

# Grace and the Fear of God

**No-one can know the true grace of our loving Creator God without experiencing the fear of that God.**

This truth is taught in the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and is verified in the personal experiences of countless Holy men and women through the centuries.

**Genesis 3:7-8, 20-21** [NIV] *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and **they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**” ... “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. **The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**”*

The first announcement of God’s redemptive intention towards humanity was made to a man and woman hiding in mortal fear from the presence of God.

**Exodus 20:18-19** [NIV] *“When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, **they trembled with fear.** They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”*

The Law of God was given to a man trembling in terror amid fire and smoke and with the rest of the nation quaking at the voice of thunder and the sound of the Divine Trumpet.

**Luke 1:64-65** [King James] *“And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. **And fear came on all that dwelt round about them:** and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.”*

When Zacharias’ tongue was loosened by the mysterious operation of God, fear spread throughout the area.

**Luke 2:8-9** [NIV] *“And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and **they were terrified.**”*

Even the famous annunciation of Christ’s birth was accompanied with fear.

**The presence of the Divine has always brought fear to the hearts of sinful humans.**

This is **not** an instinctive fear for physical self-preservation, this fear goes deeper into our very nature.

Any true manifestation of God leaves those experiencing it daunted and overawed with a terror that is more than natural fear.

**Proverbs 1:7** [NIV] *“**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.**”*

**Proverbs 9:10** [NIV] *“**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**”*

**In all of us there is a very strong and altogether self-confident nature, and until this attitude has been humbled, God cannot begin to show His Love and Grace.**

**1 Peter 5:5** [King James] *“... **God resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble.**”*

In the context of this statement we are encouraged to humble ourselves to possibly avoid having a traumatic encounter with the Sovereign, all powerful God.

**1 Peter 5:6-7** [King James] *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*

**The Love of God is not likely to affect the proud, self-confident, carnal heart; only in negative ways that would simply confirm our self-righteousness.**

Too often ministers today present people with the “soft side” of Christianity to woo them into their congregation.

**Isaiah 59:1-4** [NIV] *“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No-one calls for justice; no-one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.”*

This ignores the very reason for our alienation from God in the first place, and the need for the grace that God extends to us.

**Romans 6:23** [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

**The reason we need God’s Grace is our proud, self-centred, self-confident, rebellious against our Creator, nature.**

**Romans 3:23-24** [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”*

**Until a person realises they have got into trouble with God, they are not likely to be seeking reconciliation.**

**Genesis 4:1-7** [NIV] *“Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.” Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”*

Cain and Abel are examples of this problem.

**Cain** brought a **present** to One whom he assumed to be pleased with him.

**Abel** brought a **sacrifice** to One who he knew could **not** accept him as he was.

**Cain’s heart did not tremble, he was well satisfied with himself so he sought no hiding place.**

**The fear of God would have helped Cain at this critical moment in his life,** it would have changed his whole character, and his entire course in life.

As indispensable as this fear of God is it cannot be induced by threats made in the name of God.

Hell and the Judgement are real but they have to be preached in the full context of Bible truth, **not** separated from the rest of scripture.

The fear of God is a supernatural thing, not related to threats of punishment to our intellect.

**The fear of God is a feeling, a deep reaction of a fallen sinful creature in the presence of a Holy God.**

The Holy Spirit alone can induce this emotion in a human being, it is part of His Work on earth.

**John 16:8-9** [NIV] *“When he comes, he will **convict the world of guilt** in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;”*

This godless world does **not** believe in God and it is only the Holy Spirit that can convict a person of God’s existence through a personal terrifying encounter.

Because the fear of God is supernatural, repeated warnings of war, atomic bombs and germ warfare will **not** frighten people into accepting Christ and it is **not** scriptural to do so.

You may be able to herd a flock of goats into a sheepfold with the use of fire crackers, but you cannot make sheep out of them.

Where does this true fear of God come from?

Only from the knowledge of our own sinfulness and a sense of the constant presence of a Holy God.

**Isaiah 6:1-5** [NIV] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”*

Isaiah’s acute experience of God’s power, glory and Holiness exposed to him his own uncleanness.

**Exodus 34:29-30** [NIV] *“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, **and they were afraid to come near him.**”*

When Moses came down from the mount with his face shining the children of Israel were afraid with a fear borne out of the supernatural sight.

Moses did not need to threaten them.

He had to only appear before them with this light of the supernatural God on his face.

The congregation of a church will feel this same mysterious terror of God when the minister and leaders of the church have spent time in the presence of God and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

What is the end result for those who lack an active fear of God and therefore do not seek His grace.

**Revelation 21:7-8** [NIV] *“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

**All these listed are people with no fear of God in their lives.**

**Revelation 22:12-15, 18-20** [NIV] *“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practise magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.” ... “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”*

God’s words and promises have to be accepted with a humble respect to His Sovereignty and perfection if we are to have any future at all.

Jesus Christ is going to return and this time He will come to judge all humanity.

**Matthew 25:31-46** [NIV] *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

A fear of God will put us in good stead for this coming judgement. A fear that will prompt us to live a life of loving and serving other human beings.