

DON'T FORGET: FEAR GOD!

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Most people out there in the Western World ... don't know God.

Here in the UK ... probably less than 5% "go to church". That means that more than 95% of the people don't have anything to do with God.

Yet many or most have "heard of" the Christian God ... though they don't know much about Him. And much of what they do hear is inaccurate —unBiblical. An unbalanced view about who God is.

Much of the preaching over-emphasises the Love of God. God loves all — unconditionally! There is nothing more you can do to make God love you more and nothing more to make God love you less.

God hates the sin — but loves the sinner (a phrase coined by Mahatma Ghandi).

Won't you accept Jesus so that He can give you your best life now?

Unfortunately ... it gives a very unbalanced picture of God. An old Grand-dad ... bit of a softy ... loves everybody equally — no matter how you might live?

In hundreds of places ... the Bible mentions something that is (almost) completely absent today — in the world and even in most churches — **THE FEAR OF GOD!**

How many of our leaders fear God?

How many celebrities fear God? How many ministers ... and brethren ... fear God?

It is probably fair to say **there's little to no fear of God** ... almost anywhere?

Yet the Bible has a lot to say on that subject!

Romans 3:9-18

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. **For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.**

10 As it is written:

“There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 **There is none who understands;**

There is none who seeks after God.

12 **They have all turned aside;**

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

13 “Their throat is an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;

“The poison of asps is under their lips”;

14 **“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”**

15 **“Their feet are swift to shed blood;**

16 **Destruction and misery are in their ways;**

17 **And the way of peace they have not known.”**

18 **“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

There is NO FEAR OF GOD! They couldn't care less!

A major problem. If people hear of God at all ... it is usually about His “Love”. Why would they fear a God who loves them unconditionally — no matter how they live?

If people genuinely feared God — they would live differently!

Genesis 42:13-21

13 And they said, **“Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.”**

14 But Joseph said to them, “It is as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You are spies!’

15 In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!”

17 So he put them all together in prison three days.

18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "**Do this and live, for I fear God:**

19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses.

20 And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."

And they did so.

21 Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

Joseph feared God. Can we say that?

A public statement that should inspire confidence in his brothers. A person who fears God should be trusted.

Exodus 1:15-17

15 Then **the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives**, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah;

16 and he said, "**When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth-stools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.**"

17 **But the midwives feared God**, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

The midwives feared God. More than just a "religious reverence". Tread lightly around Jehovah God?

Exodus 9:24, 27-35

24 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.

27 **And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are wicked.**

28 Entreat the LORD, that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail, for it is enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

29 So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the LORD's.

30 But as for you and your servants, **I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God.**"

31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head and the flax was in bud.

32 But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are late crops.

33 So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth.

34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, **he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart**, he and his servants.

35 So **the heart of Pharaoh was hard**; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

Verse 30: "you will not fear God".

Do you fear God?

Exodus 20:18-20

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

19 Then they said to Moses, **"You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."**

20 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."**

Fear not — the thunderings and the lightning. Fear God — to not sin.

A healthy fear of God — of His response and punishment — is conducive to right living.

Deuteronomy 5:28-29

28 "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken.

29 **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!

Oh that they would Fear me! Then they would be scared to break His commandments. They would honour God. And be the most blessed nation upon the whole earth.

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

12 “And now, Israel, 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,**
13 **and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?** *(Good — for your benefit and welfare)*

14 Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it.

15 The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day.

16 Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

17 **For 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.**

18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

20 **You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name.**

21 He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.

22 Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Fear the Lord — mentioned twice here. And — love Him.

Deuteronomy 31:10-13

10 And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles,

11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

12 **Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,**

13 and that their children, who have not known it, **may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God** as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.”

LEARN TO FEAR!

A proper fear is a good incentive. We don't want to experience the consequences of disobedience.

Israel never learned to fear. They thumbed their noses at God.

Jeremiah 5:20-25

20 “Declare this in the house of Jacob
And proclaim it in Judah, saying,

21 ‘Hear this now, O foolish people,
Without understanding,

Who have eyes and see not,

And who have ears and hear not:

22 **Do you not fear Me?’ says the LORD.**

Will you not tremble at My presence,

Who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea,
By a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it?
And though its waves toss to and fro,
Yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.

23 **But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart;
They have revolted and departed.**

24 **They do not say in their heart,**

“Let us now fear the LORD our God,

Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season.
He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.”

25 **Your iniquities have turned these things away,
And your sins have withheld good from you.**

Do you not fear Me?

Jeremiah 44:7-11

7 “Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel:

‘Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain,

8 in that you provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

10 **They have not been humbled, to this day, nor have they feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.'**

11 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for cutting off all Judah.

Nor have they feared.

God was incredibly patient. For centuries. Sending dozens of prophets. That did no good. The people never learned to fear God. It meant that their minds were deficient.

Proverbs 1:7

7 **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Proverbs 1:28-33

28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

29 **Because they hated knowledge**

And did not choose the fear of the LORD,

30 They would have none of my counsel

And despised my every rebuke.

31 **Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,**

And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,

And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

33 **But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,**

And will be secure, without fear of evil."

If you don't choose the fear of God — calamity!

Proverbs 9:10-11

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

11 **For by me your days will be multiplied,
And years of life will be added to you.**

Proverbs 8:12-13

12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge and discretion.

13 **The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.**

Proverbs 23:17-18

17 **Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day;**

18 For surely there is a hereafter,
And your hope will not be cut off.

Continue all day long in the fear of the Lord.

Psalms 25:12-15

12 **Who is the man that fears the LORD?
Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.**

13 **He himself shall dwell in prosperity,
And his descendants shall inherit the earth.**

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

15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
For He shall pluck my feet out of the net. (*Out of the net — out of difficulty*)

"The secret of the LORD" =

- "Friendship of the LORD" (ESV)
- "Intimate fellowship" (LEB)

Psalms 34:8-14

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;

Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 **Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!**

There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;

But **those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.**

11 Come, you children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 Who is the man who desires life,
And loves many days, that he may see good?

13 **Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.**

14 **Depart from evil and do good;**

Seek peace and pursue it.

I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Remember: HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY — NOT GOD ALL—MATEY!

I could keep going. There are many hundreds of places where we're encouraged to FEAR GOD.

Maybe it's just the God of the Old Testament we've got to fear? The harsh God of judgment and wrath?

Maybe in the New Testament it's just about love? Grace — love! Perfect love casts out fear?

Next week we'll have a look at the New Testament and see what it says about us — New Testament saints.

The final scripture for the day.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:**

Fear God and keep His commandments,

For this is man's all.

14 **For God will bring every work into judgment,**

Including every secret thing,

Whether good or evil.

Conclusion? **FEAR GOD!**

Today we live in a fairly casual world. Often a great deal of disrespect among people — in the media ... in politics.

It might be justifiable — perhaps — among flawed and sometimes corrupt human beings.

But: God isn't a human being! Majestic — Glorious — Almighty — Everlasting — Pure and ... God is Holy.

We need to be very very respectful.

The Bible makes it clear: Fear God!!