

Hello, brethren. I have a question for you all. What does it mean to fear God?

The responses to this question might vary slightly, however, most of God's Church would have a similar response to this question. The world, however, would respond in a very different way. The world has no real comprehension of this fear of God or the commandment to fear God. And this is evidenced by their behavior.

Today we're going to look at the instruction (commandment) to fear God, consider its meaning, and the consequences of not following this instruction (commandment). Let's first look at the word "fear" and its meaning. *Strong's* describes "fear" as "to fear morally, to revere, cause to frighten, to be or make afraid, dreadful, to stand in awe of, reverence, honor, respect, to be fearful, to cause astonishment and awe, to inspire reverence or godly fear or awe." Throughout scripture the reference to fear includes all of these descriptions, and depending on the scripture, the correct interpretation of the word "fear" varies.

So let's now look at the instruction (commandment) given in scripture to fear God. Let's turn to **Deuteronomy 6:1**—Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your sons son, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you in the land that flows with milk and honey.

Let's now turn to **Deuteronomy 10:12**—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, to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, (verse 13) to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you this day for your good, or "your benefit."

If we refer to the interpretation, or the translation of the word "fear" in the verses we've just read, the word "fear" here according to *Strong's* is "to stand in awe of, to revere," or "to be afraid to go against." So here we've seen the instructions that God gave through Moses to the Israelites with regard to fearing God.

Christ also provided instructions to fear God, so let's turn to Matthew 10 and read this account. **Matthew 10:28**, and this is Christ speaking, **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 gehenna.**

Let's also look at this in Luke 12:4. Again, this is Christ speaking. **Luke 12:4—And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you who you should fear: Fear Him, which after He had killed had power to cast into gehenna; yes, I say to you, Fear Him.**

Again, referring to *Strong's*, the translation of the word "fear" in these scriptures refers to "reverential fear." And "reverence," in this context, refers to "regarding with great respect or devotion."

So, now that we've seen the instruction to fear God, or the commandment to fear God, how do we do this? Let's look at what scripture tells us about how we must act. **Proverbs 2:1—My son, if you will receive my words, and treasure my commandments with you; so that you incline you ear towards them, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom: out of His mouth, knowledge and understanding. He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous: He is a shield to them that walk upright. He keeps the paths of judgment, and preserves the way of His saints. Then shall you understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yes, every good path. When wisdom enters into your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul; Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you, to deliver you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks perverse things.**

Let's move now, down to **Proverbs 3:5—Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall make smooth your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.** Here we see very clear instructions in these verses as to how we must act and the things we must do if we're to follow the instructional commandment to fear God. And if we follow this commandment to fear God, there are certain promises that God gives us.

Let's now look at what *is* promised by God if we follow this instructional commandment to fear Him. Please turn to **Deuteronomy 28:1-14.** And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe and do all His commandments which I command you this day, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on you and overtake you, if you shall hearken to the voice of the LORD your God: **Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your cattle, and the increase of your flocks of your sheep. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed will be when you come in, and blessed will be when you go out.**

The LORD will cause your enemies that rise up against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your storehouses and in all that you set your hand to do, and He shall bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

The LORD shall establish you a holy people unto Himself, as He has sworn unto you, if you shall keep His commandments, of the LORD your God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.

And the LORD shall make you plenteous in goods, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your cattle, in the fruit of your ground, in the land which the LORD swear unto your fathers to give you.

The LORD shall open unto you His good treasure, the heaven, to give rain unto your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand.

And you shall lend unto many nations, and you shall not borrow. And the LORD shall make you the head and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath, if that you hearken unto the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, to observe and to do them. And you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods and to serve them.

Brethren, this is a significant promise that God gives us if we follow His commandments.

Brethren, let's look at another example in scripture where we are commanded by God to fear Him and to follow His instructions. Let's turn, please, back to Deuteronomy 6:1—Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I commanded you, you and your son and your sons son, all the days of your life, and that the days may be prolonged. Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with you, that you may increase mightily as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you in the land that flows with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD your God is one LORD! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and where you walk by the way, and where you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house and on your gates.

And it shall be, when the LORD your God shall have brought you into the land which He swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which you filled not, and wells digged, which you digged not, vineyards and olive trees which you planted not—when you shall have eaten and are full—*then* beware, and forget not the LORD which brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall swear by His name. You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples which *are* around about you (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you and destroy you from off the face of the earth.

You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go into the land and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto your fathers.

Let's drop on down to Deuteronomy 7:6—For you *are* a holy people unto the LORD your God; the LORD your God had chosen you to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, had the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of house of bondman, from the hand of Pharaoh's king of Egypt.

Now, therefore, that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God which kept covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; and repay them that hate them to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hates Him; He will repay him to his face. You shall, therefore, keep the commandments and the statutes, and judgments which I command you this day to do them.

Therefore, it shall come to pass, if you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God shall keep unto you the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your corn, your wine, your oil, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore unto your fathers to give them. You shall be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female barren among you or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt which you knowest upon you, but will lay *them* upon all them that hate you. And you shall consume all the people of the land your God shall deliver you; your eye shall have no pity upon them; neither shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare unto you.

If you shall say in your heart, These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?— you shall not be afraid of them, *but* shall well remember what the LORD your God did unto Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great temptations which your eyes saw, and the signs and wonders, and the mighty hand and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do unto all people of whom you are afraid. Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornets among them until they are left and hide themselves from you, and be destroyed. You shall not be afrightened of them; for the LORD your God is among you, a mighty God and awesome.

Brethren, it's very easy for us to read through these scriptures and think of this physically, and think that it relates only to the children of Israel as they were coming out of Egypt and entering into the promised land. But, brethren, this message is for us at this time as we prepare to enter into a new world. We need

to keep this “front of mind” that we don't consider these things from a physical sense but we consider them in a spiritual nature as well.

**Deuteronomy 8:1**—All the commandments, which I command you this day, you shall observe to do and you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. God shows us very clearly what we can expect if we follow His instruction (His commandment). These blessings will be poured out on us. However, if we do not follow God's commandments to fear, He is very clear on what will result.

Let's continue. **Deuteronomy 28:15**—But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you: Cursed *shall* be you in the city, and cursed *shall* be you in the field. Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed *shall* be you when you come in, and cursed *shall* be you when you go out. The LORD will send upon you cursing's, fixations, and rebuke in all that you settest your hand to do, until you be destroyed and until you perish quickly, because the wickedness of your doings whereby you hath forsaken Me.

The LORD shall make the plague cleave unto you until He has consumed you from off the land whither you go to possess it. The LORD shall smite you with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with the blasting, and with the mildew; and they shall pursue you until you perish.

And your heaven that is over your head shall be brass, and the earth that is underneath you *shall be* iron. The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon you until you be destroyed. The LORD shall cause you to be smitten before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and shall be removed unto all the kingdoms of the earth. And your carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall *frey them* away. The LORD will smite you with boils of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, where you cannot be healed. The LORD shall smite you with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropes in the darkness; and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you shall be oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save you.

You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: you shall build a house, and you shall not dwell therein: You shall plant a vineyard, and shall not gather the grapes thereof. Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat thereof: your donkey shall be violently taken away from you before Your face, and shall not be restored to you: your sheep will be given unto your enemies, and you shall have none to rescue them. Your sons and your daughters shall be given unto another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in your hand. The fruit of your land, and all your labours, shall a nation which you

know not eat up; and you shall only be oppressed and crushed always: So that you shall be driven mad for the sight of your eyes which you shall see.

The LORD shall smite you in the knees, and in the legs, with sore boils that cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. The LORD shall bring you, and your king which you shall set over you, unto a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known; and there shall you serve other gods, wood and stone.

And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all the nations where the LORD shall lead. You shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather little; for the locust shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards, and dress them, but shall neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your coasts, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. You shall beget sons and daughters, but you shall not enjoy them; for they will go into captivity.

All your trees and fruit of your land shall the locust consume. The stranger that was with you shall get up above you very high; and you shall come down very low. He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him: he will be the head, and you will be the tail.

Moreover, all these curses shall come upon you, and shall pursue you, and overtake you, till you be destroyed; because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you: And they shall be upon you for a sign and for a wonder, upon your seed forever. Because you served not the LORD your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore, shall you serve your enemies which the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has destroyed you.

The LORD shall bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies; a nation whose tongue you shall not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of old, nor show favor to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of your cattle, and the fruit of your land, until you be destroyed: which also shall not leave you neither corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of your cattle, or flocks of your sheep, until he has destroyed you.

And he shall besiege you in all your gates, until your high and fenced walls come down, wherein you trusted, throughout all your land: and he shall besiege you in all your gates throughout all your land, which the LORD your God had given you.

And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, and the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, which the LORD your God had given you, and in the siege, and in the straightness, wherewith your enemies shall distress you: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he has nothing left him in the siege, and in straightness, wherewith your enemies shall distress you in all your gates.

The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her young one that comes out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straightness, wherewith your enemy shall distress you in your gates.

If you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD YOUR GOD; then the LORD will make Your plagues extraordinary, and the plagues of your seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover, He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of; and they shall cleave unto you. Also every sickness, every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon you, until you be destroyed.

And you shall be left few in number, whereas we were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and you shall be plucked from off the land where you go to possess it.

And the LORD shall scatter you among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other; and there you will serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations you shall find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest: but the LORD shall give you a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of your life: In the morning you shalt say, I wish it were evening! And in the evening you shall say, I wish to God it was morning! For the fear of your heart whereof you shalt fear, and for the sight of your eyes which you shalt see.

And the LORD will bring you into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I have spoken unto you. You shall see it no more again: and you shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

God made it very clear to the Israelites what was expected of them, what He requires of us, and what we will receive if we follow His commandments, and what we can expect or what will happen to us if we do not follow these commandments. There are many examples throughout scripture of the results of not following God's commandments. We'll look at one of these in a moment, but first, let's turn to Genesis 22:12. We're cutting in a little bit to the story here where God commanded Abraham to take his son Isaac to offer him as a burnt offering on the mountains.

And in Genesis 22:12 we read, And He said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do you anything unto him: for now I know that you fear God, seeing you had not withheld your son, your only son from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the

thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself I have sworn, said the LORD, for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son: that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed My voice. Here we see the promises provided to Abraham for following God's commandment to fear Him.

Now let's turn to Jeremiah 5 and see the consequences of not obeying God's command to fear Him. Jeremiah 5:1—Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, if there be any that executes judgment, that seeks the truth; and I will pardon it.

And though they say, The LORD lives; surely they swear falsely. O LORD, are not Your eyes upon the truth? You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; You have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return. Therefore, I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak to them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.

Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goes out of there shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased. How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me, and sworn by them that are not gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not punish them for these things? said the LORD: and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Go up on her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD'S. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against Me, said the LORD. They have belied the LORD, and said, Is it not He; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword or famine: And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.

Therefore, thus said the LORD God of hosts, Because you speak this word, behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. I will bring nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, said the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you know not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up your harvest, and your bread, which your

sons and your daughters should eat: they shall eat up your flocks and your herds: they shall eat up your vines, your fig trees: they shall impoverish your fenced cities, wherein you trusted, with the sword.

Nevertheless, in those days, said the LORD, I will not make a full end with you. And it shall come to pass, when you shall say, Wherefore does the LORD our God all these things unto us? Then shall you answer them, Like as we have forsaken Me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall you serve strangers in a land that is not yours.

Declare this in the house of Jacob, and proclaim it in Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; and have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? said the LORD: will you not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it? But this people has a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and departed. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that gives rain, both the former and the latter, in His season: He reserves unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you. For among My people are found wicked men: they lay await, as he that sets snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore, they are become great, and grown rich. They have grown fat, they shine: yes, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy they do not judge.

Shall I not punish for these things? said the LORD: shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; and the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof?

Brethren, here we see the consequences of not obeying God's command, of not following God's ways. We have a clear instruction from God and from Jesus Christ to fear God and to follow His commandments. God provides us promises as to what we will receive if we follow His command, and also, what we will receive if we do not follow His command. The choice is ours.

For a final scripture, please turn with me to 2 Corinthians 6:14—Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God, and they will be My people. Therefore, Come out from among them and be you separate, said the Lord. And touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a Father unto you, and you will be My sons and daughters, said the LORD.

**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.** The word "fear" here in this scripture is explained well in *Strong's*. *Strong's* translation of this word "fear" is "as not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him."

Brethren, many have not been able to follow God's ways, God's instructions, God's commandments. We have seen in the last few years a cleansing of God's Church, and those that haven't been able to follow these instructions are no longer with us. As we are in a "Year of Dedication" we need to get focused. We need to follow God's commandments, especially His commandment to fear Him.□