

Fear God

When Abraham excused his lie for telling Abimelech that Sarah was his sister instead of his wife, his grounds for doing so was that "surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Gen. 20:11). He did not believe the people had any respect for either God or His will. Paul addressed certain worshippers in a synagogue in Antioch thus: "Men of Israel and ye that fear God" (Acts 13:16).

The Psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man that feareth Jehovah" (Ps. 12:1). Among those blessings is that God's mercy is great toward those that fear Him and that He pitieth them (Ps. 103:11, 13). God takes pleasure in those who fear Him, and the fear of Jehovah can bring strong comfort (Ps. 147:11; Pr. 14:26). The fear of Jehovah is something we ought and should learn (Dt. 10:20).

First, the "fear of Jehovah" involves the respect and awe we have for Him. The Hebrew writer urged: "Let us serve God with reverence and awe.." (Hb. 12:28). The Psalmist wrote: "Stand and awe and sin not. Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Ps. 4:4). Sometimes one may say, "I have a healthy fear of electricity," by which that one means that he knows its power and respects it and acts accordingly. When God smote Ananias and Sapphira for their sin "great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11).

Second, the "fear of Jehovah" is to live a life pleasing in His sight. "The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil, pride and arrogance and the evil way and perverse mouth" (Pr. 8:13). When Jews of Nehemiah's day were adding suffering to fellow Jews through their charging usury (a violation of their law), Nehemiah rebuked them and told them they ought to walk "in the fear of Jehovah" and not exact usury from fellow Jews (Neh. 5:9). One of Judah's good kings urged judges to walk in the fear of the Lord and not accept bribes. They were to judge righteous judgment (2 Chron. 19:9). When man cleanses himself from the defilements of flesh and spirit, he thereby perfects holiness in the "fear of the Lord" (2 Cor. 7:1). Man's whole duty is to "fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccl. 12:13).

Man is commanded to fear God (1 Pet. 2:13). Such is the beginning of wisdom, knowledge and understanding (Pr. 9:10; 1:7f). We have God's assurance that "God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable with him" (Acts

10:35).

When the penitent thief rebuked the other who mocked Jesus in his suffering, he asked, "Dost thou not fear God?" (Lk. 23:40). This is a good question we would do well to ask ourselves.

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