

## **EIGHT REASONS WHY WE SHOULD FEAR THE LORD**

*1<sup>7</sup>The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* (Prov. 1:7)

### **Introduction**

Many organizations and institutions have a motto that serves to identify and remind them of their purpose. For example, the motto of the Oakland Raiders' football team is COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

By definition, a motto is a short, concise statement that defines the guiding principle of an organization. As we approach the School of Solomon, we find this motto prominently inscribed above the entryway: THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE. That is to say, the fear of the LORD is the starting point as well as the chief part of true knowledge

May the LORD cause us to appreciate the fact that this is a motto by which to live. Rightly understood, this guiding principle will lead you in the way of life, and keep you from the way of death, as Proverbs 14:27 testifies, *"The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, causing a man to turn from the snares of death."*

In this lesson we will consider eight reasons why we are to fear the LORD our God. We will do so by submitting the relevant Scriptures that support each of those reasons.

### **I. You Should Fear the LORD because It is an Appropriate Response to the Person of God**

God is not "the Man Upstairs," as some people refer to Him. He is "The Holy One of Israel," the One who is exalted far above His creation and who is set apart in infinite moral purity, Yet He graciously condescends to enter into an intimate covenantal relationship with those who receive His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

*There is no one like you, O Jehovah; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. <sup>7</sup>Who should not fear you, O King of the nations? Indeed, it is your due.* (Jer. 10:6-7a;) i.e.; it is appropriate and proper to respond to the Person of God with holy, reverential fear, the LORD is worthy of such fear and to Him it rightfully belongs.

*The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever* (Psl. 19:9a;) i.e.; it is a holy and good thing to fear the LORD; it is legitimate and wholesome, unlike the fear of man that is shameful and disgraceful (note Isa. 51:12-13a)

*I, I am the one who comforts you. Who [do you think] you are—you who are afraid of [mortal] man who shall die, [afraid of] a son of man who is made [like] a blade of grass? <sup>13</sup>You have forgotten Jehovah your Maker, the one who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. (Isa. 51:12-13a)*

*Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear: <sup>22</sup>Should you not fear me? declares Jehovah. Should you not tremble in my presence? I made the sand to be a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it. <sup>23</sup>But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts ... (Jer. 5:21-23a;)* note that the failure to exhibit a holy fear of the LORD is the indication of “*a stubborn and rebellious heart,*” a heart that defies the LORD our God and Maker

## **II. You Should Fear the Lord because It is the Commandment of God**

*Respect all men; love the brotherhood [of believers]; fear God, honor the king. (1 Pet. 2:17)*

*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. (Eccl. 12:13)*

*I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. <sup>5</sup>But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. (Lk. 12:4-5;)* here are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself

## **III. You Should Fear the Lord because It is Intended for Your Good**

*Jehovah commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear Jehovah our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. (Deut. 6:24)*

*Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commandments always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever! (Deut. 5:29)*

Holy fear of the LORD is used by Him to turn us away from evil:

*... by the fear of Jehovah men turn away from evil. (Prov. 16:6b)*

*As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup>there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup>All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. <sup>13</sup>Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. <sup>14</sup>Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. <sup>15</sup>Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup>ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup>and the way*

*of peace they do not know. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Rom. 3:10-18)*

A holy fear of the LORD is used by Him to move us and motivate us to obedience:

*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, **moved with godly fear, prepared an ark** by which his family was saved. By faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Heb. 11:7)*

Holy fear of the LORD is used by Him to bind us to Christ:

*I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. <sup>40</sup>I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. (Jer. 32:39-40)*

#### **IV. You Should Fear the Lord because It is a Characteristic of a Godly Man**

*There lived a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and turned away from evil. (Job 1:1)*

*During the days of his life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his godly fear. (Heb. 5:7;) a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself*

*A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse; a branch from his roots will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup>The Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, **the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.** <sup>3</sup>He will delight in the fear of Jehovah. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he decide by what he hears with his ears. (Isa. 11:1-3;) a prophecy referring to the Lord Jesus*

#### **V. You Should Fear the Lord because It is the Complement of Love**

*And now, O Israel, **what does Jehovah your God require of you? He requires you to fear Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.** (Deut. 10:12)*

*And if you call upon the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, live your remaining time on earth in fear. (1 Pet. 1:17;) i.e., our relationship with God as our loving heavenly Father must not be abused, rather it must be complemented with a reverential fear, knowing that God our Father is also the Righteous Judge of all the earth*

When our love for God is perfect (as it will be in the eternal kingdom of heaven,) there will no longer be the need for reverential fear as a motivation to obedience and a deterrent to sin: perfect love will willingly render perfect, whole-hearted obedience:

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear relates to punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love. (1 Jn. 4:18)*

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and greatest commandment. (Matt. 22:37-38;)* where such love is exhibited there is no need for reverential fear to serve as the means of moving us to obedience and as a detriment to disobedience

## **VI. You Should Fear the Lord because It Gives You Access to the Tender Mercies of God**

*The friendship of Jehovah is with those who fear him; and he will show them his covenant. (Psl. 25:14)*

*This is what Jehovah says, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Therefore, what kind of house will you build for me, and where will be my resting place? <sup>2</sup>My hand has made all these things, so it was that all these things came into being, declares Jehovah. But this is the man I will regard, namely, he who is humble and who has a contrite spirit, he who trembles at my word. (Isa. 66:1-2)*

*... as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him ... <sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion on his children, so Jehovah has compassion on those who fear him ...<sup>17</sup>... from everlasting to everlasting Jehovah's love is with those who fear him ... (Psl. 103:11,13,17a)*

*And his mercy extends from generation to generation upon those who fear him. (Lk. 1:50)*

## **VII. You Should Fear the Lord because It will Secure for You a Refuge with God**

*The angel of Jehovah encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. (Psl. 34:7)*

*Jehovah of hosts, him you must sanctify; he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread—<sup>14</sup>and he will be a sanctuary [for you]. (Isaiah 8:13-14a;)* when you fear the LORD your God with a holy fear and sanctify Him (i.e.; acknowledge Him to be holy and sacred,) He will be a place of refuge and security for you

## VIII. You Should Fear the Lord because It will be Greatly Rewarded by God

*Jehovah takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his lovingkindness. (Psl. 147:11)*

*How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. (Psl. 31:19)*

*The reward for humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and honor and life. (Prov. 22:4)*

### Conclusion

The fear of the LORD is the starting point and the chief part of true knowledge.

What Scripture is referring to here is that deep and profound reverence for God that causes us to honor Him as God and that moves us to submit ourselves to His commandments as the rule of life.

It is by His own grace that the LORD imparts this holy fear to the hearts of His children in Christ:

*I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. <sup>40</sup>I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. (Jer. 32:39-40)*