

Searching the Scriptures / 71 / Non-believers Do Not Fear The Lord / Part 1

In today’s study I would like to discuss why non-believers do not “*fear God*”. The three points to consider are as follows:

1. No Fear ... of God
2. Two Kinds of “Fear”
3. Man Suppresses the Knowledge of God

1. No Fear ... of God

A familiar bumper sticker that is found in many cities throughout the United States reads: “NO FEAR”. Little do the owners of these vehicles realize the sad underlying truth of those two words. Indeed, Rom 3:18 speaks of unsaved man’s innate sinfulness and rebellion against God, “*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*” It is important to remember the context in Rom 3:10–17 where these searing words “*there is no fear of God before their eyes...*” are found: “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.*”

Psa 36:1 adds, “*The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*” Unsaved man in his spiritual deadness fails to heed the biblical warnings of Jam 4:14 and Amos 4:12, and many other verses. In Jam 4:14, we read, “*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*” Amos 4:12 proclaims the frightening encounter with God Almighty that every unsaved human being must inevitably face, “*... prepare to meet thy God...*”

2. Two Kinds of “Fear”

At this point I think it will be helpful to explain the distinction between the believer’s God-given “*fear of the Lord*” (i.e., reverential respect, honor, and worship of God) and the unbeliever’s “*fear of the Lord*” (i.e., terror and dread of eternal punishment), which is in view in the following passages. The first kind of “*fear*” manifests itself as obedience in the life of a believer; and the second kind is probably the underlying reason for all the man-made religions of the world. Isa 2:8–10, 19–21 “*Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty... And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*”

The idea of “*hiding*” from the wrath of God is also found in Rev 6:15–17: “*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in*

the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

The lack of the respectful fear of God and the power of the Gospel are dramatically expressed during the Crucifixion scene on Calvary in Luke 23:39–43: “*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*”

3. Man Suppresses the Knowledge of God

God has placed within all mankind the basic knowledge of His existence and power as man views this world. This is evident from Rom 1:19–20, where we read, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse...*”

Unsaved man tries to deny or suppress the knowledge of God for a very important reason. If one concedes that God exists and that He is absolutely in control of this universe that He created, then he must affirm that which man desperately attempts to avoid—his inevitable appointment with his Maker and Judge. Thus, man makes every effort possible to escape this greatest of all human dilemmas, as we find by reading further in Rom. 1:21–23. God reveals in His Word that this process merely serves to expose the various degrees of degradation that sin naturally produces: “*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*”

Like Adam of old, man continues to foolishly think that he can run away and hide from God. Amos 9:2 asserts, “*Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down...*”

May God be pleased to grant us the fear of the Lord that we, too, might be turned to God for salvation.