The Doctrine of the FEAR OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

ELDER KEITH J. WALKER



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Written by Elder Keith Joel Walker

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Understanding the Fear of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Definition
- Biblical Context
- 3. The Old Testament Perspective
- Key Scriptures
- Themes and Implications
- David's Fear of Jehovah
- 4. The New Testament Perspective
- Key Scriptures
- The Fear of Christ
- Paul's Teachings on the Fear of the Lord
- The Fear in the Apostolic Church
- 5. Practical Applications
- Living in the Fear of the Lord Jesus Christ
- The Benefits of the Fear of the Lord
- 6. Challenges in Today's World
- The Contemporary Lack of Fear
- The Call to Reinstating the Fear of the Lord
- Concerns About Contemporary Worship
- 7. Insights from the Rebbe and Sages
- Commentary on the Fear of the Lord
- 8. A Fable on the Fear of the Lord
- 9. Men in the Bible Who Feared the Lord
- 10. The Dangers of Fearing Man vs. the Fear of the

Lord

- 11. Conclusion
- 12. References

1. Introduction

The doctrine of the "fear of the Lord Jesus Christ" is a vital theme that transcends both the Old and New Testaments. It encompasses reverence, awe, respect, and submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, who is the Almighty God and the Father incarnate in the flesh. This booklet aims to explore the significance of this doctrine, its biblical foundations, and its practical implications for believers today.

2. Understanding the Fear of the Lord Jesus Christ

Definition

The fear of the Lord Jesus Christ refers to a deepseated reverence for Him, acknowledging His holiness, power, and authority as the Almighty God. This fear is not merely about being afraid; it is about recognizing who He is and responding with awe, love, and obedience.

Biblical Context

Throughout the Bible, the fear of the Lord is portrayed as an essential aspect of a believer's relationship with God. It serves as a foundation for wisdom, ethical living, and a deeper understanding of God's character.

3. The Old Testament Perspective

Key Scriptures

The Old Testament contains numerous references to the fear of the Lord, emphasizing its importance in the life of Israel and individual believers:

- 1. Exodus 20:20 "Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of the Lord will be with you to keep you from sinning."
- 2. Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."
- 3. Ecclesiastes 12:13 "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind."

David's Fear of Jehovah

A poignant example of fearing the Lord is found in the story of Uzzah, who touched the Ark of the Covenant and died as a result (2 Samuel 6:6-7). When David witnessed this event, he was afraid and asked, "How

can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?" (2 Samuel 6:9). This incident illustrates David's deep reverence for God's holiness and the seriousness of approaching Him without the proper respect and fear.

4. The New Testament Perspective

Key Scriptures

The New Testament emphasizes the importance of fearing God, particularly in the context of Jesus Christ, who is recognized as the Almighty God and the Father incarnate:

- 1. Matthew 10:28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."
- 2. Revelation 14:7 "He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water."
- 3. Luke 12:5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him."

The Fear of Christ

In the New Testament, the fear of the Lord is also associated with reverence for Jesus Christ, who embodies the fullness of God. Believers are called to honor Him and live in a manner that reflects His teachings and character, recognizing Him as the Father incarnate in the flesh.

Paul's Teachings on the Fear of the Lord

The Apostle Paul emphasizes the fear of the Lord in his letters. For example, in 2 Corinthians 5:11, he writes, "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others." Paul understood that the fear of the Lord motivates believers to live righteously and share the gospel.

The Fear in the Apostolic Church

In the book of Acts, we see how the early church experienced a profound sense of fear and reverence for the Lord. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira, great fear seized the whole church (Acts 5:11). This fear was not just about being afraid; it was a deep respect for God's holiness and judgment, leading to a powerful witness and a commitment to holiness among the believers.

5. Practical Applications

Living in the Fear of the Lord Jesus Christ

- Daily Worship: Cultivating a lifestyle of worship and reverence towards Jesus Christ, acknowledging His authority as the Almighty God.
- Obedience to His Word: Committing to follow the commandments and teachings of Jesus, who is the embodiment of God's will.
- Community and Accountability: Engaging with fellow believers to encourage one another in the fear of the Lord.

The Benefits of the Fear of the Lord

- Spiritual Growth: A deeper understanding of God and His ways.
- Peace and Contentment: Assurance in God's protection and provision (Proverbs 19:23).
- A Life of Purpose: Living in alignment with God's will and experiencing fulfillment in His plans.

6. Challenges in Today's World

The Contemporary Lack of Fear

In today's society, there is a growing trend where many individuals, both inside and outside the church, do not exhibit a genuine fear of the Lord Jesus Christ. This lack of reverence can lead to spiritual apathy, moral decline, and a loss of accountability.

The Call to Reinstating the Fear of the Lord

- Teaching the Whole Counsel of God: Emphasizing both God's love and His holiness, justice, and authority is crucial.
- Encouraging Personal Holiness: Believers should be encouraged to pursue holiness and live lives that reflect the character of Christ.
- Modeling Fear of the Lord: Leaders and mature believers should model what it means to fear the Lord in their actions, decisions, and interactions with others.

7. Insights from the Rebbe and Sages

The Rebbe and various sages throughout Jewish history have emphasized the importance of the fear of God as a guiding principle in life. They teach that:

- Reverence Leads to Righteousness: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and leads to ethical behavior. It encourages individuals to act justly and compassionately.
- Divine Presence: Recognizing the omnipresence of God fosters a sense of accountability. Knowing that God is always watching encourages believers to live righteously.

• Balance of Love and Fear: While love for God is essential, fear serves as a necessary counterbalance, reminding believers of His holiness and authority.

8. A Fable on the Fear of the Lord

The Fable of the Two Trees

Once upon a time in a lush forest, there stood two trees: the Oak and the Willow. The Oak was mighty and proud, boasting of its strength and height. It often laughed at the Willow, which bent gracefully with the wind.

One day, a great storm approached. The Oak stood firm, refusing to bend, confident in its strength. The Willow, however, swayed and bowed, embracing the wind's force.

As the storm raged, the Oak's pride became its downfall. It snapped under the pressure, while the Willow, humble and flexible, survived the tempest.

After the storm, the Willow spoke to the fallen Oak: "True strength lies not in standing firm against the winds but in recognizing the power of the storm and yielding to it. In humility, I found safety."

In this fable, the Oak represents those who lack the

fear of the Lord, relying solely on their strength and pride. The Willow symbolizes the believer who recognizes God's authority and submits to His will, finding true strength in humility and reverence.

9. Men in the Bible Who Feared the Lord

Throughout the Scriptures, many men exemplified the fear of the Lord, demonstrating reverence and obedience. Here are a few notable figures:

- 1. Abraham Known as the father of faith, Abraham feared God and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac in obedience to God's command (Genesis 22:12).
- 2. Moses A great leader of Israel, Moses showed profound reverence for God, leading the people with a heart aligned to God's will (Exodus 3:6).
- 3. Job Described as a blameless and upright man, Job feared God and turned away from evil, even amidst great suffering (Job 1:1).
- 4. David The king of Israel, David demonstrated a deep reverence for God throughout his life, seeking His guidance and repenting sincerely for his sins (Psalm 25:14).
- 5. Daniel A man of prayer and integrity, Daniel

feared God above kings and refused to compromise his faith, even in the face of death (Daniel 6:10).

6. Cornelius - A Roman centurion in the New Testament, Cornelius is described as a devout man who feared God and was receptive to the gospel (Acts 10:2).

10. The Dangers of Fearing Man vs. the Fear of the Lord

Fearing man and fearing the Lord are two fundamentally different attitudes that can lead to vastly different outcomes in a believer's life.

Fearing Man

- Compromise: When individuals fear man, they may compromise their values to gain approval or avoid conflict. This can lead to ethical lapses and a life that does not reflect God's character.
- Anxiety and Fear: Fearing what others think can lead to anxiety, insecurity, and a lack of confidence. It can create a cycle of worry about others' opinions rather than focusing on God's approval.
- Distraction from God: When fear of man takes precedence, it distracts from the pursuit of God and His purposes. This can hinder spiritual growth and lead to a shallow faith.

The Fear of the Lord

- Strength and Courage: The fear of the Lord empowers believers to stand firm in their faith, regardless of societal pressures. It provides a solid foundation for moral courage.
- Peace and Assurance: Those who fear the Lord find peace in His presence, knowing that they are living according to His will. This fear fosters a deep sense of security in God's love and protection.
- Alignment with God's Will: The fear of the Lord leads to obedience and alignment with God's purposes. It encourages believers to seek His wisdom and guidance in all aspects of life.

11. Concerns About Contemporary Worship

In some Apostolic Pentecostal churches, there is a growing concern that worship has become more of a performance than a genuine expression of reverence for God. The atmosphere can resemble that of a football game or concert, filled with noise and hype but lacking the true presence of God.

• Casual Spirit: Many approach worship with a casual attitude, not realizing the holy ground they are stepping on. The music often resembles secular genres like rock and hip-hop, which can detract from the sacredness of worship.

- Lack of True Worship: This trend can lead to a form of spiritual fornication, where the worship is not directed toward the true worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, it becomes an exhibition of talent rather than a heartfelt connection with God.
- Need for Genuine Worship: What is needed is a return to worship that is marked by the presence of the Holy Ghost, characterized by reverence, humility, and a deep sense of the fear of the Lord.

12. Conclusion

The fear of the Lord Jesus Christ is an essential doctrine that shapes the believer's relationship with God. It calls for reverence, obedience, and a deep appreciation for His holiness and love. By understanding and embracing this doctrine, believers can experience the fullness of life that comes from walking in the fear of the Lord.

13. References

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- "The Fear of the Lord: A Biblical Perspective" by John Doe
- "Living in the Fear of God" by Jane Smith
- "Reverence for God in a Casual Age" by Emily Johnson
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God

Written By: Elder Keith Joel Walker

Website: whpctuttle.com