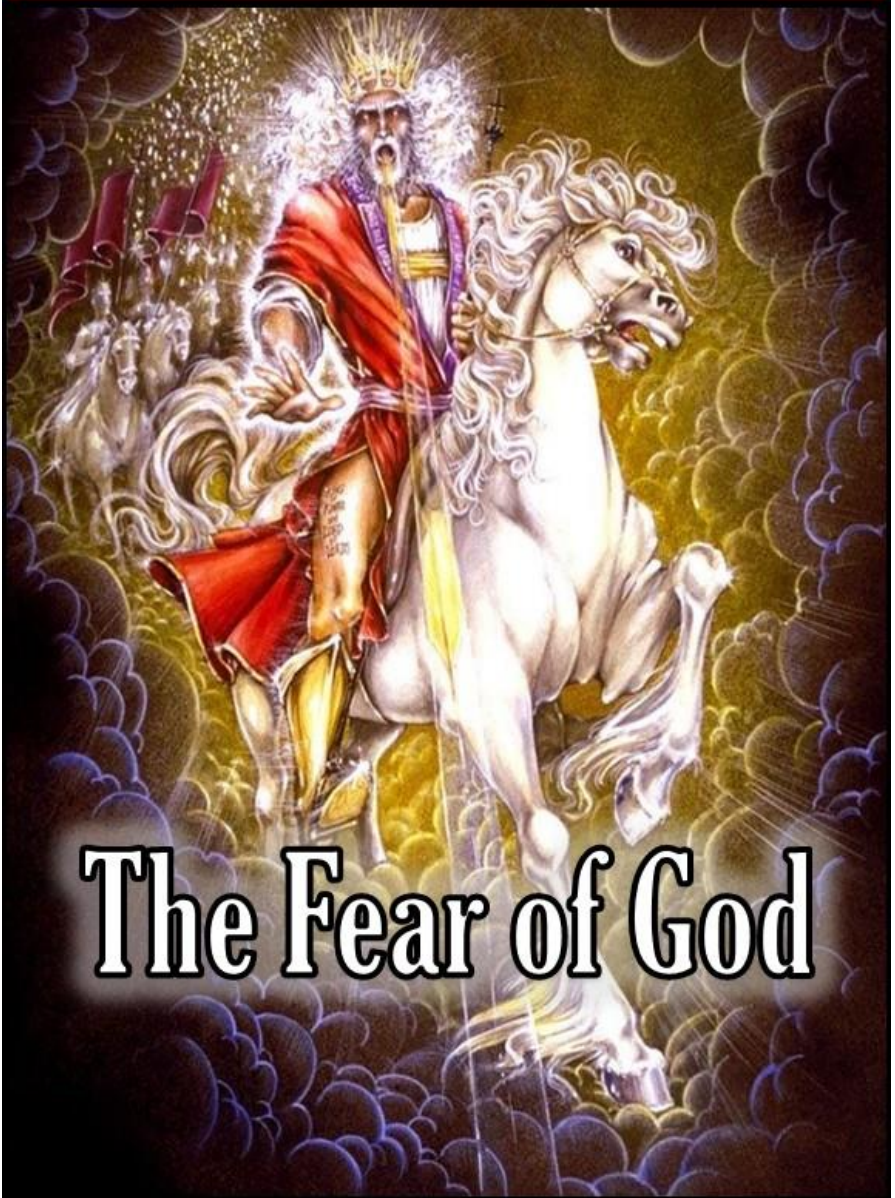


Tool Box Series



The Fear of God

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The Fear of God

This is the Beginning

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and is also the beginning point on our journey to know God. As we approach God, we must first understand that He is Almighty, supremely Holy, and will not tolerate sin, and we are the polar opposite. He desires to have fellowship with us, but our sin is an obstacle that separates us from him. The more we understand the distance between his infinite holiness and our utter sinfulness, the more we will grow in our fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

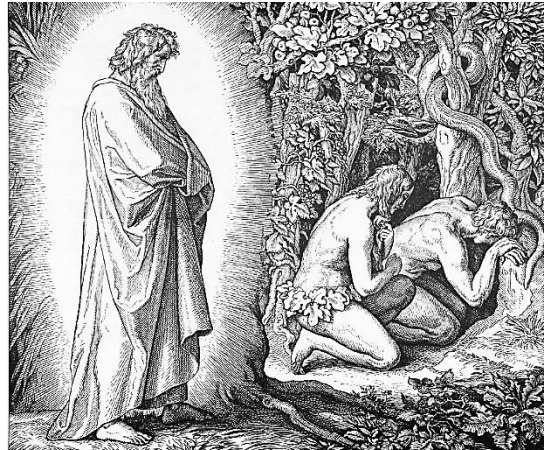
*Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, **what is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?***

The fear of God exists from eternity, past, present, and future. At a time in the future, called the great tribulation, the worst time of human history, an angel will preach the everlasting gospel to everyone on earth. So, what is this eternally important message delivered supernaturally by an angelic being to a world convulsing in agony and marching toward the mass extinction of sinners? Fear God!

Revelation 14:6-7 *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."*

Adam

In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had one simple rule: Don't eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Naturally, they broke the rule,



so suddenly, they realized they were completely naked and ran and hid from God. So why did they hide? Their new consciousness of good and evil told them that they had sinned, and the realization of their sin and nakedness struck them with fear, and they tried to hide from God.

Our conscience subliminally knows there will be a judgment against wrongs committed, which will drive us in one of two directions. We either run to God for forgiveness and mercy, or we run and try to hide or cover up our misdeeds. In either case, the fear of God produces our response.

Genesis 3:6-10 ... *She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So, he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."*

Isaiah

Isaiah was a fiery prophet who prophesied and pronounced judgment and doom against entire nations. But one day, he was caught up in a vision to see the throne of God filled with glory and with myriads of heavenly beings who thundered Holy, Holy, Holy with a voice that shook the place. Then Isaiah was struck by the fear of God as he realized that he was a sinner in the presence of an infinitely holy God.

Isaiah 6:5 *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."*

Hebrews 10:30-31 ... *The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

The closer we draw to God, the more we become aware of our sins. The natural reaction to being brought into God's holy presence is to be overwhelmed by our unworthiness contrasted to His holiness. Reverence, respect, and fear of God lead us to live right and avoid evil.

Psalms 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, ... yea, what FEAR, yea, ... In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

Noah

When God told Noah to build a boat, it had never rained before. The ark was a massive project, and he did not have

a Home Depot or electric tools. Starting from scratch with raw materials using primitive hand tools, they chopped down trees, sawed them into boards, then constructed and waterproofed a ship with three levels and 450 feet long.

It is hard to imagine how hard Noah worked decade after decade, but he knew a flood was coming. His faith in God and the prophetic word he received caused him to move with fear to build the ark to save his family.



Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**

When God gives prophetic warnings of events or coming judgment, the fear of God should motivate his people to take action. Bible prophecy tells us that Jesus will return, and he will snatch the church up to meet him in the air. But someone might say that has never happened before. That's true, but it had never rained before Noah built the ark. The rapture will happen, and believers with the fear of God will be watching and ready for it! And those who miss the rapture escape boat will go through the great tribulation instead of a flood.

Titus 2:11-13 For 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, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**

2 Peter 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass 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 of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?**

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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.**

Job

Job is known for his patience and endurance during a time of severe testing. But how did his afflictions begin? In a rare glimpse of a conversation between God and Satan, we see that Job was the topic. God was boasting about how Job feared God and was blameless, upright, and avoided evil.

Satan questioned the sincerity of Job because he had great wealth, a great family, and was so blessed. So, God permitted Satan to put him through an onslaught of painful events losing his children and possessions. God will test our sincerity by allowing circumstances that reveal our true character, whether we fear God or not. You know a Christian not by how they act but by how they react.

***Job 1:7-11** And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So, Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, **a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?**" So, Satan answered the LORD and said, "**Does Job fear God for nothing?** "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. "But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"*

Job had lost everything, but he still maintained his integrity, so he passed the first series of tests. And again, God boasted to Satan about how Job kept his integrity. Then Satan replied that Job would curse God if he suffered pain in his body. Then God permitted Satan to attack Job physically by covering his body with painful running sores.

*Job 2:3-5 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a **blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?** And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." So, Satan answered the LORD and said, "**Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.** "But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"*



These severe tests stripped Job of his wealth and his children and left him with excruciating pain in his body. Yet he would not curse God, compromise his integrity, or lose his fear of God. Job endured and passed every test. And in the end, Job had a better understanding of God and greater wisdom. God also restored his health and blessed him with double the number of children and the wealth he previously had.

Job 23:8-10 "Look, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him. But He

*knows the way that I take; **When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.***

The apostle Peter was also familiar with being tested by fire, and he could testify that suffering refines us and produces a genuine faith that is more precious than gold.

***1 Peter 1:6-7** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Job compared searching for wisdom with searching for gold or jewels. Men will dig deep into the heart of the earth, building mine shafts and sifting through tons of dirt to find something precious. Those who mine for wisdom are solitary and hidden from the view of other humans, animals, and birds. Their work and experiences are in secret places, known only to themselves and the Lord.

***Proverbs 25:2** It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*

***Psalm 25:14** The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.*

From the bottom of a mine, Job comes to the surface to reveal the precious jewels that he discovered. What was the discovery? He found that the fear of the Lord is wisdom!

Job 28:1-28 *"There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from ore. Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness. Far from where people dwell he cuts a shaft, in places forgotten by the foot of man; far from men he dangles and sways. The earth, from which food comes, is transformed below as by fire; sapphires come from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold. No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon's eye has seen it. Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there. Man's hand assaults the flinty rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains. He tunnels through the rock; his eyes see all its treasures. He searches the sources of the rivers and brings hidden things to light. **"But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.'** It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed in silver. It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or*



*sapphires. Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold. Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies. The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold. "Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air. Destruction and Death say, 'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.' **God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells**, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, **then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'**"*

Solomon said we should search for wisdom the same way people search for hidden treasures. In other words, we should be highly motivated, enthusiastic, creative, and work hard to gain godly wisdom.

Proverbs 2:1-5 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden

treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

Isaiah 33:6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation; The fear of the LORD is His treasure.

In 1848, a miner struck gold in California and started a gold rush. By the year 1849, over 300,000 people from all over the world traveled there with dreams of riches. These 49'ers were willing to forsake their home, family, friends and relocate thousands of miles away. They worked tirelessly for hours without end, day after day, enduring primitive living conditions with privations, and many lost everything. If people do this for material riches that won't last, how much more should we sacrifice for heavenly treasures that last forever?

If we were paid ten thousand dollars per hour to read the Bible and pray, would that suddenly change how much time we spend in Bible reading and prayer? What are we willing to do to find God's hidden treasures? If we find that treasure, we will find the fear of the Lord and wisdom.

Matthew 13:44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

1 Corinthians 2:6-7 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming

to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

*Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD
Are riches and honor and life.*

*Proverbs 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the
LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.*

Abraham

When Abraham was seventy-five years old, God promised him a child. Abraham waited twenty-five years for the son to be born, and he raised him for about twenty years. So, after investing forty-five years and placing all his hopes and dreams on this son, God asked Abraham to give him as a sacrifice on the altar. The elderly Abraham immediately proceeded to obey, but God stopped him as he raised the knife above his son.



Abraham had proven his unquestioning obedience because of his faith in God. Abraham believed that if God required the death of his son, then God would raise him from the dead. He walked with God for 45 years, yet it took the most extreme test of obedience to prove that Abraham feared God.

Genesis 22:10-13 *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" so he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; **for now, I know that you fear God**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So, Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*

Hebrews 11:17-19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," **concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead**, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

Moses

When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he brought them to Mount Sinai, where he received the ten commandments. God came down on the mountain in thick clouds, thunders, and a loud trumpet. The sight was so terrifying that the people begged not to speak to God and asked Moses to talk to him. Moses himself was terrified. God was testing them so that the fear of God would keep them from sinning.

Exodus 19:16 *Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thundering's and*

*lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that **all the people who were in the camp trembled.***

Exodus 20:18-20** Now all the people witnessed the thundering's, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and **when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.** Then they said to Moses, "**You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**" And Moses said to the people, "**Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.

Moses had a terrifying mountain-shaking experience in the Sinai, but at the second coming of Christ, it will not just be the earth that shakes, but God will shake heaven and earth and everything that shakes. We are approaching a time that Jesus said would be the most terrifying in all human history, so what kind of people should we be? We should serve God with reverence and godly fear!



***Hebrews 12:21-29** And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "**I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.**" But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to*

an innumerable company of angels... For if 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.

David

Beginning from the moment David received the anointing to be the next king of Israel, his life completely changed. First, he defeated Goliath, and then king Saul became insanely jealous and repeatedly tried to kill him. Finally, David decided that he would be safer living with his enemies than living in Israel while Saul relentlessly tried to kill him. So, David went to the Philistine city of Gath and asked king Achish for refuge. That move was either unbelievably brave or extremely crazy because Gath was Goliath's hometown (1 Samuel 17:4, 23).

So, while David was asking for refuge from the Philistine king, the Philistine army officers reminded the king that David had killed Goliath and that Israel sang songs about how David had killed tens of thousands of the Philistines.

The situation was unbelievably stressful and perplexing, and David had to do something.

So here was David's wise master plan for the situation, pretend to be insane! And by God's mercy, it worked! The king allowed him to live there (1 Samuel 21:10-15). It seems like David was dumb like a fox, again. After that incident, David wrote the following song.

Psalm 34:1-11 *I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you, His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

David said because he feared the Lord, the angel of the Lord protected him. David wanted to share what he learned from this experience with others, saying, “I will teach you the fear

of the Lord.” Experience gives wisdom, and wisdom teaches the fear of the Lord.

Eventually, Saul died then David became king. Once David was established in his kingdom, he decided to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. David made this a big celebration, with huge crowds. It was a joyful procession with music and dancing. But suddenly, disaster struck when Uzza put his hand on the ark and fell dead. Immediately the music stopped, the crowd went home, and they moved the ark to a different location, and David was afraid of God that day.



1 Chronicles 13:8-12 Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God ... **David was afraid of God that day**, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?"

Only Levites from the priestly tribe were allowed to move the ark, and they were supposed to carry it on their shoulders. Uzza was not a priest, and the ox cart idea came from the Philistines. They were doing the right thing with good intentions but in the wrong way.

We may think that being busy with all kinds of church activities, surrounded by a crowd of sincere people, we are serving God. But doing our own thing, even good things, with good intentions, if it is outside the boundaries of God's will and His word, we may bring judgment against ourselves. It is frightening to think about standing before Jesus at the judgment, anticipating a reward for service, only to hear Him say, I never knew you depart from me.

Matthew 7:21-23 "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 in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

King David had become complacent towards the Law, and this incident with Uzzah shocked him into reality. The fear of God came upon David, so he organized the priesthood and the order of worship for the Temple in compliance with the Law given by Moses. David's instructions became the standard that Israel followed for hundreds of years. David wrote the following songs to be used to worship God.

*Psalm 5:7-8 But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; **In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.** Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.*

*Psalm 2:11 **Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.***

*Psalm 96:8-9 Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. **Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.***

David had another experience that put the fear of God in his heart. He took a census of the military-age men, which greatly displeased God. As a result, the Lord sent a plague that killed seventy thousand people. When David and the elders saw the angel of the Lord standing over Jerusalem with a drawn sword in his hand, they immediately fell on their faces.

1 Chronicles 21:16** Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. **So, David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces.

After David escaped the Philistines, he declared that the Angel of the Lord protects those who fear him. When David sinned, he was in fear of the Angel's drawn sword. The sword has two edges, one for our enemies and one for us.

There is no partiality, no favoritism, no exemptions with God, even if you are king David.

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Solomon -What Wisdom?

The premise for this whole study comes from Solomon's proverb stating that the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We must be careful to identify which type of wisdom we are referring to, there is God's wisdom, and there is ungodly, worldly, and demonic wisdom. God's wisdom is considered foolish by the ungodly people of the world.

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

*1 Corinthians 1:20-25 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? **Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks***

seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Not all wisdom comes from God. You have heard of being "street smart," meaning sly, shifty, clever, and deceptive. The devil's wisdom is motivated by evil and is proud, worldly-minded, sensual, or demonic.

*James 3:13-17 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. **This wisdom does not descend from above but is earthly, sensual, demonic.** For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.***

God gave Solomon wisdom, but he lost sight of God. He disintegrated into worldly wisdom, which became sensual and ended in the demonic realm. If the world's wisest man could fall into this trap, how easy would it be to deceive ourselves, and how careful should we be?

1 Kings 11:1-9 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women ... ***He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. so, Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods. The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.***

Spiritual Adultery

Before we look at Solomon's sayings, let's establish that adultery can happen on multiple levels. There is literal adultery, sneaking in the back door after the spouse has gone to work. There is adultery in the heart, looking on a woman or man with lust (Matthew 5:27-28).

Then, there is spiritual adultery when we give things that should belong only to God to anyone or anything else. The first commandment is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. So, if we love or put anything above God, we are spiritual adulterers.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Spiritual adultery plays into end-time prophecy (the times we live in) because there will be a great falling away from the faith. The backslidden church is called the woman or the mother of harlots in the book of Revelation. We need wisdom and discernment to stay away from that church.

Revelation 17:3-6 ...The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead, a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The apostle Paul feared that Satan would deceive the church and cause it to be unfaithful to Christ. He warned them not to be seduced, to follow a different Jesus, a different gospel, or a different spirit. Our goal is to stay focused only on Jesus and not pay any attention to the serpent's voice.

2 Corinthians 11:2-4 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I FEAR, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

*For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted you may well put up with it!*

*2 Timothy 2:22 **Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***

*2 Corinthians 7:1 **Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.***

When we read Solomon's sayings about the adulteress, it can have dual meanings. He could be speaking of a literal adulteress or the spiritual harlot church and false religions. We will comment on the harlot church with correlating verses about the adulteress to show the parallel meanings.

The immoral woman flatters her victims. We hear the same message from prosperity preachers, self-help gurus, and hirelings in the harlot church. These churches preach that **YOU** can be a better **YOU** and how **YOU** can be healthy, wealthy, and blessed, and **YOU** sing about who **YOU** are in Christ. If you're in a church like that, run for your life. Christ should have preeminence in all things. Paul said we don't preach ourselves, but Christ and him crucified.

*Proverbs 7:1-5 My son, keep my words ... That they may keep you from the immoral woman, **From the seductress who flatters with her words.***

The harlot will not stay home, is dressed to kill, and is hunting for souls. Like a wandering star, she has left her assigned position. She goes away from the word of God. She is being blown about and tossed here and there by every wind and wave of strange teachings. The harlot church departs from the true gospel that Jesus and the apostles had once for all delivered to the saints.

*Proverbs 7:6-11 For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, and saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding, ... And there **a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious; her feet would not stay at home.***

Ironically this harlot boasts about her religious offerings while trying to seduce someone into a bed of immorality. She brings sensuality and entertainment into the church. Skinny jeans, big screens, fog machines, and rock concerts will fill the seats and build the new tower of Babel. The message is that her bed allows any expression of sexual preference or activities, with no shame and no accountability.

Proverbs 7:14-16 ... "I have peace offerings with me; Today I have paid my (religious) vows. I have

spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.

Jesus has a bed for spiritual harlots that cheat on him while he is away, and it is not spread with a tapestry but with sickness during the great tribulation.

Revelation 2:20-22 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. "And 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 deeds.

This woman says her husband is not home and is away on a long journey. Jesus described his return at the second coming in the same way. Jesus gave his servants responsibilities and expected them to watch and work. The harlot church mocks the return of Christ, is doing business as usual, is having fun, and could care less about Jesus' return.

Proverbs 7:19-20 ... *For my husband is not at home; He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, and will come home on the appointed day."*

Mark 13:33-35 *"(Jesus) Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. "It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning*

The immoral woman has cast many strong and great men down to hell. Solomon was very wise but got duped by crafty and seductive women. No one was stronger than Samson, but he got his eyes poked out by a little woman. Both men and women need the fear of God to protect us from falling into the sensuality, seduction, and deceptions of the harlot in these last days.

Proverbs 7:25-27 *Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths; **For she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death.***

Revelation 17:6. *I saw the woman (harlot church), drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.*

Jesus

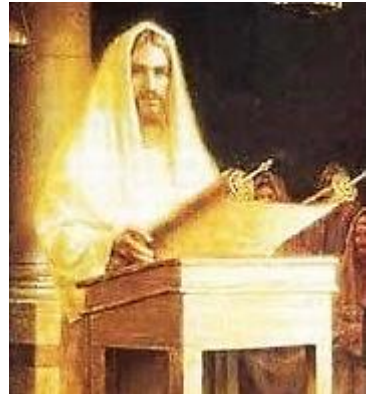
The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus after he was water baptized and led him into the wilderness for forty days, and he returned from there in the power of the Spirit. Once the

Holy Spirit anointed and empowered Jesus, he began his ministry and announced it by reading from Isaiah in the synagogue.

Luke 4:18-21 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

The Spirit & Fear

Jesus moved in the power of the Spirit by doing miracles, signs, wonders, and healings. We recognize the Holy Spirit by his divine attributes. Isaiah reveals that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of **wisdom**, understanding, and **the fear of the Lord**.



Isaiah 11:2-3 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him (Jesus), The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall

not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

The Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and counsel directed every step that Jesus took. Jesus walked in the anointing with the oil of gladness, and the fear of the Lord was his delight.

Hebrews 1:8-9 *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

If we have a delight in fearing God, loving righteousness, and hating sin as Jesus did, we will experience the same godly joy in the face of any situation and the most extreme persecutions as he did.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

Acts 5:41 *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Jude 1:24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,*

1 Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Although Jesus had the oil of joy, he was also called the man of sorrows. Persecution and the cross are inescapable realities. The advice that Jesus gave regarding the fear of God was straightforward and to the point, fear him who has the power to send to Hell. Paul said that if we live holy lives, we will suffer persecution.

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

1 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

The Followers of Jesus

There were many times in Jesus' ministry when people realized that he was not a mere man but the very presence of God, and many times they became overcome with fear. Let's follow some of those incidents.

After a great catch of fish

So, how do you impress a fisherman? Ask Peter, who was a fisherman by trade. One time Peter had fished all night but

failed to catch a single fish. Jesus got into his boat and asked him to cast his net again. Peter was skeptical, but he did it. When they cast out the nets, they caught so many fish that the boat was about to sink (we need Jesus in our boats!). Peter realized that he was in the presence of God. The fear of God came upon him, and he became so convicted of his sin that he asked Jesus to go away.

Luke 5:5-8

But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught



*nothing; nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. so, they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. **When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"** For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, **"Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."***

After healing a cripple

Jesus was teaching, and a large crowd gathered around the house. Some men brought a lame man on a stretcher but could not enter the house because it was too crowded. So, they went up on the roof, made an opening, and lowered the man in front of Jesus.



Then Jesus looked at the religious leaders and posed this question to them, “Which is easier to say, ‘your sins are forgiven’ or ‘arise and walk?’ So, that you know that I (the Son of Man) have the power to forgive sins, I say, then he looked to the lame man and said, rise and walk.” The lame man stood to his feet and walked, and the people were amazed and filled with fear. And, just for the record, healing is easy for Jesus!

Luke 5:25-27 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"

After raising the dead

One day Jesus and his disciples were entering a city when a large funeral procession was approaching. The deceased was the only son of a widow, and Jesus felt compassion for her. When Jesus approached them, he touched the coffin

and spoke, and the dead son came back to life. Then the fear of God came over everyone who was there.

*Luke 7:14-16 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So, he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. **Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God**, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people."*

After calming a storm

Jesus and the Disciples got into a boat to cross the lake. A big storm came up that was so violent that the experienced commercial fishermen on board thought they would die. Meanwhile, Jesus was taking a nap, and his panicked disciples came and woke him, fearing for their lives. So, Jesus stood and rebuked the raging storm, and the crashing waves and violent winds ceased, and the sea became calm. When they saw his power over the storm, they felt a powerful conviction of God's presence and were afraid.



Luke 8:25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying

to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

After casting out demons,

When Jesus and the disciples landed on the shore, a demon-possessed man encountered them. Jesus asked the demons for their name, and multitudes of demons replied that their name was "legion" because they were many. A Roman legion is between 4,000 to 6,000 troops. The demons begged not to go to the pit of hell and asked to go into a nearby herd of pigs. Jesus granted their request, so the demons entered the herd of pigs and drove them over a cliff to their death.

The people from town came out to see what happened and asked Jesus to leave their territory. Pigs are considered unclean under Mosaic law, and pigs were an abomination to religious Jews. But this town supported a big pig herd of possibly 4,000 or more pigs, which would have made them unclean by God's law. No wonder they were afraid and convicted by the power and presence of God and begged Jesus to leave. Who knows, maybe the demons left the pigs and entered the people. After all, these people preferred uncleanness over Jesus.

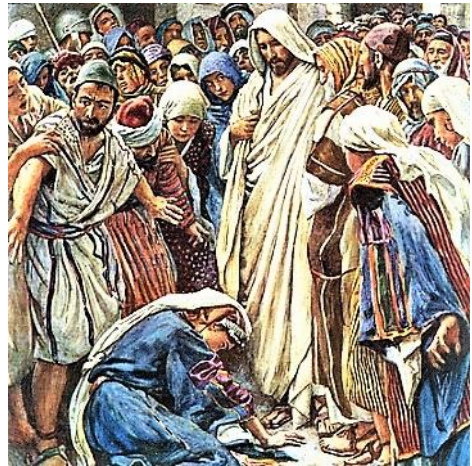
***Luke 8:37** Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round **about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear:** and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*

After healing a woman

Crowds surrounded Jesus often, and once a woman was present who had suffered from severe blood loss (hemorrhage) for twelve long years. This woman had tried every available medical treatment and only got worse. She believed that Jesus was her only, best, and last hope of getting healed and thought if she could push through the crowd and touch him, she would be healed. She pressed through the crowd and touched his garment, and the power of God was released from Jesus, healing her. Then Jesus stopped and asked who had touched him, and the woman trembled with fear and fell at Jesus' feet, knowing that she was in the presence of God, and God healed her.

Mark 5:29-33

Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned



around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing

what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

Pilate and his Wife

During the Passover feast, the Jews could not put Jesus to death, so they planned to have the Romans kill him. They brought Jesus to Pilate and demanded that he would give him the death penalty of execution on the cross. And although Pilate sat in judgment of Jesus, he knew that he was innocent and wanted no part in condemning him to death and tried to wash his hands of the illegitimate trial. Pilate was a cruel Roman ruler with no problems whatsoever in having people tortured and killed. But Pilate felt something different about Jesus because Jesus was no ordinary man, and Pilate feared him.

***Mark 15:4-5** So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed, (marveled).*

John 19:7-9** The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." **When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilates' wife had nightmares concerning Jesus, and she tried to warn him not to judge Jesus. She feared judgment for her

husband's treatment of Jesus. Maybe they didn't realize it, but Pilate was judging the great judge of all mankind.

Matthew 27:18-19 For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

Pilate's wife feared for good reason. Those involved in condemning Jesus met with untimely and horrible deaths. For example, Herod gave a speech and accepted praise from the crowd, claiming he was a god. His judgment was swift and painful.

*Acts 12:21-23 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" **Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him** because he did not give glory to God. **And he was eaten by worms and died.***

After Pentecost

The church was born on the day of Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Multitudes were coming to Christ. They witnessed the Holy Spirit move powerfully with supernatural signs and wonders, and the fear of God came upon every one of them.

Acts 2:41-43 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three

thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Correcting Sin in the Church

Just after Pentecost, the believers were so committed to Christ that they were selling their houses and lands and donating the money to support the work of God. One married couple, Ananias and Sapphira, sold a house and brought the proceeds from the sale as a donation to Peter. But in the process of giving the money, they lied to Peter by saying they gave everything from the house sale, but in reality, they only gave part of the money.



Let's put this story in today's setting. During a church service, a deacon is about to pray to receive the offering when a couple stands up and says they have a testimony. They go up to the pulpit, and the husband takes the microphone to testify. He says we have just sold a house and are giving all the money to the church. They hold up the check and say, here is \$250,000 for the work of the Lord, praise God! Loud shouts of praise thunder throughout the church. They drop the mic and head to their seats amidst the applause and cheers, giving high fives as they go.

However, the house sold for \$300,000. What should happen if the Pastor knew they kept \$50,000 and lied to the church? Should the Pastor confront them? Should he ignore the lie, pocket the money, and go along with their story?

Acts 5:4-11 "(Peter speaking), *While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.*" ***Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last ... Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband 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.***

From Peter's perspective, EITHER two sinners die, OR the whole move of God becomes dead. Remember how 2.5 million Israelis were defeated and stopped from advancing in their conquest of Canaan by the sin of one man named Achan (Joshua 7). Also, all of Israel had to stop and remain parked for one week in the wilderness because of the sin of one woman named Miriam, the sister of Moses (Numbers 12). That is evidence that one person can kill the move of God for millions of believers. So, how important are holiness and the fear of God for the church? Decisions have consequences, so what's your choice? Compromise, sin, money, and be part of the harlot church? OR truth, holiness, and the fear of God, and be the bride of Christ? Maybe this is one reason for so many dead churches!

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Psalms 93:5 Your testimonies are very sure; Holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever.

You would think after Ananias and Sapphira died in the church, people would have been shouting, “Run for your life! People are dropping dead in that church!” No! It was very much the opposite. Great fear came on everybody who heard about it. But the good kind of godly fear with reverence, respect, and awareness of the presence of God in their midst. And great signs and wonders followed the apostles, with multitudes joining the church!

Acts 5:10-14 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women ...

Peace after Persecution

Saul was a zealous Pharisee, and he persecuted, imprisoned, and was responsible for having Christians killed. One day, as he was traveling to attack Christians, he met Jesus, and everything changed. Saul became a Christian, changed his name to Paul, and became a powerful preacher of Christ. Following Paul’s conversion, the Christians enjoyed a time

of peace, their faith grew strong, and the fear of the Lord was present in their lives.

Acts 9:31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And **walking in the fear of the Lord** and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Paul and Felix

The Apostle Paul made all unbelievers uncomfortable with his uncompromising message, and he was a formidable force in every aspect except his scarred, beaten, and deprived outward physical appearance. The Holy Spirit used the mental genius of Paul to debate Jewish law experts, Greek philosophers, judges, and politicians, and his writings laid the foundation of faith for the church of all ages. The Roman governor Felix was no match for Paul. When he questioned Paul, Felix was the one in the hot seat. Paul spoke to him about self-control, righteousness, and the coming judgment, which powerfully frightened Felix.

Acts 24:24-25 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, **Felix was afraid** and answered, "**Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you.**"

John

Jesus had an inner circle of three disciples: Peter, James, and John. But John was the closest to Jesus, and he was called the disciple that Jesus loved. But when John saw the risen Christ in his glorified body, with power and glory, he was so overwhelmed with fear that he collapsed like a dead man. John was overwhelmed by the fear of God.

Revelation 1:14-17 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of



many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

If John, who was closest to Jesus, collapsed in fear at the sight of the resurrected Christ, how much more will sinners be terrified when they stand before him in judgment. Everyone who has ever lived will one day bow before Jesus and acknowledge that he is Lord.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

1Peter 4:17-18 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now **"If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"**

The Key to Holiness

Holiness is a separation from sin and this world's fallen thinking and lifestyles so we can separate ourselves exclusively unto God and maintain faithful obedience to his will. The fear of God will make us depart from the thought of doing evil and produce holiness and self-control in every area of our life.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

1 Thessalonians 5:21-23 Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil (all appearance of evil). **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your**

whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*1 Peter 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass 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 of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?***

We are on a lifelong journey of learning God's ways and being transformed into the character of Christ while at the same time realizing our weaknesses and flaws. Anyone that sincerely wants to follow, serve, and love Jesus, will grow closer to him by the fear of the Lord, or they will drift farther away from him from lack of it. Let us make every moment count by keeping the fear of God as a priority every day of our lives.

*2 Corinthians 5:9-11 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him. **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well***

known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 *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.*** Call to Action

Call to Action

Because we are in the end times, our world is changing quickly to line up with Bible prophecy. Jesus said the signs of his return would be like birth pangs, growing in intensity and frequency and globally. All those signs happen at once, and we can see them happening in real-time with wars, food shortages, pandemics, shutdowns, and natural disasters, all leading to a one-world government ruled by the antichrist. Also, there will be a great falling away from Christ, with churches becoming perverted, politically woke, and government-controlled. Eventually, all true believers will have to come out of the dead institutional denominations and fake churches. Thank God we have a blessed hope that Jesus will rapture the church before wrath and judgment hit the earth!

While we have time and freedom, we should study the scriptures, share the gospel, and learn to live by faith. This book is part of a series of basic teachings that all Christians should know and teach. We call it the "toolbox series" because each study is a tool for you to share your faith with others. For free resources and study materials, visit our website at Ears2Hear.online.

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