The FEAR of the LORD

(Do you Reverence God?)

(Selected Scriptures)

January 19, 2003

All of Life's responsibilities can be reduced to a simple axiom:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God**, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man." Eccles. 12:13

**** The LORD is <u>WORTHY OF RESPECT</u>!***

> The FEAR of the LORD is a Profound Respect for Who God is and What He can do to you.

A New Testament Fear Factor:

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and ***walking in THE FEAR OF THE LORD****, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* Acts 9:31

I. Wisdom from <u>Hebrews</u> about the FEAR of the LORD

Hebrews 12:25-29

A. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

B. <u>SERVE</u> HIM with respect (v.28-29)

II. Wisdom from <u>Proverbs</u> about the FEAR of the LORD

A. When you FEAR the LORD… You <u>GAIN WISDOM</u> (Prov.9:10)
Why?
One who fears God **LISTENS** Intently to His Word and thereby gains wisdom for <u>Learning</u> (Prov.1:7; 2:5)
One who fears God **OBEYS** His Word and thereby gains wisdom for <u>Living</u> (Psalm 111:10)

B. When you FEAR the LORD…You <u>HATE SIN</u> (Prov.8:13; 16:6)

C. When you FEAR the LORD…You <u>EXPERIENCE BLESSING</u>
(Prov.10:27; 14:26,27; 19:23; 22:4; Eccl.8:12)

D. When you FEAR the LORD…You <u>WALK HUMBLY</u> (Mt.10:28)
Such humility leads to **Salvation** for the lost
Such humility leads to **Sanctification** for the saved.

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One of the biggest problems (even among some Christians today) is a lack of a fear of God.

Verses from Proverbs on *"the fear of the Lord"*: Prov. 1:7, 3:7, 8:13, 9:10, 14:16, 15:16, 16:6, 23:17.

"Fear God" (1 Peter 2:17) - we must continually live in reverence for God (*"holy and reverend is His name"* - Ps. 111:9).

Stand in awe of God! (Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.")*

The highest authority (God) deserves the highest respect.

Heb. 12:28-29

Rev. 14:7

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Having a "fear of God" is to fear disobeying Him and to fear displeasing Him.

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The FEAR of the LORD is a Profound Respect for Who God is and What He can do to you.

**** God is WORTHY OF RESPECT!***

A New Testament Fear Factor:

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and ***walking in THE FEAR OF THE LORD****, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* *Acts 9:31*

I. Wisdom from Hebrews about the FEAR of the LORD

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A. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

V. 25

"See that" - Look out! Be alert and on guard! Take heed; pay attention!

A word of <u>caution</u> emphasizing the seriousness of the command.

"Refuse" - (*paraaiteomai - para* = aside; *alteo* = to ask)

In some contexts the word means:

--to have <u>nothing to do with</u> (I Tim. 4:7, 2:23)

--to intentionally <u>neglect</u> something (I Tim. 5:11)

--to intentionally <u>reject</u> (Ti. 3:10)

--to <u>refuse</u> or <u>decline</u> (Acts 25:11)

**To ask to be <u>excused</u> - cp. Lk. 14:18-19; Heb. 12:19

"Speaketh" - (a present tense - speaking) How is God speaking today? Exclusively through His Word, the Bible.

He has spoken from Heaven via His Son who became incarnate, and through the New testament apostles and prophets who wrote about Jesus Christ and the salvation He brought to us (Heb. 1:1-2, 2:1-4).

"Spoke on earth . . . speaketh from Heaven" - A contrast between Mt. Sinai (23:18-21) and Mt. Zion (12:22-24)

The Israelites who didn't want to listen to God speaking at Sinai (12:190 still were not able to escape responsibility and accountability for their disobedience to the words He gave. When they sinned, they faced the consequences.

Don't think for a moment that you will escape the consequences of disobedience!

"The unbelieving Israelites who ignored God at Sinai did not enter the earthly Promised Land, and unbelievers today, Jew or Gentile, who ignore God when He speaks through His Son from Mt. Zion, will not enter the Promised Land. Whether God speaks from Sinai or from Zion, no man who refuses Him will escape judgment" (MacArthur, p. 417).

V. 26

When God spoke from Mt. Sinai, His voice shook the earth (it thundered with power) (12:19; Ex. 19:16; 20:19).

The next time God will shake the earth will be when Christ returns in "*the Day of the Lord."*

Haggai 2:6-7 - *"For thus saith the LORD of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."*

Joel 2:30-31 - *"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."*

Joel 3:15, 16 - *"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD shall be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

"Once more" - one final judgment of this earth is yet to come! God's promise will be fulfilled.

Luke 21:25 - 28 - *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the mood, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring: Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh."*

When will such a shaking take place? When Jesus comes back at the Sixth Seal of Rev. 6:12-17; after which time--during the Bowl (vial) Judgments--God will destroy all the cities of the world with a violent shaking of the globe (Rev. 16:17-21).

"Not the earth only (as at Sinai) ***but also the heaven*** (sky and space)" ***"when God roars out of Zion"*** (Joel 3:16) - The implied point in this context is this: If God was to be respected because of His awesome power in shaking the earth at Sinai, then certainly He should be respected now in light of the fact that He will in the future violently shake this earth and shake the stars out of the sky!

V. 27

"Things that are made" - All of the tangible things of the earth will crumble and burn! (II Pet. 3:10-13 - *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.")*

The physical will be destroyed; the eternal things will remain.

Are you building your life on things that can shake? (When earthly things crumble in our lives, we will be very upset, if this is where our heart is).

What things *"cannot be shaken"?* The kingdom reserved for us by Jesus Christ! (v. 28a)

The world with its glitter, glamour, gold will one day crumble, but God's Kingdom will last.

In Christ, we stand on an unshakable foundation.

Don't put your trust in that which will be destroyed!

The point is this: The God who shook Sinai and the God who will shake the whole earth and Heavens, is a God worthy of respect. We should not turn a deaf ear to Him when He speaks through His Scripture!

Do you respect God enough to take His Word (with its warnings) seriously? Do you *"tremble at His Word"* or treat it lightly?

Who is the one who refuses to listen to God?

A person who does not reverently listen to God is one who:

1) Views His imperatives (N.T. commands) as options rather than obligations

2) Hears but doesn't heed

3) Knows the truth but doesn't practice the truth

4) Has answers for everyone else, but doesn't apply the truth to his own heart

5) Mentally drifts during a preaching service, or slumbers during private devotions

6) Treats lightly the message His preacher or teacher gives (jokes around; whispers under his breath to his/her friends, etc.)

B. SERVE HIM with respect (v.28-29)

1. The MOTIVE for our service: *Gratefulness for our Kingdom*

That which motivates our service for God is our faith in His promises regarding our future!

Out of gratitude for what we have in Christ, we serve Him!

"Let us have grace" - A grace to say thanks and offer God praise for what He has given us.

Do you have a grateful heart for the Kingdom you will receive?

How does it express itself here and now? God's expectation of our attitude of gratitude is repeated in Heb. 13:14-16.

True faith always results in true appreciation; and such appreciation will manifest itself by our service for God!

FAITH ---------- GRATEFULNESS ---------- SERVICE
"I believe" ---------- "I am thankful" ---------- "I will serve"
"I trust God" ---------- "I appreciate God" -------"I will serve God"

2. The <u>MEANING</u> of our service: *Spiritual Worship to God*

"Serve" - to offer to God a worshipful service.

All <u>service</u> for God is a form of your <u>worship</u> to God.

Whenever you serve Him, you worship Him! Worship is not merely singing praises and prayer; everything we say and do for God is worship to God!

3. The <u>MANNER</u> of our service:

a. *"Acceptably" (well pleasing to God)*

"Acceptably" - well-pleasing; to offer God the worshipful service that He would accept.

--He accepts only service done <u>for His glory</u> (not for vain proud reasons)

--He accepts only service done <u>through His power</u> (not the flesh)

--He accepts only service done <u>according to His New Testament instructions</u> (not the Mosaic Law)

--He accepts only service done to the <u>best of our ability</u> (not giving God garbage)

b. *"Reverence and Godly fear" (Respect and Awe)*

"Reverence" - to have a deep respect for God

"Godly fear" - to be in <u>awe</u> of God

EX: Song: "Our God is an Awesome God"

"There is a big difference between the flame of a candle and the roaring blast of a forest fire. We cannot even stand near a consuming, raging fire. Even with sophisticated fire-fighting equipment, a consuming fire is often beyond human control. God is not within our control either. . . He cannot be contained (by man)." (Life Applic. Bible)

His fire will one day try (test) our works (service we rendered for Him)
SEE: I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10-11a

II. Wisdom from Proverbs about the FEAR of the LORD

A. When you FEAR the LORD… You GAIN WISDOM

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

Why?

One who fears God **LISTENS** Intently to His Word and thereby gains wisdom for Learning (Prov.1:7; 2:5)

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 2:5

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

One who fears God **OBEYS** His Word and thereby gains wisdom for Living

Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments:* his praise endureth for ever.

B. When you FEAR the LORD…You HATE SIN (Prov.8:13; 16:6)

Proverbs 8:13

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

Proverbs 16:6

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

C. When you FEAR the LORD…You <u>EXPERIENCE BLESSING</u>

Proverbs 10:27
The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Proverbs 14:26
In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14:27
The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Proverbs 19:23
The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Proverbs 22:4
By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.

Eccles. 8:12
Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

D. When you FEAR the LORD…You <u>WALK HUMBLY</u>

Matthew 10:28
And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1. Such humility leads to **Salvation** for the lost

   "Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, as grace my fears relieved" (John Newton in <u>Amazing Grace</u>)

2. Such humility leads to **Sanctification** for the saved.