanwhile, all of this lawlessness can be traced back to a lack of the fear of the LORD! And I wish we could just say that most of the Church still feared the LORD, but sadly we cannot! No, these days many Christians have little to no fear of the LORD, they turn their ears away from hearing His law, and they imagine that GOD is an unjust Judge who will show partiality to those who have said a prayer, walked an aisle, or confessed belief in certain facts without turning from their sins.

Friends, this is not the type of Judge JESUS is! No, He impartially judges based on guilt or innocence according to His commandments. He has not abandoned His laws! And His death on the cross was meant to lead us to repentance and obedience to His Commandments, not to justify unrepentant, rebellious sinners.

Truly, anyone who does not understand how the laws, the sacrifices, and the judgments of GOD all worked together in the first covenant, can't understand the Gospel! So, they eliminate the laws and the judgments of GOD and ignorantly point only to the sacrifice. But one day they will discover, the Lamb is also the Lawgiver and the Judge. And only those who turn to Him as all three will experience His salvation!

Imagine a man being picked up by a limousine. Inside that heavily armored vehicle is the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court. They drive from where the man entered the car to the highest court in the land and enter the courtroom through multiple layers of security.

Inside the courtroom, the other high court justices are all present, judging cases, pursuing justice, and upholding the law. Armed court security guards stand at every entrance, cameras record every area of activity, and the building is one of the most secure locations imaginable.

Now imagine the man brought into such a solemn, just, and secure space intentionally and repeatedly violating the law. How foolish is that man? How quickly will the Chief Justice have his guest arrested, tried, and convicted for the crimes he committed to defile his courtroom?

If the Chief Justice showed any favoritism to his guest, could he be a just judge? Doesn't a just judge have to impartially punish those who violate the law?

Next, please imagine the Judge every knee will bow before, including every human judge who has ever lived. Every chief justice from every nation will answer to Him because He is the Judge who knows all things, who created all things, who wrote His commandments in stone with His very own finger, and who can cast those who unrepentantly violate His commandments into hell for all eternity.

His courtroom is the eternal holy of holies. The guards of His courtroom are the holy angels. Justice and righteousness are the foundation of His throne. And even holy prophets are "undone" in His glorious presence.

Can you imagine anyone sinning in His holy presence? What would happen to someone who despises or disregards the laws of His ultimate courtroom? These are the types of mental preparations and comparisons we should make before we read what Hebrews has to say about the throne room of heaven.

It is written in the Word of Truth: **You have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")**¹¹¹

Then after that reference to the terrifying sights and sounds of Mount Sinai, Hebrews explains: **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all.**¹¹²

Then, reminding us of the covenant declared from Sinai, the passage concludes: **See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if**

¹¹¹ Hebrews 12:18-21

¹¹² Hebrews 12:22-23

they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.¹¹³

Friends, grace is not opposed to the commandments of GOD and John 3:16 is not a perfect summary of the entire Bible! No, grace instructs us to repent of every form of unrighteousness and John 3:16 is not a perfect summary of the Gospel that the Apostles preached! But by trying to boil the whole Bible down into one or two simple verses, much of what GOD has told us about Himself has been forgotten or lost to many.

Did you notice that Hebrews did not say GOD changed the words of His Covenant? No, the same voice that shook Mount Sinai still thunders in Heaven, declaring the same law, and He will judge the entire earth by that Law.

Therefore, James writes: **If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.**¹¹⁴

JESUS did not die on the cross so we can ignore His law! No, He died so we could be restored to fellowship with Him when we repent and agree with His law, that sin is wrong! So, **repentance** is the key!

¹¹³ Hebrews 12:25-29

¹¹⁴ James 2:8-13a

And it means to change our minds about GOD's law, and even the law in general!

When we are dead in sin, we don't realize how the law is good and it protects the righteous from those who would live in wickedness. But when we repent and believe the biblical Gospel, we recognize that the laws of GOD were given to mankind for our good! They stop us from robbing others, while they stop us from being robbed. They stop us from harming others, while they also stop others from harming us!

You see, the law protects us, guides us, teaches us, and helps us know right from wrong! And while none of us can keep the law perfectly, those who really know JESUS will seek to do so in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT!

This is why the Apostle John wrote: **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**¹¹⁵

Our LORD's roles of sacrificial Lamb, High Priest, and Advocate do not contradict His roles of Lawgiver, Judge, and Conqueror! No, all who read and trust the entire Bible as GOD's Word understand how GOD's covenant works!

So, they recognize that the sacrifices, the priests, the judges, the law, and everything else GOD instituted in the first covenant worked together to guide GOD's obedient servants into His presence!

They also know that Paul highlighted how JESUS ended the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the first covenant when He tore open the veil to the Holy of Holies. But they see that Paul never opposed any other aspects of GOD's perfect law!

Yes, JESUS inaugurated a new priesthood, offered Himself as a far better sacrifice, and functions as our Advocate as Moses once did for Israel, but JESUS is still Lawgiver and Judge, and just as He punished Israel for turning their ears away from His law, He will

¹¹⁵ 1 John 2:1-4

punish every person that follows in those same disobedient footsteps.

So, the Word describes JESUS by saying: **The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.**¹¹⁶

Likewise, the Bible tells us of the return of JESUS, by declaring: **Behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.**¹¹⁷

And because the Apostles of our LORD knew JESUS occupied many more roles beyond just Lamb, Savior, and Redeemer, the Gospel they preached sounded like this: **“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”**¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Psalms 110:5-6

¹¹⁷ Isaiah 66:15-16

¹¹⁸ Acts 17:30-31

Chapter 4: The Law, Grace, and the Gospel

So far, we have discovered together how the fear of the LORD is good, it endures forever, and it causes us to hate evil and love good. So, JESUS promoted the fear of the LORD¹¹⁹, just as all of His servants the Apostles¹²⁰ and Prophets¹²¹ did.

We have learned that many Christians are not being taught that the fear of the LORD is good, so many famous people associated with the name of our LORD have demonstrated they did not fear the LORD through their evil actions¹²².

We have learned that we can focus our fear on the wrong things, which will cause us to lose sight of the fear of the LORD¹²³. And when fear is misplaced, instead of loving what GOD calls good and hating what GOD calls evil, people focus their fear on things that cannot lead to the eternal condemnation of their souls¹²⁴.

We have learned that salvation is a road and the fear of the LORD repels us away from evil¹²⁵, while the love of GOD draws us forward toward good¹²⁶. But when we forget the fear of the LORD, misplaced love will lead to an exit off of the road of salvation, and we will be right back on the evil mega-highway that leads to destruction¹²⁷ unless we repent.

We have learned that GOD's law functions like a guardrail along the road of salvation, helping us define the edges of the road by defining good and evil¹²⁸. And the fear of the LORD works like an "exit closed" sign to prevent us from taking an exit ramp towards sin.

But false prophets and false teachers dismantle the Divinely designed guardrails and "exit closed" signs, thereby leading people off the road

¹¹⁹ Luke 12:5

¹²⁰ Philippians 2:12

¹²¹ Isaiah 8:13

¹²² 2 Peter 2:1-2

¹²³ Luke 12:4

¹²⁴ Revelation 21:8 (cowardly = fearful)

¹²⁵ Proverbs 8:13

¹²⁶ John 14:21

¹²⁷ Matthew 7:13-14

¹²⁸ Nehemiah 9:13

of salvation. So we must avoid anyone who contradicts the fear of the LORD or GOD's standards of good and evil¹²⁹.

We have learned that the law is good¹³⁰, we should obey it in the fear of the LORD¹³¹, and it is instituted to protect every law-abiding citizen from those who would break the law¹³². Thus, the liberties all law-abiding citizens enjoy can only exist in a society with just laws and trustworthy law enforcement officials¹³³.

We have proven that any law enforcement officer who refuses to stop those who violate the law or treat all those they do stop impartially, is not a good law-enforcement officer. Likewise, we have proven that a judge who refuses to punish all those who violate the law impartially, is not a good judge.

But most importantly, we learned together that JESUS is the Lawgiver, the Judge, and the Lamb, and those three titles of our LORD do not contradict one another. However, people who *only* see JESUS as the Lamb and their Savior often abandon the fear of the LORD and obedience to His Commandments.

Thus, with all we have learned together established as a foundation, we are ready to build on that Biblical footing and see the truth about how the fear of the LORD requires us to remember that JESUS is the impartial Judge of all the earth, His standards of judgment are absolute, and His cross does not contradict those facts.

Please imagine someone pulled over by a police officer for speeding. But when questioned by the officer, they pointed out that they were looking for a speed limit sign to obey, but because they could not find that sign and they don't normally drive that road, they did not know what the speed limit was.

The officer has a choice to make. First of all, ignorance of the law is not an excuse, so he might present them with a ticket for speeding.

¹²⁹ 1 Timothy 6:3-5

¹³⁰ Romans 7:12

¹³¹ 2 Corinthians 7:1

¹³² Romans 13:1-6

¹³³ James 1:22-25

But, if the law allows for it, the officer might decide to present them with an official warning, and advise them to “Go and speed no more”¹³⁴.

Now imagine that the officer desired to be perfectly just, and for some reason, warnings were not permitted in his district. What if he issued the unintentional speeder a ticket, and personally paid the fines; would his actions undermine the speed limit laws he was sworn to uphold, or would they reinforce and support them?

Would an officer paying someone’s speeding fine erase the speed limit? Certainly not! Instead, it would show the driver that the officer deeply cared for them, but he had the highest respect for the law that demanded such a penalty. Therefore, this should cause the person who’s fine was paid to drive under the speed limit happily and consistently from then on.

What if we transfer this analogy to a judge? Imagine someone standing before a judge for a crime they committed in ignorance. Somehow, they broke a law they had never heard of, and the prescribed punishment was a month in jail.

If the judge decided to let that person go with a warning, and afterward went to serve the month in jail on their behalf so that the law was satisfied, would it abolish that law or reinforce it?

You see, only if the judge truly cared for the person who broke the law and simultaneously held the law in the highest regard, would they act in such a gracious way. And the lesson that the judge’s actions should teach the person who unintentionally violated the law is: how seriously they should avoid breaking the law ever again!

Friends, that is what the cross of JESUS declares! JESUS is the Ultimate Judge, but He stepped down from heaven’s throne to die for our sins so we would realize *two* very important things.

First, we must realize the amazing love He demonstrated by dying for us while we were yet sinners¹³⁵, a term that means we violated His perfect laws.

¹³⁴ c.f. John 8:11

¹³⁵ God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

And second, we must realize how seriously JESUS takes His Law to willingly take on the prescribed penalty for all those who will repent and come to Him as their Teacher and LORD!

This is why Paul wrote: **JESUS CHRIST gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**¹³⁶ The gracious police officer and the gracious judge, both showed grace in our analogies to teach the recipient of grace to obey the law, and this was the point of our LORD's ultimate sacrifice of grace! He wants us to do good, as defined in His law, and avoid evil.

So, all those who understand the Biblical gospel can see: **The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.**¹³⁷ But those who misunderstand the gospel of GOD's grace think that JESUS abolished the laws they broke, rather than the record of them breaking the law!

Would you pay a prescribed legal penalty for someone else if you thought you could just abolish the law that established the penalty? Certainly not! So, the death of our LORD on the cross proves that JESUS did not abolish the law!

For this reason, JESUS commanded: **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fill them to the full. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one dot will by no means pass from the law till all has come to pass. Whoever therefore loosens one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”**¹³⁸

Truly, JESUS did not abolish His law, and He forbids us to even think so! Instead, He simply replaced the Levitical system of cleansing that

¹³⁶ Titus 2:14

¹³⁷ Titus 2:11-12

¹³⁸ Matthew 5:17-19 (NKJV with literal translation adjustments)

He instituted before His death to usher in a new and better priesthood based on His ultimate sacrifice.

So, the book of Hebrews perfectly summarized what legal aspects JESUS did away with at His cross, explaining that the Levitical priesthood was **“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.”**¹³⁹

Hebrews explains the Levitical priesthood (with those fleshly ordinances) could not open the veil to the Holy of Holies. But JESUS succeeded in opening that veil when He became our High Priest. And that fact eliminated the fleshly aspects of the first covenant imposed when the veil was still shut, such as the laws concerning clean and unclean foods, the ritual washing of unclean items, and fleshly ordinances like physical circumcision.

Meanwhile, the New Covenant that features JESUS as High Priest is still based on the same Commandments, and no part of His law was abolished beyond those fleshly items. So Paul wrote: **Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.**¹⁴⁰

Yes, the amazing grace of GOD is not in any way opposed to His amazing Commandments or the fear of the LORD! And anyone who teaches otherwise is teaching a false gospel, they are not abiding in the doctrine of CHRIST, and Paul has placed a curse on them in the pages of the Bible!

Paul wrote: **I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so**

¹³⁹ Hebrews 9:10-11

¹⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:19

now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.¹⁴¹

Some people teach a false gospel by proclaiming that Christians must keep the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the Levitical Covenant, and Paul's curse applies to them.

But other people teach that JESUS did away with some or all of the Commandments of GOD, and the good moral standards they represent, and those who teach this heresy are also under Paul's curse.

But the ironic thing is, those who teach that second false doctrine do so because they misunderstand the letters of Paul, the Apostle who cursed them in one of his letters.

As a former pharisee who previously relied on the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the law for his righteousness, he knew how those things never made anyone righteous enough to enter the Holy of Holies. So, because Paul knew they represented the old covenant of Levitical works, he vehemently opposed them.

For this reason, when you read in any of Paul's letters an argument against what he called "the works of the law", you will see him mention circumcision or foods in the context of such passages¹⁴². But at the same time, Paul always promoted good works that agreed with the moral aspects of the law not related to Levitical cleansing.

As a few examples of many, we see that Paul wrote: **"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."**¹⁴³

Paul wrote: **"GOD will recompense each person according to his works, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are**

¹⁴¹ Galatians 1:6-9

¹⁴² Romans 2:25-29, Romans 3:30, Romans 4:9-16, 1 Corinthians 7:18-19, Galatians 2:3-21, Galatians 5:2-12, Galatians 6:11-15, Ephesians 2:11-22, Philippians 3:1-11, Colossians 2:11-15, Colossians 3:11, Colossians 4:11, Titus 1:10-11, Romans 14:14, Romans 14:16-18, 1 Timothy 4:4-6, Hebrews 9:10, Hebrews 13:9-10

¹⁴³ Titus 3:8

self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath.”¹⁴⁴

And, Paul testified that everywhere he went, he taught all of the people he met that: **“they must repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.”¹⁴⁵**

So, it is true that Paul taught against the works of the law such as circumcision and Levitical dietary restrictions, but Paul never taught against the Commandments of GOD or the fear of the LORD!

For this reason, we see Paul keeping Sabbath each week¹⁴⁶, observing the Feasts of the LORD and writing to the Churches about them¹⁴⁷, expelling blasphemers out of congregations¹⁴⁸, commanding churches to expel sexually immoral people¹⁴⁹, commanding us to put away lying¹⁵⁰ and stealing¹⁵¹, teaching that covetousness was idolatry, and much, much more¹⁵²!

Yes, Paul was reinforcing the Commandments and the fear of the LORD when he wrote: **Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.**¹⁵³

Likewise, Paul was emphasizing the Commandments and the fear of the LORD when he warned: **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders,**

¹⁴⁴ Romans 2:6-8

¹⁴⁵ Acts 26:20

¹⁴⁶ Acts 13:14, Acts 13:42-44, Acts 16:13, Acts 17:2, Acts 18:4, So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding part of a festival or a new moon or sabbaths. Colossians 2:16

¹⁴⁷ Acts 12:3, Acts 20:6, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Hebrews 11:28, Acts 20:16, 1 Corinthians 16:8

¹⁴⁸ 1 Timothy 1:20

¹⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:2-5

¹⁵⁰ Ephesians 4:25, Colossians 3:9

¹⁵¹ Ephesians 4:28

¹⁵² Romans 1:29, Romans 13:9, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Colossians 3:5, etc.

¹⁵³ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.¹⁵⁴

And we can be sure that Paul was teaching the fear of the LORD and the Commandments when he explained: **But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.¹⁵⁵**

But when people who don't know or understand the rest of the Bible, read Paul's letters and how he opposed certain works of the law like circumcision or Levitical regulations regarding foods, those without a solid Biblical foundation, twist Paul's words to their own destruction! But GOD knew this would occur, so He had His servant Peter leave us all a warning.

The very last words Peter wrote to the Church include this warning, as he wrote: **Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.¹⁵⁶**

Within the Bible's inspired pages, there is a warning that indicates: we should never base our entire understanding of GOD's law exclusively on Paul's letters. Because His writings contain some things that are hard for even Apostles like Peter to understand. Consequently,

¹⁵⁴ Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁵⁵ Ephesians 5:3-6

¹⁵⁶ 2 Peter 3:15b-18

untaught and unstable people twist Paul's letters **"to their own destruction"**.

And when Peter issued this warning, he cautioned us of a specific heresy to avoid, when he wrote about **"the error of the wicked"**.

The word Peter used was: **ath'-es-mos**, which (according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon) means: **"one who breaks through the restraint of law and gratifies his lusts"**.¹⁵⁷

Yes, nearly two-thousand years ago Peter warned that some untaught unstable people use Paul's writings to justify breaking through the restraint of the law to gratify their lusts!

So, we must always remember that Paul was a disciple of JESUS, and He would never contradict JESUS or His appointed Apostles! No, Paul agreed with JESUS and His Apostles about the eternal nature of the commandments of GOD and the fear of the LORD, and if someone thinks Paul was contradicting those principles or JESUS who taught them to us, they better study harder! Now, with that debate out of the way, let us move on to learn about a very important doctrine that the Scriptures teach, and that is the doctrine of worthiness.

John is clear about the worthiness of GOD, saying about the Father, the Son, and the HOLY SPIRIT: **"I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!' And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!' Then the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.**¹⁵⁸

Truly GOD is worthy to reign over all the universe because He created it, He is worthy of all the riches that exist because He created all things, He is worthy to receive glory from all of His creation because He

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g113/wlc/tr/0-1/>

¹⁵⁸ Revelation 5:11-14

sustains every creature, He is worthy to receive worship because He is holy and perfectly pure, and He is worthy of every other good thing, since all good comes from our heavenly King, and GOD is good in every facet of His glorious being!

But why should we fear our wonderful, awesome, exalted GOD? Well, the answer is a question of worthiness, because we don't always live up to His standards of good. Without the sacrifice of JESUS, no one is *worthy* to enter the kingdom of GOD, because all people have sinned, which is the breaking of GOD's commandments¹⁵⁹.

But GOD instituted a sacrificial system and a priesthood in the first covenant to teach us how to understand what JESUS did for us on the cross. He became our High Priest, our Sacrifice, and our Savior, so the sins of all who repent and turn to Him in obedient faith could be forgiven and worthiness could be restored by GOD's grace.

According to the righteous judgment of GOD, we were worthy of the punishment of death. But JESUS took that punishment upon Himself so we could have eternal life. And because He was a perfect, worthy, sinless Sacrifice, the grave could not hold Him!

Or put in terms of our traffic ticket analogy, our lawless driving made us unworthy to drive. But it is like JESUS deposited an infinite amount of money in a special account set apart to pay the fines of all those who agree with His traffic laws and ask Him to forgive them for speeding while teaching them how to obey the rules of the road going forward. So, by His gift, He can make drivers that are worthy of the road.

Or, put in terms of our judge analogy, our violations of the law made us worthy of imprisonment. But it is like JESUS spent an infinite number of years in prison to erase the sentence of all who repent of their violating His law, and ask Him to help them be good, law-abiding citizens. So, those who accept His offer can become worthy of His eternal kingdom!

But after we understand the relationship the cross of JESUS has to true justice and His commandments, and how JESUS can make sinners who are worthy of death, saints who are worthy of eternal life, we need to know that is not the end of the Gospel. No, after JESUS

¹⁵⁹ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23

purchased our freedom from sin's condemnation, He rose from the grave and returned to His glorious throne in Heaven!

Therefore, the gospel that the Apostles preached did not end with the death of JESUS! No, it always included the fact that the resurrection proved JESUS is worthy to judge the entire earth! Therefore, He will return to judge the world impartially based on each person's works¹⁶⁰, to measure if they are worthy of His kingdom or eternal punishment.

Peter explained that the LORD specifically commanded that the Gospel include JESUS as Judge. So, Peter declared: **“He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.”**¹⁶¹

JESUS commanded that His role as Judge be part of the Gospel so no one would think the Gospel contradicted the fear of the LORD. Therefore, the doctrine of the Fear of the LORD always sets our focus on JESUS as the ultimate Judge. And those who remember that He is the Judge, always seek to conduct themselves in a way that JESUS would consider *worthy* of His sacrifice.

If we stumble into sin, we must repent just as we did when we first came to JESUS, and His blood will cleanse us from all unrighteousness¹⁶². But every Christian must admit and understand there is a big difference between stumbling into something you don't want to do, and repeatedly doing what you hope to get away with!

Repentance means we don't want to sin anymore! We agree with JESUS that sin is evil, harmful, selfish, unloving, and destructive. And those who truly repent, agree with JESUS and His Apostles, that the law is good!¹⁶³

Those who *only* pray to JESUS to forgive them so they can avoid Hell, have not truly repented and agreed with His teachings that the Law is good, and they should keep it. And this is made evident by the fact

¹⁶⁰ Romans 2:5-8, Matthew 16:27, 2 Corinthians 11:15, Revelation 2:23, John 5:28-29

¹⁶¹ Acts 10:42

¹⁶² 1 John 1:9

¹⁶³ Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Romans 7:12

that they never live in the freedom from sin that JESUS purchased for them.¹⁶⁴

But those true Christians who find freedom from sin's slavery come to JESUS because they see that sin is wrong, hell is a just punishment for sin, and they don't want to sin anymore. Then JESUS will apply His blood to their sins, fill them with His HOLY SPIRIT, and teach them how to walk in the Way of Righteousness in a manner worthy of His sacrifice.¹⁶⁵

Truly, GOD's grace that makes it possible to have our sins forgiven by the blood of JESUS is an invitation to turn to GOD and live under His authority because we have recognized His rules are worthy of obedience, His ways are worthy of imitating, and the things we thought sin could offer us turned out to be unworthy deceptions that always end in death.

And those who fully understand what the Bible teaches about GOD's Law, His Grace, and the Gospel, can see how this next passage fits perfectly with all we have learned so far. JESUS commanded: **“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”**¹⁶⁶

The Greek verb JESUS used, which was translated here as **“counted worthy”** is **kat-ax-ee-o'-o**. But it does not mean **“counted worthy”** it means **“judged worthy”**. And the Greek word for **“worthy”** that the compound verb JESUS used is based on is **ax'-ee-os**, which means: **“having the weight of another thing”**.

So, when you read the term **“worthy”** in the Bible, think of a set of scales, as typically pictured with a book and a gavel as a representation of the justice system. The book represents the law, the scales represent an accurate evaluation of a person's actions when weighed against the law, and the gavel represents the judgment a just

¹⁶⁴ Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” John 8:34-36

¹⁶⁵ GOD condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4

¹⁶⁶ Luke 21:36

judge pronounces based on weighing the actions of those they are judging against the righteous requirements of the law.

For example, Paul used the adverb form of that term that refers to weighing two things on a scale when he wrote: **I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.**¹⁶⁷

And He used the same form when he wrote: **For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of GOD.**¹⁶⁸

Likewise, Paul used the adverb form of the Greek word for worthy which refers to weighing two items on a set of scales, as he wrote: **You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**¹⁶⁹

Meanwhile, JESUS used the adjective form of the word when He warned: **“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”**¹⁷⁰

All of these passages and more speak about worthiness, using the word **ax'-ee-os** as their root, so each of these passages is referring to how JESUS will judge us all impartially based on our works.

Ananias and Saphira lied to the HOLY SPIRIT and JESUS weighed their actions against His Law and judged that their sin was worthy of death. His judgment was instantly applied to those two believers in that particular case to show all of His Church what He declared once more in the Book of Revelation.

¹⁶⁷ Ephesians 4:1

¹⁶⁸ Colossians 1:9-10

¹⁶⁹ 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

¹⁷⁰ Matthew 10:37-38

He said to the church of Thyatira: **“I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”**¹⁷¹

JESUS wants us all to know that He will judge us by our works. If we have repented and received the remission of sins He offers through His cross, we can enter the narrow gate and begin our journey on the highway of salvation.

If we take an exit off of that blessed road, we can repent and return to the highway by the power of His blood.

However, if we keep on violating His Commandments when the day of judgment comes, He will weigh us against the eternal standards of His Law, and we will be found unworthy of His Kingdom.

That is the terms of the covenant, and without His grace, no one could ever be counted worthy! But His grace does not give us a license to sin, it instructs us to stop sinning, lest something terrible happen to us!

So, we see the harmony between the fear of the LORD, the doctrine of worthiness, GOD’s Law, GOD’s Grace, and the everlasting Gospel of our LORD when we read, in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible: **Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.**¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Revelation 2:21-23

¹⁷² Revelation 22:14-15

Chapter 5: FAQs and the Fear of the LORD

We have demonstrated that JESUS is the ultimate impartial judge and every person must answer to Him for every evil thought, word, and deed they did not repent of while asking GOD to forgive them and help them win the war against sin.¹⁷³ So, we can see now how the fear of the LORD fits together perfectly with the Gospel¹⁷⁴. And this means that we are ready to answer some frequently asked questions about the fear of GOD.

As we have already proven, if someone asks the question: ***“What is the fear of the LORD?”***, the Biblically minded person must respond: ***“the fear of the LORD is to hate evil”***¹⁷⁵, just as Proverbs 8:13 explains. Therefore, Proverbs 3:7 teaches: ***Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.***¹⁷⁶

And this next passage is clearly speaking of the fear of the LORD, when it explains: ***A wise man fears and departs from evil.***¹⁷⁷ Obviously, wise men have wisdom, and ***“the fear of the LORD is the origin of wisdom”***¹⁷⁸ according to a literal translation of Proverbs 9:10 So, we can add to our answer about the definition of the fear of the LORD, that it is a sign of true wisdom.

But we should also mention that, to truly understand the fear of the LORD that leads to the hatred of evil, we must understand what evil is, and for that knowledge, we should look first at Deuteronomy chapter 30. There, Moses explained: ***“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments.”***¹⁷⁹

So, to be wise and to learn the fear of the LORD, we need to understand the difference between good and evil. And to learn that difference, we must know the Commandments, Statues, and

¹⁷³ Revelation 2:23

¹⁷⁴ Revelation 14:6-7

¹⁷⁵ Proverbs 8:13

¹⁷⁶ Proverbs 3:7

¹⁷⁷ Proverbs 14:16a

¹⁷⁸ Proverbs 9:10

¹⁷⁹ Deuteronomy 30:15-16a

Judgments of GOD! That is why Scripture teaches: **Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments.**¹⁸⁰ and (as one translation phrases it) **When all has been heard, the conclusion is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.**¹⁸¹

Therefore, the Commandments of GOD define the boundary between good and evil, and all those who fear GOD obey His Commandments! Thus, the answer to the question: “***What does the fear of the LORD lead us to do?***” is: it leads us to keep GOD’s commandments!

So, the Bible recorded GOD’s purpose in the Fear of the LORD, when He exclaimed: “**Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!**”¹⁸²

Yes, GOD wants everyone to fear Him and keep His Commandments so they won’t have to face a just and impartial divine verdict of “**guilty**” which will sentence all unrepentant sinners to hell. But false teachers don’t connect the fear of the LORD to obedience to His Commandments, and they rob GOD’s people of the gift of the fear of the LORD.

One example of this can be seen at Gotquestions.org. In an article entitled ***What does it mean to have the fear of GOD***, they write: “***For the unbeliever, the fear of God is the fear of the judgment of God and eternal death, which is eternal separation from God. For the believer, the fear of God is something much different. The believer’s fear is reverence of God.***”¹⁸³

Because of the false teaching of “eternal security” which denies many Biblical doctrines, such as the fact that JESUS and His Apostles described salvation as a path or a road that we must continue on “until the end” to be saved¹⁸⁴, Gotquestions.org incorrectly teaches that *only* non-Christians should fear the LORD,

¹⁸⁰ Psalms 112:1

¹⁸¹ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NASB

¹⁸² Deuteronomy 5:29

¹⁸³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/fear-God.html>

¹⁸⁴ Colossians 1:22-23, Acts 14:21-22, Matthew 24:13, Revelation 2:10

but once they become Christians they can exchange that fear of GOD for reverence.

So, we must answer the question: “**Isn’t the fear of the LORD simply reverence for Him?**” with a resounding “**No!**”. The Greek word translated into English as “**reverence**” in the passage that website quoted is **ahee-doce'**. But the Greek word properly translated into English as “**fear**” in over a hundred other passages is **fob'-os**. Meanwhile, the Bible applies *both* of these words to the every Christian, and they have different meanings!

The word **ahee-doce'** is only found in Hebrews 12:28, and 1 Timothy 2:9, and in both passages the word should be properly translated as “**modesty**”. And we see this modesty demonstrated by Moses when GOD spoke to him from the burning bush because the text records: “**Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.**”¹⁸⁵

A healthy fear of the LORD led Moses to demonstrate modesty in GOD’s presence, and that modesty was manifested by hiding his face, just as the angels in heaven hide their faces and their feet around the throne of GOD¹⁸⁶! Thus, the term “**reverence**” in the passage Gotquestions.org referred to, is speaking of a physical manifestation of modesty in the presence of GOD, such as hiding one’s face or bowing to the ground.

Meanwhile, we should note that “**bowing the face to the ground**” is what the Greek term most commonly translated as “**worship**” actually means¹⁸⁷. And even the elders who sit on 24 thrones in the presence of GOD still worship the LORD in that way!

In the book of Revelation, John describes: **And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped GOD.**¹⁸⁸ Therefore, “**reverence**” is an outward expression of modesty and humility in the presence of GOD, but the fear of the LORD is an internal state of mind that exists in all those who realize GOD will judge us all impartially based on our works!

Such fear came upon all of the Church, in Acts chapter 5, where it is written: **Peter said to [Saphira], “How is it that you have agreed**

¹⁸⁵ Exodus 3:6

¹⁸⁶ Isaiah 6:2

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4352/kjv/tr/0-1/>

¹⁸⁸ Revelation 11:16

together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband [Ananias] are at the door, and they will carry you out.” Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.¹⁸⁹

GOD used Ananias and Saphira as an object lesson to the entire Church that the wages of sin don't change when we believe in JESUS! No, the wages of sin are always death, but JESUS paid the price for us to turn from sin and find freedom from it in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

For this reason, great fear (or fob'-os) came upon all the church, and Peter later wrote to the churches: **If you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.¹⁹⁰**

Peter, Paul, and the rest of the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD all disagree with Gotquestions.org! They did not *suggest* that Christians should continue living in the fear of the LORD; instead, they *commanded* it!

So, in a world full of false teachers, we can be very thankful that many honest and trustworthy teachers still exist within the pages of the Bible; inspired teachers filled with the HOLY SPIRIT who GOD Himself approved and counted worthy of inclusion in His Word.

And one of those inspired teachers answered the question: **“Should Christians fear the LORD”, by writing: Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.¹⁹¹**

By using the term **“beloved”** we see Paul was writing to Christians, in the letter he addressed **“To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia”¹⁹²**

¹⁸⁹ Acts 5:9-11

¹⁹⁰ 1 Peter 1:17

¹⁹¹ 2 Corinthians 7:1

¹⁹² 2 Corinthians 1:1

And by using the personally inclusive term “**us**”, Paul included himself in the group he advised to “**perfect holiness in the fear of GOD**”.

Likewise, in another letter, Paul wrote: **Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**¹⁹³

Once again, this admonition was written in a letter Paul addressed “**To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons**”¹⁹⁴, so it was undeniably written to Christians!

And, once again Paul used the term “**beloved**” in the passage, revealing that they were most certainly Christians, who Paul called “**brethren**”¹⁹⁵ as well as people whose “**citizenship was in heaven**”¹⁹⁶

There can be no debating it, these passages were written to believing Christians in the churches of Corinth and Philippi, and they demonstrate that Gotquestions.org and many others who teach similar heresies to the one we read earlier have twisted the Scriptures in dangerous ways! So, you should be very careful with such false teaching.

Now we can consider the question: “**Why do we have to fear the LORD if He is so good?**”. And the answer is found in the passage we read a moment ago, where Peter warned: **If you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.**

Because GOD is so good, so pure, and so holy, He is perfectly just, and all of His judgments will be impartial, they will be based on our works, and they are final. There is no court we can appeal GOD’s decision in! No judge or panel of judges can overrule a sentence from GOD’s throne.

¹⁹³ Philippians 2:12

¹⁹⁴ Philippians 1:1

¹⁹⁵ Philippians 3:17, Philippians 4:1

¹⁹⁶ Philippians 3:20

Therefore, because Scripture warns: **“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”**¹⁹⁷, we must remember that all of our words and actions are recorded in heaven, and the blood of JESUS will only erase the sins we intentionally repent of. So, we must learn the difference between good and evil, we must repent of our evil deeds, and we must practice righteousness in the fear of the LORD to obey Peter’s admonition.

That is how the priesthood of the First Covenant worked, and that is how the priesthood of the New Covenant works! The Levitical priests were given certain ceremonies to perform to cleanse those who sinned unintentionally and repented. But JESUS replaced the sacrifices, ceremonies, and fleshly ordinances with the blood of his cross, and He will cleanse all those who repent and submit to Him as LORD.

So, JESUS taught **“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”**¹⁹⁸

Heaven doesn’t rejoice when sinners **“believe”** or **“walk an aisle”**, heaven rejoices when sinners **“repent”**! All of heaven knows that sinners must repent, or turn from their sin, to become part of GOD’s family. They know that sin will be judged impartially by GOD, and repentance leads us away from sin, so repentance leads us away from judgment!

So, the perfect justice of GOD leads us to fear the LORD, hate evil, and practice righteousness. And that is why we must never abandon the fear of the LORD! He graciously made a way of forgiveness, so that sinners could be cleansed from their sins if they repent, but if they turn back to their disobedient ways, they will face eternal judgment.

So Paul asked: **Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one**

¹⁹⁷ Hebrews 9:27

¹⁹⁸ Luke 15:7

according to his works: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath.¹⁹⁹

Truly, the perfect goodness of GOD is the basis of the fear of the LORD, and it is in no way opposed to it. Instead, the fear of the LORD leads us to repent and follow JESUS before we face the Judge who knows all things!

Amazingly, even with all we have learned so far, someone might still ask: ***“Why do we have to fear GOD if we believe in JESUS? And if you face this question you can ask the person who asked it: **“have you not read”²⁰⁰ that **“even the demons believe and tremble?”*******

Yes, James warned: **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?²⁰¹**

You see faith was a requirement because if Abraham did not believe that GOD had spoken to Him, He would not have obeyed. But the ultimate proof of faith is the works that those who believe *do* because of their faith, as they obey the Word of GOD!

Could someone believe in the high priest of the Levitical covenant, but still disobey the law he was sworn to uphold? Yes, no one doubted that the high priest existed, some just chose not to obey the laws GOD had given Israel.

Well, many believe in JESUS, the High Priest of the New Covenant, but they don't obey Him. So, JESUS warned: **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders**

¹⁹⁹ Romans 2:4-8

²⁰⁰ Matthew 12:3, 12:5, 19:4, 22:31 and Mark 12:26

²⁰¹ James 2:19-22

in Your name?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’²⁰²

JESUS did not say “depart from me you who practice *unbelief*”. No, “*lawlessness*” was the problem that led to judgment! The people in the passage had faith, but they did not obey the Commandments that JESUS reinforced in teachings like the Sermon on the Mount! So, first, we must believe the Word, then we must obey it. And our actions will prove if we believed!

For this reason, JESUS also explained: “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”²⁰³

First, we must hear the Word of the LORD and receive it in faith, but then we must act on it to build our house upon the Rock! So, without faith, no one can please GOD, but faith is not what JESUS will be investigating on the Day of Judgement. No, He will be looking to see if we put His word into practice!

Therefore, JESUS the ultimate Judge warned: “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice “and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”²⁰⁴

And JESUS also taught His disciples: “I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”²⁰⁵

²⁰² Matthew 7:21-23

²⁰³ Luke 6:46-49

²⁰⁴ John 5:28-29

²⁰⁵ Luke 12:4-5

So, if someone claims “**those who believe in JESUS don’t have to fear the LORD or the coming Judgement**”, we must ask ourselves: Am I going to believe JESUS who commanded His disciples to fear GOD and obey His commandments, or am I going to believe those who contradict JESUS like Gotquestions.org?

Now, with the interdependent relationship between faith and works explained, we can answer the question: “**How can we fear the LORD if we can't see him?**”

How many of us believe that Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates existed? What causes us to believe that these people existed in history? If you answered: eyewitness testimony and certain documents attributed to them you would be correct.

So, if you added up all the individuals who personally met those historical men in their lifetime, you may get a maximum count of perhaps no more than one hundred thousand people.

But there were at least six hundred thousand men who heard GOD speak at Mount Sinai²⁰⁶, and that number at least doubles when we count women and children. So a conservative estimate would say that at least 1.5 million people heard GOD speak the Ten Commandments that became the foundation of their nation.

Now, can you find a nation anywhere on earth that is exclusively based on the words of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, or Socrates? No, such a nation does not exist.

But Israel does exist! And every Sabbath the children of Israel demonstrate the impact GOD had on their people when He told 1.5 million of their ancestors not to work on the seventh day. Yes, all who rest on the seventh day because the Creator completed His living masterpiece in six days and rested on the seventh day demonstrate that GOD exists, He created us, and the whole world should believe in Him!

You see, Israel’s meeting with GOD at Sinai had a major impact on the world, just as the MESSIAH’s miracles, doctrine, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension did.

²⁰⁶ Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. Exodus 12:37-38

More writers have written about or on behalf of JESUS than have ever written about or on behalf of Plato, Aristotle, or Socrates. And when we evaluate the evidence honestly, it makes more sense to believe in GOD than any other historical figure!

Archaeology testifies to the Exodus, the Red Sea crossing, Mount Sinai, the conquest of Canaan, the fall of Jericho, the Tabernacle site at Shiloh, the kingdoms of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and countless other facts of Biblical history.

Prophetic fulfillments such as world wars, famines, and global pestilences prove GOD exists and the Bible's prophecies are 100% accurate.

The expansion of space that the Bible explained long before scientists discovered it proves the Bible's divine origin. GOD's Biblical comparison of the stars to the sand of the seashore could not be confirmed until telescopes like the Hubble spacecraft stunned scientists at the vastness of the universe.

The more the evidence pours in, the more it becomes clear: it takes more faith to dismiss the Bible than it does to accept it as the Word of GOD! And the Bible teaches us to fear the LORD, so because of the evidence that our faith is firmly founded upon, we choose the fear of the LORD!

But someone will ask: “***Do we have to fear the LORD in the New Covenant?***”, to which we can reply “Have you not read that in the New Covenant, we are taught to fear the LORD at least 37 times?”²⁰⁷

JESUS commands us to fear Him because He has the power to cast both body and soul into hell.²⁰⁸

Five times in Acts Luke describes the Church walking in the fear of the LORD as normal and healthy.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Matt 10:28, Matt 27:54, Mark 4:41, Mark 5:33, Luke 1:50, Luke 5:26, Luke 7:16, Luke 9:34, Luke 12:4-5, Luke 23:40, Acts 2:43, Acts 5:5, Acts 5:11, Acts 9:31, Acts 10:2, Acts 10:22, Acts 10:35, Acts 13:16, Acts 13:26, Acts 19:17, Rom 3:18, Rom 11:20, 2Cor 5:11, 2Cor 7:1, Eph 5:21, Phil 2:12, Col 3:22, 1Tim 5:20, Heb 4:1, Heb 10:31, Heb 12:21, 1Pet 1:17, 1Pet 2:17, Rev 11:13, Rev 11:18, Rev 15:4, Rev 19:5

²⁰⁸ Luke 12:4-5

²⁰⁹ Acts 2:43, Acts 5:5, Acts 5:11, Acts 9:31, Acts 19:17

Peter declared: **“In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”**²¹⁰

At least six separate times, Paul commanded the New Covenant saints he was writing to fear the LORD.²¹¹

Twice in his epistles, Peter commanded the New Covenant Christian audiences he wrote to fear the LORD.²¹²

And the fear of the LORD is explicitly named and encouraged four times in the book of Revelation, the final epistle of the New Covenant Scriptures.²¹³

So, the fear of the LORD is a New Covenant doctrine, and anyone who contradicts that fact is arguing with JESUS and His Apostles!

Still, someone might ask: **“What about the passage in John that says perfect love casts out all fear?”** And to answer that question, we will have to read the passage in context and consider some important Biblical facts.

In context, John wrote: **God is love, and he that abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this love has been perfected with us: that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because just as He is, we also are in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment. But he that fears has not been made perfect in love.**²¹⁴

Please consider the phrase: **“we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because just as He is, we also are in this world”**. Who is the pronoun “He” referring to? Based on all that John ever wrote, and the teachings of JESUS and the rest of His Apostles, I think we can safely say that JESUS is who we are to emulate in this world.

²¹⁰ Acts 10:34-35

²¹¹ Rom 11:20, 2Cor 5:11, 2Cor 7:1, Eph 5:21, Phil 2:12, Col 3:22

²¹² 1Pet 1:17, 1Pet 2:17

²¹³ Rev 11:18, Rev 14:7, Rev 15:4, Rev 19:5

²¹⁴ 1 John 4:16b-18 CAB

So, John's point was that if we walk just as JESUS walked, we can have confidence on the day of judgment. But does anyone **perfectly** walk just as JESUS walked?

After all, John did not say "*love casts out all fear*", he said "**perfect love casts out all fear**", and "**he who fears has not yet been made perfect in love**".

The verb John used twice in the passage that was translated as "**perfected**" and "**been made perfect**" is "**tel-i-o'-o**", which is Strong's concordance number G5048. And it means: "**to make perfect, or complete**".

But this same verb was used in the context of the fear of the LORD and following JESUS in the book of Hebrews, which was written many years before John's letter.

There it is written: **In the days of His flesh, when [JESUS] had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, He was heard because of His godly fear. Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.**²¹⁵

This passage is speaking of JESUS our LORD demonstrating "**godly fear**" in the garden of Gethsemane. It is speaking of JESUS learning obedience by the things that He suffered. And it is speaking of the LORD's being perfected as a reference to Him rising from the dead.

Hebrews teaches that JESUS demonstrated "godly fear", especially in the garden, about which Matthew described: **He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."**²¹⁶ And if JESUS demonstrated "godly fear" so should all who follow Him!

Hebrews explains that JESUS "**learned obedience by the things that He suffered**" because true obedience must endure trials and testing just as JESUS endured trials and testing.

²¹⁵ Hebrews 5:7-9

²¹⁶ Matthew 26:39

But JESUS was perfect throughout His entire life, so how could He be perfected? Well, perfection comes at the resurrection, when we become like our resurrected MESSIAH, perfected in body, soul, and spirit!

The more we become like our perfect Savior, the more confidence we can have in the day of judgment, but even Paul had to write that he was: **...being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**²¹⁷

Perfection and the resurrection go hand and hand, so in the same letter we have been considering, John wrote: **Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**²¹⁸

And we can point all of these Biblical facts out to anyone who tries to use John's words about "**perfect love casting out all fear**" to dismiss the fear of the LORD we are commanded to maintain.

So, now that we have dealt with all the reasons people wrongly reject the fear of the LORD, we can ask: "**Why do so many people forget to fear the LORD?**"

One major reason is that people get so wrapped up in the tasks and challenges of each day that they lose sight of the proper, eternal perspective of life. Like sojourners and pilgrims on a long journey, we must never take our eyes off the destination we are pursuing!

To help with this, Paul wrote: **If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**²¹⁹

Heaven should be our primary goal, GOD should be our primary love, and His commandments should be incorporated into our daily

²¹⁷ Philippians 3:7-12

²¹⁸ 1 John 3:2

²¹⁹ Colossians 3:1-4

lives and routines. And we should eat, drink, drive, speak, listen, and do every other thing we do for the glory of GOD!²²⁰

GOD also gives us ways to visually remind ourselves to fear Him, such as the tassels described in Numbers chapter 15. It is written: **The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.”**²²¹

These tassels were worn by Ezekiel, JESUS, and every other faithful descendant of the Israelites since the time of Moses! And JESUS expected His followers to be wearing them, but He taught us not to enlarge them like the Pharisees!

He said: **“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat, therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do. But do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the tassels of their garments.”**²²² So, tassels are for us as *reminders*, not for others!

Likewise, GOD gave us visual and verbal reminders to help us remember to fear Him when He said: **“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you**

²²⁰ Colossians 3:1-4

²²¹ Numbers 15:37-40

²²² Matthew 23:2-5

shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”²²³

Parents are the primary educators of their Children, followed by Grandparents! And the curriculum GOD commands revolves around His Holy Commandments! So, those who love the LORD and fear Him always teach their children His commands diligently, and all of us should write His commandments on the doorposts of our homes, as well as on our gates.

These are constant reminders to love the LORD by keeping His commandments as we walk in the Fear of the LORD by hating evil! Meanwhile, all of these visual reminders point to a larger problem that leads people to forget the fear of the LORD, and that is an issue with the *culture* of this modern, evil age.

Imagine growing up in a town where every neighbor taught their children GOD’s Commandments when they sat in their house, when they walked down the street, when they lay down to sleep, and when they rose in the morning.

Then imagine every person in your town wrote the Commandments of the LORD on their homes and gates and lived for the pleasure of GOD every moment of their lives in love for GOD and the fear of the LORD. If that town does not appeal to you, you will *really* hate heaven!

But if you see why that town would be such a wonderful place to live, you can see what GOD was picturing when He gave the world those Commandments!

But we now live in an evil, anti-christian age, among many people who hate GOD’s laws, they hate GOD’s authority, and they walk in rebellion and lawlessness. That is why you have to lock your car and the doors of your home. Also, that is why there is so much animosity and distrust in and towards Washington D.C.

Meanwhile, the lawlessness of the culture we live in makes it much easier to forget the fear of the LORD each day. And while that is no excuse, it should compel us to establish a very different culture in our homes, churches, and communities by sharing the true gospel!

²²³ Deuteronomy 11:18-20

Rebellion against the Commandments 1.5 million Israelites heard at the foot of Mount Sinai is the source of every problem ever known to man! And you and I have a chance to redeem the time, to teach others to repent, call on JESUS, and love GOD by keeping His Commandments while they fear His righteous judgment. But that job starts at home!

We have to take the Words of GOD to heart, put them into practice, trust that GOD's way is the best way to teach our children, and we need to focus our families on obeying the Commandments as we follow JESUS CHRIST!

And this brings us to our final question to answer, which is: ***“How does the fear of the LORD apply to Bible prophecy?”***

Although prophecy is technically defined as “any message of a divine origin”²²⁴, in most people's minds the term “prophecy” has come to mean “a divine declaration of events that will take place in the future”.

With that second definition applied to our question, we can begin by noting, the best way to learn how to respond to the last book of the Bible is to look at the first two. In other words, if we want to know how to react to the book of Revelation, we need to look to the books of Genesis and Exodus.

In Exodus, GOD sent Moses to deliver a prophecy to the Pharaoh of Egypt. And the message Moses delivered from GOD said: **“Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die.”**²²⁵

Then the Bible records: **He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.**²²⁶

²²⁴ <https://biblehub.com/greek/4394.htm>

²²⁵ Exodus 9:18-19

²²⁶ Exodus 9:20-21

Very commonly messages from GOD about the future are warnings, and those who fear GOD prepare for what has been declared. But those who don't fear GOD or take heed to His Word do not prepare, and they suffer the consequences.

So, Exodus records: **Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.**²²⁷

Friends, the prophecy of the first trumpet in Revelation warns of this same judgment on a global scale! So, the Bible states: **The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.**²²⁸

What if Noah had not prepared an Ark when he learned of the global flood that approached?²²⁹ GOD used Noah's preparations to preserve Noah's three sons who became the fathers of every nation on the earth.

What if Joseph had not prepared by storing up grain when he learned of Pharaoh's prophetic dream declaring famine was coming?²³⁰ GOD used the preparations of Joseph to preserve the children of Israel, including Judah, the father of the tribe our LORD descended from in the flesh.

Yes, the front of the Bible teaches those who fear the LORD how to prepare for the end of the Bible! Truly: **The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. On that day the heavens will pass**

²²⁷ Exodus 9:22-25

²²⁸ Revelation 8:7

²²⁹ Hebrews 11:7

²³⁰ Genesis 41:47-49

away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of GOD? Because on that day, the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat!²³¹

²³¹ 2 Peter 3:10-12