



ON FEARING GOD

GARY W. MOON

(Proverbs 1:7)



o Fear.” This slogan appears on the T-shirts of sports enthusiasts on the court or on the field. In response to its popularity, some Christian T-shirts began popping up with the answering slogan, “Fear God.” But what is meant by the instruction, “Fear God”?

In the first few words of Proverbs 1:7, the theological foundation of this book of wisdom is established. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.” The fear of God, as the foundation for wise living, is a recurring theme throughout Scripture.

The Book of Deuteronomy contains the great summary of God’s total claim on humanity and an expected response to His requirements. It is a summary of how God’s children are to live each day of life. “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God . . . and to love Him” (Deut. 10:12).

There is a great riddle wrapped inside this passage. Israel was given directions that were foreign to their neighbors—to stand before God in both fear and love. Even today, living with fear and love seems to be a perplexing paradox.

THE PARADOX OF FEAR AND LOVE

Since fear is the most primitive of all human emotions, all forms of anxiety disorder are rooted in fear. Fear is also the body’s natural alarm system. Any perceived threat will switch on the sympathetic nervous system’s “fight or flight” response. The heart begins to race. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid. Blood flows away from the extremities and digestive organs and into the large muscles. Hands and feet become cold. Sweating increases to cool down the body which has gone into hyperdrive. In short, the person is ready to fight the object of fear or to run and hide.

When that same person experiences love (or laughter or relaxation), the body’s response is very different. In this instance, it is the parasympathetic nervous system which dominates. The preparation is to approach and enjoy, not flee or fight. Fear and love are physiological opposites. So again, how can it be that people are to both fear and love God?

FEARING GOD

The word “fear” has many synonyms such as reverence, awe, dismay, dread, distress, trouble, terror, horror, and respect. However, most of these synonyms for “fear” have not survived the journey from Bible times and culture to present day. For most people, to fear means to dread instead of to hold in awe or reverence.

Some would argue that little is lost and much gained if we retranslate Proverbs 1:7 as, “The reverence of God is the beginning of wisdom.” However, the fear of God does not totally equate with reverence and awe. The Hebrew concept of God was filled with wonder, awesomeness, majesty, and yes, terror and fear—a lineup that moderns may struggle to comprehend. So while substituting other words for “fear” may be helpful in certain situations or with some individuals, one must continue to pursue a deeper appreciation for God that preserves the idea of fearing Him. He is much more complex and awe-inspiring than a “big buddy in the sky.” God is the ultimate Friend and Father, but He is also holy and completely “other.” To see Him in all His

glory might very well be enough to stop an earthly human heart.

LOVING GOD

People's love for God should create a sense of heart-pounding anguish at the very thought of moral evil, revolt, rebellion, or compromise. With this in mind, a person ought to be terrified at the possibility of living life apart from His presence or on any other terms but His own. The new person in Christ should mature into a sense of being delivered from worldly fear, since the presence of Christ's love pushes out fear: "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. . . . But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:17-19). The maturing disciple, however, should likewise experience a sense of terror at the possibility of being alienated from God or incurring His displeasure.

On one hand, Christ impressed upon His disciples the necessity to fear God who can destroy both the body and the soul (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5). He did not downplay the reality of the prospect of judgment. On the other hand, Jesus presented a radical means for overcoming fear—being led by the Spirit of God to receive a sense of adoption by which one cries, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). God's gift to His children is not a "spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Through the mystery of Christ, it is possible to move from the fear of being punished in His presence, to the joy of being drawn by and into His love.

We ought to fear God, yes. But we should not run from Him. We ought to run to Him. We can come out of hiding and flee back into His presence and His standards for living. Then we can let fear keep us

from leaving again as bonds of love grow and keep us tied to His presence.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of fear/fear of God include:

- > Joshua 24:14
- > 1 Samuel 12:14
- > Job 28:28
- > Psalms 19:9; 27:1-3; 31:19; 33:18; 111:10
- > Proverbs 14:26; 15:16
- > Ecclesiastes 12:13
- > Matthew 10:28
- > 2 Corinthians 7:1

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on fear/fear of God at Proverbs 1:7 on page 798. See also the personality profile of Gideon on page 308.

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—

5 A wise man will hear and increase learning,

And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

6 To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

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

SHUN EVIL COUNSEL

8 My son, hear the instruction of your father,

And do not forsake the law of your mother;

For they will be a graceful ornament on your head,

And chains about your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.

11 If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to shed blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent
without cause;



SOUL NOTE

Find the Way (1:4) King Solomon compiled these proverbs to "give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." Solomon wanted to help his readers to navigate the challenges and difficulties of life with greater wisdom, and ultimately with success. Through these ancient words of life experience collected by Solomon, God speaks to His people as a wise and loving Father guiding them through life's difficulties, temptations, and dilemmas. When we listen to His voice and seek His wisdom, He will show us the right way to go in every situation.

Topic: Wisdom



Fear/
Fear of God

KEY PASSAGE

AWESOME

(1:7)

The Book of Proverbs emphasizes that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." Fear of God means reverential awe of the Supreme Being, the Creator, the final Judge. While knowledge is possible without knowing God, it misses the point, since God is the Source of everything. It's ridiculous for humans to claim great knowledge and wisdom without having any respect for God. All human knowledge is a tiny portion of all that there is to be known, a speck of all that God has created.

Human beings then, as they seek wisdom and knowledge, should do so in the context of a proper fear of God. Then they will be able to use that wisdom and knowledge for whatever purposes God desires in order to build His kingdom. When God's people fear Him, they understand His power over their lives and willingly allow His hand to guide them.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about fear/fear of God on pages 800, 801. See also the personality profile of Gideon on page 308.

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¹⁷Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You."

And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

¹⁹So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. ²⁰The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay

them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

²¹Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

²²Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

²³Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." ²⁴So Gid-



Fear/Fear of God

PERSONALITY PROFILE

GIDEON AND THE FEAR OF GOD

(JUDGES 6)

Gideon knew fear. He wasn't cowardly, just cautious. His courage had a strong component of fear that actually made him an effective warrior. He figured the odds. He took risks but planned to survive. He demonstrated a willingness to resist a superior enemy—with caution. That is why God's messenger found Gideon in concealment. That is why Gideon tested God's guidance. And that is also why Gideon had to learn a new lesson about fear—the fear of God.

God reached Gideon during a military mission. Gideon was conducting a wheat threshing operation under the camouflage of a winepress. His act of resistance included a fair amount of desperation and danger. The people of Israel had been driven underground for almost seven years by the repeated pillaging of their Midianite oppressors. Obtaining wheat had become a dangerous enterprise. For Gideon and his men, discovery by their enemies would have meant losing the wheat and probably their lives. These factors explain Gideon's response to the stranger he noticed sitting under the tree that overlooked the winepress.

When God's messenger greeted Gideon with a compliment, he brushed it aside and expressed a complaint about God. "If the LORD is with us," asked Gideon, "why then has all this happened to us?" (Judg. 6:13). Instead of an answer, God gave Gideon a command. Gideon responded with an offering. God then replied with a miracle and specific directions. Gideon obeyed by destroying a Baal altar and starting a war. Thirty-two thousand Israelites joined Gideon to fight, but they were no match for the huge army of the Midianites. Faced with apparent annihilation, Gideon asked for further confirmation of God's blessing: He put out a fleece as a means of getting a signal from God.

God confirmed both Gideon's blessing and His own role in the outcome of the battle. He downsized Gideon's fighting force to a mere 300 warriors. They did little more than light up the scene while God insured that the Midianites slaughtered one another. In all these events, Gideon's fear affected his behavior. But fear didn't prevent him from obeying or acting courageously. Fear actually clarified the choices and pointed to God as the real source of victory. Gideon discovered a deeper courage in respecting God's commands.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about fear/fear of God on pages 800, 801. See also the key passage note at Proverbs 1:7 on page 798.

for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

⁴²And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by *intending* to kill you. ⁴³Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, ⁴⁵until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

⁴⁶And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these *who are* the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

28 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. ²Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

"May God Almighty bless you,
And make you fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of
peoples;

⁴ And give you the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
In which you are a stranger,
Which God gave to Abraham."

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

ESAU MARRIES MAHALATH

⁶Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, *and that* as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," ⁷and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. ⁸Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. ⁹So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

JACOB'S VOW AT BETHEL

¹⁰Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. ¹²Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

¹³And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the

Behold, I am with you and will
keep you wherever you go, and
will bring you back to this land; for
I will not leave you until I have done
what I have spoken to you.

GENESIS 28:15



SOUL NOTE

Afraid of God? (28:16-19) After Jacob stole Esau's blessing, Esau wanted to kill him (27:41). Jacob ran, and on his lonely journey he lay down to rest and had a strange dream. Jacob realized that God had revealed Himself, and the Bible tells us that Jacob "was afraid." Jacob later remembered this moment as a turning point in his life: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me" (48:3). God's awesomeness should inspire fear (reverence), but don't stop there. Let it lead you to faith. **Topic: Fear/Fear of God**

son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images,⁶ and burn their carved images with fire.

⁶“For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The

LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

⁹“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. ¹¹Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

¹²“Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do

them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. ¹³And 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 grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the off-

spring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. ¹⁴You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. ¹⁵And the LORD will take away from you all sickness,

and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay *them* on all those who hate you. ¹⁶Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.

¹⁷“If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’— ¹⁸you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: ¹⁹the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. ²⁰Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. ²¹You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome

“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

DEUTERONOMY 7:9

7:5 ^aHebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

SOUL NOTE



Do Not Be Afraid (7:17-21) The Christian life is not easy. Believers face difficulties, pain, suffering, and sorrow. In situations that seem impossible they sometimes become afraid. God told Israel not to be afraid when the battle seemed too great. Instead, they should remember what He had done for them in the past and take heart. We must look at our fearful situations in the light of what God has already done for us, remembering that “the great and awesome God” will be going into battle with us. **Topic: Fear/Fear of God**

like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. ²And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.

³“So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. ⁴And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. ⁵Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me.”

⁶(Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. ⁷From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. ⁸At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. ⁹Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

¹⁰“As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. ¹¹Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin *your* journey before the people,

that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’

THE ESSENCE OF THE LAW

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? ¹⁴Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. ¹⁵The 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. ¹⁶There-

fore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²⁰You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. ²¹He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. ²²Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

“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, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”

DEUTERONOMY 10:12, 13

SOUL NOTE



Seriously Now (10:12, 13) What does it mean to “fear the LORD”? Fearing God means to reverence Him, to take Him seriously. How can we do that? By our obedience. These verses say that God’s people must “walk in all His ways,” loving Him, serving Him, and keeping His commandments. Why? Because these commandments are for our good. God gave His laws, not to keep people from enjoying life, but to help them find ultimate joy and purpose through a relationship with Him. Fear of God leads to true fulfillment. **Topic: Fear/Fear of God**

BOOK FOUR: PSALMS 90-106

PSALM 90

THE ETERNITY OF GOD, AND MAN'S FRAILTY

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

- 1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place^a
in all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought
forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and
the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You
are God.
- 3 You turn man to destruction,
And say, "Return, O children of men."
4 For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And *like* a watch in the night.
5 You carry them away *like* a flood;
They are like a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass *which*
grows up:
6 In the morning it flourishes and grows
up;
In the evening it is cut down and
withers.
- 7 For we have been **consumed** by Your
anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You,
Our secret *sins* in the light of Your
countenance.
- 9 For all our days have passed away in
Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives *are* seventy years;
And if by reason of strength *they are*
eighty years,
Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow;

- 11 For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath.
12 So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

- 13 Return, O LORD!
How long?
And have compassion on Your servants.
14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our
days!
15 Make us glad according to the days *in*
which You have afflicted us,
The years *in which* we have seen evil.
16 Let Your work appear to Your servants,
And Your glory to their children.
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God
be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands for
us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.

PSALM 91

SAFETY OF ABIDING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

- 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the
Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the
Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the LORD, "*He is* my refuge
and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
- Surely He shall deliver you from the
snare of the fowler^a
And from the perilous pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with His feathers,

90:1 ^aSeptuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read
refuge 91:3 ^aThat is, one who catches birds in a
trap or snare

SOUL NOTE



The Shadow of the Almighty (91:1-13) When believers are afraid, they can run to a "refuge" and "fortress"—God Himself. God's people dwell "in the secret place of the Most High" and "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (91:1). No place could be more safe than there! Believers can trust that God will protect them in their times of fear. This does not imply that God's people will never suffer or face difficulty; but it does promise that they need not be afraid, for they are in God's hands.

Topic: Fear/Fear of God

may, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

¹⁵Then He said to me, "Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." ¹⁶So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

¹⁷And He said to me, "Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. ¹⁸Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

THE WICKED ARE SLAIN

9 Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each *with* a deadly weapon in his hand." ²And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them *was* clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

³Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.^a And He called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; ⁴and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh

and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

⁵To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple. ⁷Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.

⁸So it **was**, **that** while they were killing them, I was left *alone*; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

⁹Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!' ¹⁰And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their deeds on their own head."

¹¹Just then, the man clothed with linen, who *had* the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me."

THE GLORY DEPARTS FROM THE TEMPLE

10 And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. ²Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the

9:3 ^aLiterally *house*

SOUL NOTE



Healthy Fear (8:17) By filling God's sanctuary with idols and other abominations, the Israelites demonstrated a dangerous lack of fear of the Lord. Evidently they felt that they could get away with it. This false security is often caused by an errant view of the Almighty. Many people claim that God is love and then stop there, as though that were His only attribute. They forget that He is also holy and just, and demands punishment for sin. Until people learn to respect God's holiness, they are as vulnerable as the ancient Israelites. **Topic: Fear/Fear of God**

THE PROPHET'S PRAYER

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.^a

² O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and* was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make *it* known;
In wrath remember mercy.

³ God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran.

Selah

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
⁴ His brightness was like the light;
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power *was* hidden.
Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

⁶ He stood and measured the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills bowed.
His ways *are* everlasting.
I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
Your bow was made quite ready;

Oaths were sworn over *Your* arrows.^a

Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.
¹⁰ The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted its hands on high.
¹¹ The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.

¹² You marched through the land in indignation;
You trampled the nations in anger.
¹³ You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck.

Selah

¹⁴ You thrust through with his own arrows
The head of his villages.
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
¹⁵ You walked through the sea with Your horses,
Through the heap of great waters.

¹⁶ When I heard, my body trembled;
My lips quivered at *the* voice;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in myself,

3:1 ^aExact meaning unknown 3:9 ^aLiterally *rods* or *tribes* (compare verse 14)

SOUL NOTE



In Awe (3:1, 2) Habakkuk was afraid when God's answer came. Wicked people fear God because He will punish them for their rebellious ways. For God's people—those who have appealed to the Lord for mercy—this fear is solemn reverence, or awe of God. It is a healthy respect of God's perfect ways and His power. God still speaks, still reveals Himself to His people, still does miracles. Our response should always be reverence and awe that the all-powerful God works in our lives.

Topic: Fear/Fear of God