

What Does the Fear of the Lord Entail?

Description

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A study related to the SDA
Sabbath School Lesson for 2021, 4rd Quarter
Present Truth In Deuteronomy
Week 4
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This week's lesson is entitled, "To Love the Lord Your God." It discusses the interesting apparent tension between God's command to both love Him and fear Him at the same time. We say "apparent tension," because it only seems that way to the carnal heart. Monday's lesson quotes Deuteronomy 10:12 which reads,

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?"

Each aspect in this verse helps us to understand the other aspects. To fear the Lord entails walking in all His ways and to love Him entails serving him with all our heart and with all our being.

So, to fear the Lord is to walk in all His ways, or, you could say, to be obedient to the commandments.

As the lesson points out, the Seventh-day Adventist Movement was appointed to declare the everlasting gospel: "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

Obviously, fearing God requires keeping His commandments. But what does it mean to keep His commandments? Too often, we think it's just about going to church on Saturday rather than Sunday. But is this really enough to be commandment-keepers? If we go to church on the true Sabbath, but lie, or hate someone, aren't we, in reality, breaking the commandments just as truly as someone who disregards the Sabbath? James tells us that if we break one commandment, we are guilty of all. Truly fearing, or revering, the Lord isn't about "professing" all His ways, it's about "walking" in all His ways. And the good news of the everlasting gospel is that all things, even victory over sin, are possible through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). We truly can walk in the light as Jesus is in the light (1 John 1:7). We can be righteous even as he is righteous (1 John 3:7), for God is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before his glory (Jude 24).

The three angels' messages contrast serving the beast with serving God. Jesus taught us that we cannot serve two masters. He also said that whoever sins is a slave of sin (John 8:34). So if we want to serve, or worship, God, we need to stop being a slave of sin which means to stop sinning. Sadly, the church which God has commissioned to proclaim this message the SDA church, has fallen into a Laodicean condition. We are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, and don't even know it. Jesus reproves us because he loves us and admonishes us to repent (Rev. 3:19). God will purify the SDA church by helping all who are willing to overcome their sins, and those who are not willing will be spewed out (Rev. 3:16). Thus, he will have a glorious church, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any such thing, but it will be holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27).

With this purified SDA church, God will be able to repeat the message to come out of Babylon to the fallen churches. This is represented in Revelation 18.

Revelation 18 describes another angel coming down from heaven. Note that this angel is different from the three angels of Revelation 14, who are flying in the midst of heaven, rather than coming down from heaven.

After this angel comes down and proclaims that Babylon is fallen, another voice from heaven speaks. Revelation 18:4-5 reads,

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

We must now ask, why would God bring people out of one church that is sinning into another church that is also sinning? What good would that do? No, God is going to bring His people from Babylon into a purified church. The idea that the gospel is about anything else besides pure righteousness is no gospel at all. We can clearly see that here in Revelation 18:4, because the voice from heaven is calling God's people out of Babylon so they will not share in her sins. God does not want His people who are still in Babylon at the time of the call to receive of her plagues. The solution is to bring His people out of Babylon and into a purified, righteous church, which will be the Laodicean church after the lukewarm have been spewed out of God's mouth. This should cause much self-examination among the Laodiceans of today. Do we have any cherished sins?

We see this also prophesied in Isaiah 66. It reads,

"By fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations. and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. they shall bring all your brethren to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." -Isa. 66:16, 19, 20.

Clearly, this prophecy is concerning the time before the visible return of Christ, since after the slaying spoken of here, God will send those that were not slain unto the nations, to gather them into a "clean vessel" which represents the purified Laodicean church, again, after the lukewarm are spewed out.

Ellen taught that the loud cry would be proclaimed by a pure church when she said, "The third angel's message is to lighten the earth with its glory [which is language drawn from Revelation 18]; but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it when it shall have swelled into the loud cry."• Ellen White, Historical Sketches, p. 155.3

Ellen also said,

"The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin. A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the judgment."• Ellen White, Christ's Object Lesson, p. 316.

Here we see that in the judgment, our every act, and every motive that prompts it, is what is going to be judged. Again, we are not being judged on our profession of faith, or our membership in the SDA church, etc.

Many in the SDA church today are asleep in regard to the judgment. Many have the idea that the righteousness of Christ does indeed cover our cherished sins -- sins we keep doing. But, as Ellen and the scriptures have warned, it does not.

If you find this alarming, we did too! But take heart, the Lord is awakening His denominated people in order to purify them from sin! And yes, to purify the church from sinners! But no one has to be spewed out! Each one of us can be justified, or MADE righteous. And this is no fake righteousness, where we supposedly have the righteousness of Christ while still harboring sin in our hearts, no, this is so much better -- this is actual righteousness! The everlasting gospel is given to transform our minds, so we too can have the mind of Christ -- we can think like Jesus does and live like Jesus does! We truly can!

For more on this urgent topic, please see our study, ["The Lost Gospel of Christ,"](#)• by [Trent Wilde](#).