



LESSON #3 – THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

Introduction

Last topic we studied the **meaning of the everlasting gospel**. We saw that the plan was laid in the **ages of eternity past** and into **eternity future**, the **redeemed** will continue to **sing praises** to the Father and to the Lamb.

Jesus wove a perfect robe of righteousness by living a **perfect life** and paying the **penalty for sin**. All those who **claim the robe** through **repentance, confession, trust in Jesus and baptism** will be **saved** in the kingdom.

But the everlasting Gospel also **makes demands** upon those who **receive it**. In **Revelation 14:7** we have **three imperatives** or **commands** to those who have **embraced** the everlasting gospel: **Fear** God, give **glory** to him, **worship** him

The **first imperative** [present active participle] or command that the **everlasting Gospel** lays on us is to **fear God**.

Not Being Afraid (Joy and Fear Together)

Fearing God in the Biblical sense does **not mean** that we are **afraid of Him**. This is seen by the fact that we can fear the God and at the same time **experience joy**:

Psalms 2:11: “*Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.*”

To use an **analogy**, the Bible tells us that we must **fear our father and our mother**. This does not mean that we are **afraid** of them but rather that we have a **deep respect** of them and hold them in **awe**.

Leviticus 19:3: “*Every one of you shall revere [same word] his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.*”

Proverbs 15:16: “*Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure with trouble.*”

The Beginning of Wisdom

The fear of the Lord is the **beginning** and **foundation** of all **wisdom** which means that if we don't have it, we have **no wisdom at all!!**

Proverbs 9:10: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

Implanted in the heart by God as we come to know him

We cannot just **make up our minds** that we are going to fear God because it is **put into the heart** by **God Himself**:

Jeremiah 32:40: *"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me."*

Better than Riches

The fear of the Lord is **better than riches**:

Proverbs 15:16:

"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure with trouble."

A Choice

Nehemiah 1:11: *"O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."*

Proverbs 1:28-30: *"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."*

It can be Taught

Psalms 34:11: *"Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."*

But What **does it mean** to fear God?

The fear of God or of the Lord has a **rich meaning** in the Bible. It is like a **many edged diamond** with several **complementary** connotations.

In order to understand the concept in **Revelation 14:7** we must take into account the **entire Biblical testimony**.

By **definition** the fear of God or the fear of the Lord is an attitude of profound **respect, awe, reverence and worship** to Him because of **who He is, the Creator**:

Psalms 33:6-9: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. ⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. ⁹ For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast”

Jeremiah 10:6-7: “Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might.) ⁷ Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like You.”

In the magnificent book, Child Guidance we find a **brief** and **profound** description of what it means to fear God:

“True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence.” Child Guidance, p. 538

Distance and Closeness

Isaiah 57:15. You see, God is **transcendent**. He is **over, above and above** His creation. As **Rudolph Otto** put it, He is the **wholly other**. He is not our **good old buddy**. He's is not the **man upstairs**. He demands **respect and reverence** and we must be careful about exercising **undue familiarity** with Him. He will not be **trifled with**. On the other hand He is our **Father** and we must **love him**. In other words, He is **over and beyond** His creation but also in **intimate contact** with it

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

An Intimate Closeness

It means to **cleave** to the Lord. It is the same word which is used in **Genesis 2:24** to speak of **Eve cleaving** to her husband. **Psalms 102:5**: **Bones** cleave to skin; **Psalms 137:6**: **Tongue** cleaves to roof of mouth.

Notice all the other **synonymous** words:

Deuteronomy 13:4: “You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

Respect for His awesome and holy Name

Deuteronomy 28:58, 59: “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, **THE LORD YOUR GOD**,⁵⁹ then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues — great and prolonged plagues — and serious and prolonged sicknesses.”

Psalms 111:9: “He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome is His name.”

Exodus 20:7: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Matthew 6:9: “Hallowed be Thy name.”

Slang expressions that use the **names of God** such as “gee” and “gosh”. Using God’s name in songs **without thinking** about what we are saying. Be careful about **repeating** His awesome name in **prayer**. The **Jews** did not even dare pronounce the **covenant name YHWH**.

It will affect the way you worship God

It means to worship God in the **beauty of holiness**. How you **dress**, the type of **music** you play, whether you **sing or not**, chewing **gum**, whether you **clap** or say amen and hallelujah or not.

I Chronicles 16:29, 30. “Give to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!³⁰ Tremble before Him, all the earth. The world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved.”

How Israel worshiped when God’s presence was manifested

II Chronicles 7:3: “When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever.”

- **Isaiah 6**
- **Moses (Exodus 3:5-6)**
- When **Peter** encountered Jesus (**Luke 5:8**)
- The fear of the Lord means to be **humble** We are **humus**, **creatures of clay**. We are nothing without God.

Psalms 9:20: “Put them in fear, O Lord that the nations may know themselves to be but men.”

Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?"

Remember what happened to **Nebuchadnezzar** when he was filled with pride. The jewel of reason was removed and he was immediately like a beast. God gives us the power to reason so that we can rule and accomplish things. (See **Daniel 4:28 – 37.**)

The fear of the Lord means to **trust Him**

Psalms 115:11: "You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield."

Affects the Lifestyle (the way we live)

But the fear of God is not only an **attitude of the mind**. The fear of the Lord always translates into **proper ethical behavior**.

By far, the **most prominent connotation** of the fear of the Lord is that it always translates into **service and loving obedience**. In contrast, when people **don't fear God** their ethical behavior reveals it.

Genesis 20:11: "And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the **fear of God is not in this place**; and they will kill me on account of my wife."

Exodus 1:17: "But the midwives **feared God**, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive."

Ecclesiastes 8:11-13: "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully **set in them to do evil**.¹² Though a sinner does **evil a hundred times**, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well **with those who fear God, who fear before Him**.¹³ But it will not be well with the **wicked**; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he **does not fear** before God."

Romans 3:10-18: "As it is written: "There is **none righteous**, no, not one;¹¹ there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God¹² 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."

The fear of God is linked with **obedience to the Ten Commandments** which God spoke on Mount Sinai:

Deuteronomy 4:10-13: “. . . especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’¹¹ ‘Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness’¹² And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.’¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”

Caring about People

Those who have it treat the **less fortunate** and the **weak** with respect.

Leviticus 19:14, 32: “You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, shall fear your God; I am the Lord. . .³² ‘You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 25:17, 36: “Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God. . .³⁶ Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you.”

Leviticus 25:43: “You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God.”

Deuteronomy 5:29: “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!”

Deuteronomy 8:6: “Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.”

Deuteronomy 10:12-13: “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?”

Psalms 103:17-18: “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children,¹⁸ To such as keep His covenant and to those who remember His commandments to do them.”

I Samuel 12:14, 15, 24, 25: “If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God.¹⁵ However, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord, but

rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you, as it was against your fathers. . .²⁴ Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.²⁵ But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment including every secret thing whether good or whether it is evil."

Genesis 22:12: "And He said: "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Job 1:8, 9: "Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"⁹ So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

Job 28:28: "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding."

Proverbs 8:13: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate."

Proverbs 16:6: "In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil."

Proverbs 3:7: "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil."

Proverbs 14:2 "He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him."

Joshua 24:14: "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!"

Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is by faith."

Hebrews 12:28-29: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire."

II Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Promises for those who Fear God

Malachi 3:6: “Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.”

Psalms 103: 11-14: “For as the heavens are high above the earth so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions from us ¹³ As a father pities his children so the Lord pities those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

Proverbs 10:27: “The fear of the Lord prolongs days but the years of the wicked will be shortened.”