

THE FEAR OF GOD WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS
IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

by
Rodney Phillips

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Theology
Grace Theological Seminary
May 1986

Title: THE FEAR OF GOD WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS IN THE BOOK
OF JOSHUA
Author: Rodney Phillips
Degree: Master of Theology
Date: May, 1986
Advisers: John Davis and Don Fowler

The concept of the "fear of God" is a significant theme in the entire Bible. The Lord commands all Israel and all believers to fear Him. These commands are found in the Old Testament and New Testament alike. However, due to interpretive, theological and sociological problems associated with understanding this concept, there continue to be varied and conflicting conclusions.

The book of Joshua has been chosen as a starting point for further study of the "fear of God." It is a pivotal book in that it continues the history of Israel which started in the five books of Moses and which links their new life in the Promised Land. The importance of fearing God is clearly seen in this book. The contribution of learning what the "fear of God" means is likewise great in this book.

The basis of Israel's faith was formed in the era of the Pentateuch. Therefore, chapter one overviews the fear of God in the Pentateuch. Its wide usage includes fear as a result of sin and the expectation of judgment. Fear is produced as a result of a knowledge of God and of His Self-revelation. It is also associated with belief, trust, obedience, service and conscience.

The examination of the fear of God is found in chapter three. The first reference denotes that "fear of God" is conceived through a true knowledge of God and His mighty acts (4:24). This was the purpose of the Jordan River Miracle. The second reference conveys a close association between fear and worship (22:25). This was a natural association in the mind of an Israelite. The third reference is fearing God which results in service to God (24:14). In the covenant renewal, Joshua commanded Israel to fear and serve God in all truth and faithfulness.

The third and final chapter contains a brief look at the Fear of God in the New Testament. By examining the Greek terms for fear, much confusion is eliminated as to what fear means and what it does not mean. It is concluded that the believer today is to fear God. This fear, is a conscious-awareness and knowledge of God, which results in proper attitudes and actions. This includes holiness, trust, service, worship and obedience.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
Master of Theology


Adviser


Adviser

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	1
Hermeneutical Considerations	1
The Hebrew Terms for Fear and Their Cognates	3
The Septuagint	6
Chapter	
I. THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE PENTATEUCH	7
A. The Fear of God in Genesis	7
B. The Fear of God in Exodus	9
C. The Fear of God in Leviticus	10
D. The Fear of God in Numbers	11
E. The Fear of God in Deuteronomy	11
F. Summary of the Fear of God in the Pentateuch.	14
II. THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA	17
A. The Purpose and Major Themes of the Book of Joshua	17
B. A Knowledge of God and His Powerful Acts Illicits Fear - Joshua 4:24	19
C. The Fear of God Evidences itself in Worship - Joshua 22:25	27
D. The Fear of God Evidences itself in Service - Joshua 24:14	33
III. THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	42
A. The Greek Terms Used for Fear	42
B. The Fear of God in the Early Church	44
C. The Apparent Contradiction of 1 John 4:18	45
D. The Fear of God in the Life of the Believer Today	46
CONCLUSION	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

In the age of grace, it is generally conceded that there is to be no "fear of God" in the life of a believer. The modern trend of theology says the Old Testament God was a God of wrath and the New Testament God is a God of love. Or, it is thought that the idea of reverence and trust is conveyed by this concept. Is it possible that the scope of Christendom has allowed itself to believe that they are all too familiar with God in service and worship so that there is no need to fear? It is not only possible, but probable.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to give a balanced approach to the fear of God in the entire Bible. Then, specific study is given to the fear of God in the book of Joshua. This book demonstrates that a knowledge of God creates fear. This fear, then, produces worship and service and absolute obedience to God.

Hermeneutical Considerations

In arriving at a correct understanding of the fear of God in the book of Joshua, there are certain hermeneutical factors which need to be considered. These factors create the guidelines upon which this study is based.

One of the most important hermeneutical factors for understanding the concept of fearing God in Joshua, is the context. The neglect of the context is one cause of erroneous interpretation. Context is the basic format of interpretation because it forces the interpreter to examine the entire thought of the author. Indeed, "the meaning of any particular element is nearly always controlled by what proceeds and what follows."¹ Dorsett also notes that

Any given exegetical situation stands at least partially determined by its context. This contextual dependence increases as lexical definitions expand. Accordingly, the fear of God is substantially bound by contextual considerations.²

Therefore, in considering the meaning of "the fear of God," what precedes and what follows will be given utmost importance and consideration.

Along with the context, is the importance of a well-rounded knowledge of biblical content. Biblical content is essential for arriving at an understanding of the context. Much of what is written and said in the Book of Joshua is based in the Pentateuch. An understanding of what was meant in Joshua can be at least partially reached by examining the Pentateuch. Therefore, the whole of scripture will be included in reaching a final conclusion of the meaning of the fear of God in Joshua.

¹A. Berkeley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 99.

²Allen Edmund Dorsett, "The Fear of God," a Th.M. thesis (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977), pp. 32-33.

A third hermeneutical consideration is to understand the meaning of the word "fear" itself. What is the basic meaning of the Hebrew terms for fear? The answer to these questions will further explain the meaning of the fear of God in Joshua.

These three hermeneutical factors will be the primary basis for reaching an understanding of this thesis. Each one is important. None is to be elevated at the expense of another.

The Hebrew Terms for Fear and their Cognates

The root word in Hebrew which is most commonly used to express the "fear of the Lord" is יָרָא . This is the only word used for fear in the book of Joshua. It is used three times in reference to God (4:24; 22:25; 24:14) and once in reference to man (4:14).

The verb, יָרָא , appears in the gal, niphal and piel stems. The piel has the meaning "make afraid, terrify," but is not used in reference to God.¹ The niphal form has three basic meanings: a) be fearful, dreadful; b) cause astonishment and awe; c) inspire reverence, godly fear, and awe. The second and third meanings are most often associated with God.

¹Francis Brown; S. R. Driver; and C. A. Briggs, editors. The New Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Lafayette: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1981), reprint edition, p. 431. Hereafter referred to as BDB.

The qal form has three basic meanings: a) fear, be afraid; b) stand in awe of; c) fear, reverence, honor. Within the primary meaning of fearing, being afraid, it is used: a) absolutely (Gen 3:10); b) with the person or thing feared (Num 14:9); c) with לִפְנֵי (Deut 1:29); d) with the infinitive and לַעֲשׂוֹת (Gen 19:30), meaning "fear to do a thing."¹ All three are used in reference to God.

There are two noun forms from קָרַע . The feminine form is קִרְיָה and is used in four basic ways: (1) fear or terror (Isa 7:25); (2) object of terror (Ezek 1:18); (3) reverence (often in Prov); (4) the law as revered (Ps 19:10). The masculine form is קִרְיָה . It has the following meanings: (1) fear or terror (Gen 9:2); (2) reverence (Mal 1:6); (3) object of reverence (Isa 8:1f); (4) an awe inspiring deed (Deut 4:34).²

Thus, it seems that קָרַע originally meant "to tremble" and "to quake."³ It is often used in the Old Testament where fear is not emphasized as much as other ideas.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Gunther Wanke, " φοβος and φοβεομαι in the Old Testament," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 9. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and edited by Geoffery W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p. 199.

In light of the study of the Hebrew terms for fear, one can conclude that the primary meaning is "fear, fright." This is especially true for $\lambda\gamma'$. This meaning cannot be ignored in its usage throughout the Old Testament. This meaning is not the emphasis in many passages, but it is the primary, basic meaning. The use of $\lambda\gamma'$ with God denotes one's attitude toward God. This attitude is commanded (Eccl 12:13) and commended (Job 1:8). This attitude of fear toward God was to be turned into action. Israel's response to this attitude was a responsibility to keep the covenant that God had made with them.

The Septuagint

The Septuagint had several words for translating the concept of fear. The Greek word for reverence was $\epsilonὐσεβεία$. It meant "reverence toward the gods, piety, religion."¹ The normal word for fear was $\φόβος$ which meant "to strike with fear, to terrify, frighten, alarm." It only rarely meant "to stand in awe, dread."²

¹Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Robert McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 640.

²Ibid., p. 1770.

CHAPTER I

THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE PENTATEUCH

In order to gain a well-rounded knowledge of biblical content that surrounds the Book of Joshua, one must look at the Five Books of Moses. In examining the fear of God in the Pentateuch, one can gain an understanding of what an Israelite understood by the concept of fearing God. Thus, the study of the history prior to the time of Joshua is an extremely important step. One can readily see many parallels between the Pentateuch and Joshua. This is especially true of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Fear of God in Genesis

The first instance of the fear of God comes directly after the Fall in Genesis 3:10. As God reveals Himself to man who has fallen into sin, man is afraid of God. Thus, fear is seen as the result of sin and the expectation of God's promised judgment for disobedience (Gen 2:16, 17; 3:2, 3).

In Genesis 18:15 Sarah fears God because she has been confronted with her sin of laughing in disbelief. This fear was a natural response of a sinner before a holy God.

In Genesis 22:12, Abraham feared God out of obedience. God tested Abraham through the attempted sacrifice of

his son. Thus, fear of God is the obedience of faith. Adam disobeyed God's command and discovered the fear of God, while Abraham obeyed God and learned the fear of God.¹

Jacob's vision in Genesis 28:11-22 caused him to fear God while in His presence. Jacob experienced that fear as a response of a sinful man in the presence of a holy God. Here, the fear of God is in relation to His special revelation. Also implied is a sense of worship and reverence.

The final occurrence in Genesis is found in Joseph's test of his brothers who stood before him as those in need during the famine. Joseph assures his brothers that he will deal justly with them because he fears God. It appears that this usage is to have some knowledge of God's standards. Or it was at least conscience being the guardian of international morality and that which restrained the expression of man's innate sinfulness and depravity.²

Throughout Genesis, the fear of God is often related to God's confrontation of man in his sinfulness, and to God's revelation of Himself and His will. It also seems to be used in relationship to man's conscience or to the knowledge which keeps man's sinfulness from being fully expressed.

¹Timothy Hoyt, "An Exposition of the Fear of God in the Pentateuch," a post-graduate seminar paper (Grace Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 10. Hereafter referred to as "An Exposition."

²John Calvin, Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, vol. 2, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 343.

There is also in Genesis, the unique occurrence of fear as a name for God.¹

The Fear of God in Exodus

The fear of God in Exodus is seen in relation to the development of the nation of Israel and her leaders. The fear of God is a significant theme in the building of the theocratic nation. Indeed, the Israelites experienced firsthand the terror of the Lord in His dealings with the surrounding enemies and the nation of Israel itself.

In Exodus 1:17, the midwives feared God and thus did not do as the king of Egypt commanded, in killing all male babies. This fear of God was a "providential consciousness of God's standards."² God justly rewarded them.

Further in Exodus, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, suggests choosing several qualified men to assist him in judging all the people (Chapter 18). The most distinctive character of the men is that they were to be those who feared God (v. 21). This fear would help them deal justly and without partiality. Thus, the fear of God is the conformity to God's standards which insures justice and the avoidance of partiality.

The final occurrence of fear is in Exodus 34:10. There, Moses confessed the people's unfaithfulness and in response, God made a covenant to perform miracles before

¹Hoyt, "An Exposition," pp. 12-13.

²Ibid., p. 14.

Israel and the nations. It would be a "fearful thing" because he would conquer all the nations of Canaan. This work of God would be intended to "instill into the theocratic nation, the fear basic to removing their obstinate character by showing God's judgment upon rebellious nations."¹

One concludes that there are several ways in which the fear of God is expressed in Exodus. There is a providential knowledge of God's standards which hung over the nation of Israel (1:17). Second, the personal response of Moses to the revelation of God caused him to become a willing servant of God (3:6). Third, a momentary terror of the surrounding nations caused them to obey and avoid divine judgment (15:14-16). Fourth, belief and reverence is closely linked to fear. Israel feared God and thereby faithfully submitted themselves to God and to His servant Moses (14:31). Their belief came out of fear as the two were closely identified with each other.

The Fear of God in Leviticus

There seem to be two main ways in which the fear of God is expressed in Leviticus. The first is a knowledge of God in His law and His judgment. The fear of God was to keep them from the transgression of the law (19:14, 32; 25:17, 36, 43). The second way is seen in two passages which deal with fearing God's sanctuary (19:30; 26:2). This

¹Ibid., p. 19.

type of fear leads one to obedience in honoring the sacred place of God's meeting with Moses, the priest and the people.¹ The place of God's meeting was sacred because of God's divine presence.

The Fear of God in Numbers

The main factor to be pointed out about the fear of God in Numbers is that there is no fear of God mentioned. Numbers is a book about the growing obstinence of the people, with increased murmuring and rebellion. They, therefore, demonstrated that they did not fear God.

The Fear of God in Deuteronomy

There have long been observations made concerning the similarity of Deuteronomy and Joshua. Linguistically, Deuteronomy has closer links with Joshua than with any other part of the former prophets. The content of Joshua likewise makes it the perfect sequel to Deuteronomy. The process of the conquest began in Deuteronomy is carried out in Joshua. Thus, one sees the special importance of studying the fear of God in Deuteronomy.

In contrast to Numbers, the fear of God is a predominant theme in Deuteronomy. The second generation of Israel was to remember the fear caused by God's Self-revelation and by His judgments upon their parents' disobedience.

¹Moshe Weinfeld, "The Fear of God," in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 276.

They, then, were to learn for themselves to fear the Lord.

Kenoyer summarizes it quite well:

The fear of the Lord was the sum of a godly righteous attitude which was to attend the children of Israel through every generation . . . a fear of God was evoked by revelation of Him and His Word. Both the godly and the ungodly were provoked to fear when confronted by His majesty and power.¹

The Sinai experience was to be constantly remembered so that the nation might ever be conscious of God. The nation was to constantly reflect upon and talk of God's deeds so that all future generations might learn to fear God (6:12; 14:23; 17:19; 31:12, 13). The fear of God was something to be taught and learned. The learning of the fear of God involved the reading and studying of the law which was to build the consciousness of God in the nation, in the king, and in each successive generation. "Fearing God, 'all the days' means constant awareness of God (6:12; 8:11, 14, 19)."²

There were five main requirements placed on the nation by God: fear God, walk in His way, love Him, serve Him, and keep His precepts (10:12, 13). These were all bound up together, almost inseparably, each explained and

¹Michelle Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study of the Fear of Yahweh in Deuteronomy," an M.Div. thesis (Grace Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 7. Hereafter referred to as "An Inductive Study."

²Weinfeld, Deuteronomy, p. 280.

modified by the other. The fear of God, keeping His commandments, and walking in His way almost became synonymous.¹ The fear of God was to be instilled in the nation by the judicial action of the people. Many passages speak of transgressions for which the transgressor was to be put to death. This sentence of death served as a deterrent to evil, and as a means to fearing God. This fear of God was to keep Israel from doing evil.

All the kings of Israel were to read the law to the congregation in order to learn to fear the Lord (17:19). No one was to be kept from hearing the law, for in hearing the law, godly fear was enhanced. Thus, "it was through the written revelation of the Lord God that the fear of Yahweh could be conceived in the believing hearts of the Israelites."²

There are two other senses of fearing God in Deuteronomy. One is being afraid of God and His punitive judgments (5:5; 17:13; 19:20). The second, is the "reverential awe" found frequently throughout Deuteronomy and the Old Testament (5:29; 10:12).

There are several ways in which the fear of God is described in Deuteronomy. All of these are summarized by Hoyt as follows: 1) the consciousness of God: 2) obedience;

¹Hoyt, "An Exposition," p. 27.

²Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 32.

3) knowledge of God and His law; 4) humility; 5) fear of punishment; 6) paralyzing terror.¹

Kenoyer summarized the fear of the Lord as a concept which is the total expression of a righteous man's response to God as revealed in the scriptures.²

Summary of the Fear of God in the Pentateuch³

The fear of God in the Pentateuch can be summarized in three major categories: 1) the actual experience of terror, dread or fear; 2) the result of such an experience of fear, whether or not the actual experience was past; 3) the object of the fear.

1. Fear as actual experiences

a. Fear of judgment because of sin

- 1) Adam feared God because of his disobedience and deserving judgment.
- 2) Sarah feared God because she laughed at God's Word in disbelief.
- 3) Moses feared God's judgment upon Israel because of their worship of the graven image.

b. Fear at the revelation of God or His will

- 1) Abraham was afraid as God appeared to him to ratify His covenant.
- 2) Jacob was afraid when he awoke from his dream at Bethel.
- 3) Moses was afraid to look at the burning bush.

¹Hoyt, "An Exposition," p. 30.

²Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 32.

³See Hoyt, "An Exposition," pp. 30-34.

- 4) Israel was afraid when God revealed Himself and His law at Sinai.
- c. Momentary dread - Pharaoh's servants brought their servant and flocks inside when Moses predicted the great hail from God.
- d. Disabling terror
 - 1) God promised to send disabling terror ahead of Israel when they were ready to conquer the land (compare the usage of "hornets," Exod 23:28; Deut 7:20; Josh 24:12).
 - 2) Because of disobedience, God would send His terror upon later generations of Israel.
2. Results of such experiences of fear, whether or not the actual experience which caused the fear was past.
 - a. Conscience
 - 1) Although fallen, man still possessed the image of God and innate sense of morality which either condemned or praised his behavior.
 - 2) The midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's immoral command.
 - b. Belief
 - 1) Abraham obeyed God in faith - he believed God could raise his son from the dead.
 - 2) After crossing the Red Sea, Israel believed that God was God.
 - c. Knowledge of God and His will - at Sinai, the nation fell in terror but Moses said, fear not, for God had come to test them, so that the fear of God, the knowledge of His character and law might remain with them.
 - d. Worship
 - 1) Jacob worshipped God at the place of his vision of God.
 - 2) Israel sang a song of deliverance by their God.
 - e. Obedience
 - 1) Abraham obeyed in complete trust.

- 2) Many references in Deuteronomy speak of fearing and obeying, or fearing and keeping or observing the statutes.
 - f. Humility - When Israel remembered total dependence on God's provision for them in forty years of wandering, they were to be humbled before the Provider.
3. The object of fear - the object was God.
 - a. Israel called God the awesome God.
 - b. Israel called God's acts fearful and awesome.

CHAPTER II

THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The Purpose and Major Themes of the Book of Joshua

One might summarize the purpose of the book of Joshua as "the faithfulness of God."¹ Throughout the book, the theological tendence is to emphasize the faithfulness of God through Joshua in keeping his promises.² The promises of God made with His people Israel, long before the time of Joshua, are now being fulfilled. Through the entire conquest, God's faithfulness is demonstrated. Once Israel entered the land, she was yet to go through many perilous times. Enemy armies would sweep through the land. Still to come were many battles. But with each crisis, God remained loyal to the Word once spoken.

This purpose in the entire account provides "an official and authoritative account of God's faithfulness in leading his people into the promised land (Joshua 21:43-45)."³ The book of Joshua continues the history of Israel

¹Don Fowler, "History of Israel," class notes, Grace Theological Seminary, 1984.

²Ibid.

³John Davis, Conquest and Crisis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), p. 22.

which started in the five books of Moses and is the important link in the chain of God's plan of salvation for man.¹

In keeping with the purpose, a dominant theme is that of the covenant, God made with the Israelites. This is seen in the circumcision (5:2-9), the Passover (5:10-11), and in inheriting the land (1:11 along with 18:3). Much of the book focuses on the land. This includes possessing (1:2) and its distribution (13:8; 19:48). The author emphasized the fulfillment of the covenant promise of inheriting the land.

Another dominant theme is God's holiness and His judgment of sin. What needs to be elevated is Joshua's righteousness and his awareness of a holy God who judges sin. When all Israel was faithful to God, they were victorious. When they abandoned God's directions, they were failures.

The overall purpose and each of the above mentioned themes will be seen in the passages surrounding the mentioning of the fear of God. They have a rather major part in guiding one to a conclusion as to the meaning of the fear of God. Each of these contexts where the fear of God is mentioned in Joshua will now be examined.

¹Ibid.

A Knowledge of God and His Powerful Acts

Illicits Fear - Joshua 4:24

The Context of Joshua Chapter Four

The crossing of the Jordan narrative is recorded in chapters three and four. The crossing narrative may be divided into three main parts: Preparing to cross (3:1-13), the actual crossing event (3:14-17), and the memorial of the crossing (4:1-24). The purpose for the miracle of the Jordan River event is given in verse twenty-four.

The time had come for Israel to prepare to go across the Jordan River. The people had moved from Shittim, had pitched their camp near the shores of the Jordan and were about to cross the river (vv. 1-4). The priests took the ark to the head of the people and they all marched toward the Jordan. Before crossing the river, the people were given some instructions by the officers and by Joshua himself. Further orders were given by Joshua to the priests which were carried out in due course (vv. 5-6). After addressing the people, Joshua received from God the assurance of his unfailing assistance along with further instructing the priests to carry the ark to the river and to "stand in it." All of the instructions from God were then carried out (vv. 7-13).¹

¹See the following for an examination of the crossing narrative: Paul Saydon, "The Crossing of the Jordan," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 12 (April 1950):194-207.

The miracle is recorded next in verses 14-17. The priests went first to the waters of the Jordan which was at its flood stage (3:15; 4:18). Once they stepped into the river, the waters stopped (v. 16). The waters were heaped up in one heap at the city of Adam which is near Zeretan. This was approximately 13-15 miles north of the Dead Sea which permitted a wide expanse for the children of Israel to cross.

In chapter four, two memorials were established to commemorate the miracle of the Jordan crossing. One is described in verses 9-18 which was placed near or at the camp of Gilgal (vv. 20-24). This was also to provide a memorial for future generations and to serve as a sign of God's power to the nations around them.

Also important to the concept of fear is the prominence of the ark of the testimony. This was a witness and a testimony of God's presence. The ark contained the tablets of the covenant (Exod 27:21; Lev 24:3). Their existence in the ark was a testimony to the reality of God and to their relationship to God.

The Meaning of the Fear of God in Joshua 4:24

The very last feature of chapter four is the revealed purpose for the miracles. One notes that there appear to be two purposes listed in verse 24. The first one is directed to the nations but, as will be examined later, the ultimate purpose is directed toward Israel. That this

miracle served a purpose is demonstrated by the first word of the Hebrew text (לֵאמֹר), followed later by a causal $\text{וְ$.¹ So important is this concept of fearing God that Arayaprteep says יִרְאָה is the key word for understanding the whole section of 3:1-5:1, for יִרְאָה speaks of Israel in the covenant relationship with God.²

The demonstration of God's power was first, to cause the nations to submit and flee. Once Israel entered into the land, they were to remove the inhabitants. In Deuteronomy 20:17-18, God commanded Israel that once they entered into the land of Canaan, they were to eliminate every living creature. This was God's plan for giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites. Through the extermination of the Canaanites, Israel was to inherit and inhabit the land without any threat to their purity. God was holy and placed those same holy commands upon Israel. Thus, Israel is commanded to eliminate any influence that would threaten that purity. The nature of the religion of the Canaanites was syncretistic. Thus, for Canaan and Israel to coexist would be very threatening to Israel's purity.³

¹Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline, Second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 36, 61.

²K. Arayaprteep, "A Note on יִרְאָה in Joshua 4:24" Vetus Testamentum 22 (April 1972):241.

³For a more complete study, see: Tommy Jones, "Deuteronomy 20:17-18: Yahweh's Command of Extermination," M. Div. Thesis (Grace Theological Seminary, 1984).

The fear of God toward the nations was to show that God was giving the gift of land to the Canaanites and was also protecting their religious purity. The command to eliminate and drive out the inhabitants (Deut 9:1-5) was intended to strike fear in the hearts of the Canaanites as Israel moved into the land. Thus, the result would be that the Canaanites would be so taken over with fear that they would voluntarily flee to another land.¹

The fear produced in the nations was one purpose of the miracle. But there seems to be a more ultimate purpose for the nation of Israel. The miracle at the Jordan was done so that Israel might always fear the Lord their God. It is true that the land was truly a gift of God and an act of grace. The Pentateuch clearly points out this fact. But this verse also indicates that the gift of the land was to produce fear in the Israelites.

There are several reasons as to why the ultimate purpose of the miracle should be directed toward Israel. Arayaprteep notes that "Joshua 4:24b is consistent with the peculiarities of the Deuteronomic teaching concerning the exhortation of Israel to fear, i.e. to be faithful to Yahweh."² One cannot ignore the context of 3:1-4:24. This section does not center around the nations, but around Israel. In this section the nations are only mentioned in

¹Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²K. Arayaprteep, "A Note on $\chi\tau$ in Joshua 4:24," p. 241.

verse 24. Also, it does not fit the Deuteronomic theology to say that the nations are to fear God "all the days of their lives."¹

Having established the fact that the ultimate demonstration of God's power was to cause Israel to fear, what is the meaning of fear? Certainly the mighty God and His mighty acts were not to be ignored, nor taken lightly. They were to develop an attitude of fear before God. What, then, does this concept mean?

Several views have been proposed, each having an element of truth. Fowler noted that this concept is synonymous with worship.² Woudstra believes that this fear is not dread but contains a recognition of God's glory and majesty along with trust.³ Butler says that the actual purpose of the miracle and of the author

is to bring Israel to reflect upon her history . . . and to respond with reverence and awe to Yahweh, the God who has brought the nations to their knees. The knowledge about God results not in pride and dogmatism, but in worship and service.⁴

Because of the overall use of fear in the Old Testament, each of the above meanings is possible. But from the

¹Ibid., pp. 241-242.

²Fowler, "History of Israel."

³Marten Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, in The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), p. 97.

⁴Trent Butler, Joshua, in Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 7, ed. David Hubbard and Glen Barker (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), p. 51.

context of Joshua 1-4, the main point that seems to be brought out is what causes the fear and not what the fear is itself. This is the main thrust. A knowledge of God and His mighty acts was to produce fear in the hearts of every Israelite.

This is supported by the memorial stones that were set up as a witness to future generations of God's mighty acts. On two occasions in this chapter this is seen. In verse six, the stones were to serve as a sign so that in the future, "when your children ask you, 'what do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off . . . These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." In verse 21, Joshua repeats the same admonition. Israel and future Israel were to elevate in their minds the fact that the Lord their God dried up the Jordan and allowed them to cross on dry ground. This mighty act of God was to be remembered that all Israel might fear God all the days of their lives.

This fact is not just found within the framework of the conquest. Throughout all of Israel's history, God's powerful acts created fear. The first recording of Israel fearing God is found in Exodus 14:31. This fear was provoked because of a great act of God. The great act which provoked this fear in Israel was the power of God demonstrated through delivering them across the Red Sea.¹

¹Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 8.

The language is very descriptive as to God's mighty deeds. Deuteronomy 4:34 tells of the acts of God in bringing Israel out of Egypt. This was done by "a mighty hand," "an outstretched arm" and "great terrors" by God. God's mighty acts throughout her history created fear in Israel. Another example is the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai (Exod 20:19-20). The revelation of God produced fear, existing in light of the covenantal relationship between God and Israel.¹

The mighty acts of God, as recorded in His Word, should produce fear in the believer today. It should produce absolute trust, absolute dependence and absolute obedience. None of these elements can be ignored as the believer stands before the Holy God. Since God's acts and power cause fear and demand acknowledgement, the term, *phobos*, denotes not just elementary fear resulting from threat. But it is fear of the author of the threat, so that it becomes submissive reverence and recognition.² Fear then, becomes at least part of the basis for man's obedience to God's divine demands (Deut 10:12, Eccl 12:13).³

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Gunther Wanke, "*phobos* and *phobosmal* in the Old Testament," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 9, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 201.

³Stephen Harthan, "The Fear of God in the Old Testament," a post-graduate seminar paper (Grace Theological Seminary, 1976), p. 15.

The fear that Israel was to have, was to be continual. The last phrase of Joshua 4:24 is **כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּוְתְּךָ**. There are several ways to translate this, but the idea is clear. An Israelite was to fear God all of his days and all of his life. This final phrase helps one to see, at least partially, what the concept of fearing God means. Fearing God "all the days" means constant awareness of God.¹ It is God-consciousness. It proceeds out of a knowledge of God, His character, His power and His mighty acts. It results in a relationship of intimacy and an awareness of His presence. Kenoyer put it well when he wrote, "God-consciousness is one of the most richly descriptive characteristics of the 'fear of the Lord.' Continual consideration of God as He has revealed Himself to man is the essence of the godly soul."² This is true for the believer today.

An example of this might be highlighted in the life of Enoch. Enoch "walked with God" which indicates an awareness of the presence of God.³ The idea is that the fear of God (a God-consciousness) must be the guiding principle in man's life and is to remain uppermost in his mind and heart. For this reason, the Torah was to be read and studied at all times. Through this manner, the people might fear God all

¹Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 280.

²Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 58.

³John Murray, "The Fear of God," In Principles of Conduct (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 240.

the days they lived on this earth.¹ This awareness of God's presence is the "fear of the Lord." This "fear of the Lord" is produced by a knowledge of God's mighty acts.

The Fear of God Evidences itself in Worship -

Joshua 22:25

The Context of Joshua 22

Joshua 22 is connected with several other passages in the Old Testament which explain why Joshua sent the two and one-half tribes away. One must go back to Deuteronomy 3:12-29 and Numbers 32 to see the setting for Joshua 22. Reuben, Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh, because of their great amount of cattle, desired to settle in the land of Jazer and Gilead which were good grazing areas. Moses granted the request, conditioned upon those tribes remaining with the others to assist in the conquest of the promised land.

Once they had realized the conquest of the land and the allotment of the territories to the tribes, Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh together (cf. Josh 1:12-18). He commended them for their faithfulness (v. 2) and then expressed to them their freedom to go to inherit their land.

There are many who believe that this allotment was wrong. Some even say those tribes were sinning in their

¹Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School, pp. 279-280.

desire for the Transjordan area. Is this necessarily true? Actually, the eastern boundary of the Promised Land was not the Jordan Valley, but the mountain range of Gilead. Second, Joshua gave his full blessing to the tribes and indicated their right to settle in the Transjordan area. Apparently, he did not regard the area as "impure." Also, it seems that since God delivered the land of Sihon and Og to Israel that He intended for them to inherit it as well (24:8).¹ Thus, there does not appear to be anything wrong with this allotment.

Before the two and one-half tribes departed, Joshua exhorted them concerning some very important spiritual matters (v. 5). Six infinitives are used to emphasize their responsibility to remain faithful to God, His Word and Will. These tribes took this exhortation very seriously. This is indicated in their building of an altar on their way home (v. 10). When the other tribes realized that another altar had been erected, they immediately thought it was in opposition to the one in Shiloh. Thus, they gathered together and prepared for war (v. 12).

Phinehas and the Israelites charged them with three kinds of sin. They called this a tresspass (טִפְסָה) in verse sixteen and an act of rebellion in verses eighteen and nineteen. It was also likened to the "iniquity of Peor." The background for the sin of Peor is Numbers 25. This account

¹Davis, Conquest and Crisis, p. 85.

tells the story of Israel's failures on the border of the land. At Shittim, next to Moab, Israel became involved with Moabite women and the Moabite cults, particularly those connected with the Baal of Peor. God's response to this idolatry and immorality was to demand for those involved to die.¹ Thus, the sin of Peor was open idolatry and disobedience to God's will regarding worship.

The response of the two-and-one-half tribes is recorded in verses 21-29. The altar was not designed to be in opposition to the one at Shiloh, neither was it for sacrifices. Rather, it was to be a witness (7✓) between them and future generations. Their concern was for their children to have equal rights to worship God on the west side of the Jordan. They deemed it necessary for a ceremonial altar to be erected as a sign of their right to worship Jehovah. They did not want their future generations to stop "fearing the Lord" (v. 25). The Israelites were satisfied with this response.

In actuality, the erection of the altar was wrong. The law stated that all Israelite males were to appear before the Lord at the Tabernacle three times a year (Exod 23:17). Thus, no other was to be built. It was God's plan for all Israel to remain unified through the faithful worship at Shiloh. This action by the two-and-one-half tribes

¹C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, vol. 3, in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. by James Martain (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), pp. 203-205.

was the beginning of many independent acts which eventually led to the fragmentation of the tribes of Israel. The overall unifying factor in ancient Israel was the worship of the Lord their God. This may have been the main purpose for the recording of the story of the altar. It was to warn Israel of the danger in losing sight of its unity. Their unity was disrupted when unauthorized cult places were erected.¹

Having established the fact that the altar was wrong, one can easily see why they erected it by examining the physical structure of Palestine. The Jordan Valley is increasingly depressed as it moves toward the Dead Sea. At the Dead Sea, it is 1300 feet below sea level. Also, the mountainous plateau on each side of the Jordan Valley rises to the height of approximately 2,000 feet. Therefore, to approach either side of the Jordan is difficult. During the warm season, the heat increases fatigue and discourages travel.² This is seemingly behind the reasoning of the tribes to build another altar. But Israel did not need to assist in creating more dangers of disunity than were already present in the physical nature of the land.

The Meaning of the Fear of God in Joshua 22:25

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh responded to the threat in verse twenty-five by

¹Marten Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, p. 319.

²William G. Blaikie, The Book of Joshua (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), pp. 371-372.

saying, "So your descendents might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord." They showed great concern that their children might one day think that they do not have as intimate a relationship with Him as their brethren do, since they are geographically removed from God's sanctuary. This, then, might cause them to believe that their obligation to fear him is also less.¹

When the tribes came to see about the purpose for the altar, they believed it was one where sacrifices would be made and be equal to the one at Shiloh. It was in their mind equal to a place of worship. They likened it to the sin of Peor which was the worship of a Baal god. The entire context is worship.

The response of the Reubenites, the Gadites and Manasseh showed that this altar was not in the place of the altar at Shiloh. But it was to serve the function of allowing them to continue their stance of worshiping and serving Yahweh alone. They did not want any of them, nor any future generations to stop worshiping the Lord and fearing the Lord. The purpose for the altar was to provide the means of worship for the present parties and for their future generations. Fear, in verse twenty-five, seems to be so very similar to worship. Delitzsch offers this meaning by paraphrasing as follows: "Might make them desist from the

¹R. Druker, The Book of Joshua (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, 1982), p. 437.

worship of Jehovah."¹

In the religion of Israel, there was a natural relationship between fear and worship. The concept of worship to an Israelite included all aspects of his life. He was to serve, love, obey his God in fearing and worshiping Him. Israel was commanded to "fear the Lord thy God, and to serve Him (Deut 6:13). The Psalmist tells them to serve the Lord with fear (Ps 2:17). Pfeiffer cites several biblical examples and other cultural examples in defending his thesis that fear of God resulted in service and worship.²

One cannot ignore the basic understanding of real fear being a part of the word *יָרָא*. But, beyond this basic meaning is a strong attraction to service and worship. This concept includes real fear, but it also produces real worship.³

For the believer today, the fear of God should relate to all elements of his life and religion. It should result in a strong attitude of fear, which is not negative, but positive. It is positive in the sense that it creates a strong attitude of desiring to please God. This attitude produces action--action that is seen in worship and service.

¹C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. James Martain (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 221.

²Pfeiffer, "The Fear of God," p. 44.

³Harthan, "The Fear of God in the Old Testament," pp. 20-21.

The Fear of God Evidences itself in Service -

Joshua 24:14

The Context of Joshua 24

Joshua brought his ministry to a close, in the same manner as Moses had done (Deut 29:1f). He proposed a solemn renewal of the covenant with the Lord. Joshua did not choose the site of Shiloh which was the place of the national sanctuary. This is very significant, especially in light of chapter eight. But Shechem was set apart for such a ceremony as this in light of its rich heritage, going back to the time of the Patriarchs. This was the place where Abraham received the first promise from God after going into Canaan (Gen 12:6-7). Jacob settled here after his return from Mesopotamia and is also the place where he purified his house from the strange gods (Gen 33:19; 35:2-4).

Chapter twenty-four opens with an imperfect waw which closely joins this chapter with the chapter twenty-three narrative. The relationship is underlined by repeating the same audience (23:2 and 24:1). Syntax and content tie these two chapters tightly together.¹

All of Joshua's exhortations and commands center around giving instruction for enduring the land of Canaan. The land has been conquered and inherited. Now, Israel must carry out the conquest to its fullest and thus, the need for

¹Butler, Joshua, p. 265.

obedience to God's plan for continuing in the land of milk and honey.

In the opening verses of chapter twenty-three, Joshua calls for all Israel to be completely obedient to God's Word (vv. 1-6). The conquest began based on the authority of God's Word. Now it must continue on that same basis. Second, Joshua calls for a separation from the people and the gods of the land (vv. 7-16). Israel is to be separated from them and separated unto Yahweh (cf. Exod 23:13; Deut 12:3).

Chapter twenty-four begins the formal covenant renewal at Shechem. Joshua 23:16 indicates that a formal covenant was already in existence. This was, of course, the covenant established at Sinai shortly after the deliverance out of Egypt. This covenant renewal was to be a binding commitment to God's Word.

One can easily see many similar features in this covenant renewal with the Near Eastern treaties. The renewal opens with the preamble to the covenant renewal (vv. 1-2). This simply is an identification of the God and the parties involved in the treaty. Here, this is Jehovah and Israel. The second part is the historical prologue where the provision is made by the king for his people. Thus, Joshua reviewed God's blessing upon the nation of Israel. This was a span from the time of Abraham's call to the conquest of the land of Canaan. What is signalled out is the

sufficiency of God in providing the military and economic needs of Israel.¹

Joshua begins by reviewing the hand of God upon them from Mesopotamia to Egypt (vv. 2-4). God called Abraham, led him throughout Canaan and made his offspring many. Joshua then recalls Israel's travels from Egypt to Canaan (vv. 5-7). God plagued Egypt and brought them out. There the power of God was demonstrated (Exod 8:2; 14:20, 28). Then Israel went through the wilderness experience. It was in the wilderness that Israel experienced a time of discipline and training (Deut 8:2-6) which was a vital time of preparation for serving God in Canaan. Through the wilderness experiences, Israel learned of the name and power of God.

Joshua then retells of the journey from the wilderness to the land of Canaan (vv. 8-12). This is the final stage in reaching the Promised Land. It was Yahweh alone who gave the victory. It was Yahweh who sent panic ("hornets") among the gentile nations and who destroyed their power. It was Yahweh who gave protection to His people. Then came the gift of the land (v. 13). Israel received a land on which they had not toiled and labored. God brought Israel there. He was responsible for it all.

¹Davis, Conquest and Crisis, p. 88.

Now Joshua turns to exhort Israel to respond by "fearing the Lord."¹

The Meaning of the Fear of God in Joshua 24:14

Joshua begins verse fourteen with "Now therefore" indicating a sense of urgency. This transition indicates the legal setting of a covenant within which the command to fear and serve God are to be seen. It is a purposeful, abrupt change of moods. The purpose is to cause Israel to see their only response is to obey God. A decision must be made. In response to the majestic acts of God, Israel is obligated to maintain a proper relationship of fearing and serving God.

This chapter is Joshua's final effort to strengthen and preserve the nation of Israel's commitment to the Lord. Joshua had personally experienced the power of God and now desires Israel to recommit herself to that same God. Joshua had experienced the great deliverance out of Egypt. He had been with Moses at Sinai. Joshua had been present at some of the sacred meetings such as the giving of the Law. At Kadesh-barnea he voiced his complete confidence in the God of Israel. At the end of the forty years of wilderness wanderings, Joshua heard Moses' final warning just prior to the entrance into Canaan and Moses' death.

¹E. John Hamlin, Joshua, Inheriting the Land, in International Theological Commentary, George Knight and Fredrick Holmgren, editors (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 193-196.

Now, like Moses, Joshua saw dangerous trends developing. Considering the fact that Joshua had witnessed earlier Israelites turning from the Lord, it is not surprising that he calls for a recommitment to the covenant. Joshua calls for an inward commitment as well as an outward confession of the Lord.

Joshua calls for Israel to fear God. The word for fear is an imperative. It is the only command to fear God in the book of Joshua. The proper relationship, then, is no option. It includes the "proper attitude of reverence and awe in response to the majestic acts of God and the proper action of service in its widest sense."¹

The command to fear is qualified in two ways. It is qualified first by, **וְכָל**, which means "totally." This word is used in reference to men with Noah (Gen 6:9); as a command to Abraham (17:1); as a demand placed upon a person who entered into the cultic worship (Ps 15:2). The second qualifying word is, **וְנֶאֱמָר**, which means "faithfully." This designates the idea of a quality within men. It is that of trustworthiness and faithfulness. This quality is to be found in speech and in deed in relationship to God and to other people. Joshua also calls for a proper allegiance to God. Israel must put away the worship of false gods of their ancestors.²

¹Butler, Joshua, p. 273.

²Ibid., pp. 272-273.

The fear of God and the service to God is at the heart of Joshua's message. Here, the fear of God is associated with serving God. There is a striking parallelism between fearing God and serving God. The idea of serving God is mentioned ten times in Joshua's speech and Israel's response and eleven times in the entire chapter (v. 14 (2), 15 (3), 16, 19, 21, 22, 24, 31).

"Fearing the Lord sums up the religious attitude expected of the Old Testament believer."¹ Fearing God is an "attitude" of awe and of filial reverence which befits the child of God over against his Maker and Redeemer."² While reverence and awe is the attitude of fear, service is the action of fearing God. The concept of the fear of God in Joshua and in the whole Old Testament seems to include both. It is not just an attitude of reverence. It is that and is also an assumed response of service and worship as seen in chapter twenty-three. To fear, is to follow the Lord hearkening into His voice wholeheartedly and sincerely.³

The concept of serving God associated with fearing God is certainly not foreign to the Pentateuch. Such requirements from God were to fear, walk, love, serve and keep His commandments (Deut 10:12-13). Kenoyer puts this in the proper covenant perspective. She notes that each verb

¹Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, p. 351.

²Ibid.

³Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School, p. 66.

"represents a manner of life, and each is a correlary to the other. The attitude of heart is as much a necessity in fulfilling the requirement of the covenant as the outward act of obedience."¹ In Deuteronomy 10:20, Moses commands Israel to fear, serve, cling and swear by His name. Joshua is in complete agreement with Deuteronomy in that fear precedes the other responses. Schroeder goes on to suggest that fear is inclusive of the "serving," "clinging," and "swearing."² Kenoyer summarizes by saying that "fear is fundamental to true religion, that right response to a knowledge of the Lord, and is inclusive of obedience, trust, and loyalty."³

The concept of fearing and serving God was known in the ancient Near East. To "fear the gods" was the expression of a correct attitude to them. "Service" to the gods was primarily done in the cultic services of sacrifice, prayers and festivals. So the fear of the gods was expressed in service to the gods.⁴

While wanting to support service to God in an ancient Near Eastern setting, one does not want to over

¹Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 30.

²Schroeder, Wilhelm Julius. "Deuteronomy," trans. by Philip Schaff, in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, ed. John P. Lange, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 114-115.

³Kenoyer, "An Inductive Study," p. 30.

⁴Helmer Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, trans. by John Sturdy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 111-112.

simplify the concepts. A careful examination of ancient Near Eastern religious literature suggests that the concept was used in a variety of ways. A few of these are now examined.

The fear of the gods existed in the form of terror or dread. Dyrness notes that "in pagan religions people live in constant fear of the Spirits which they must seek to appease . . ."¹ Another concept is found in Babylonian wisdom literature which demonstrates the meaning of fear as reverence.² In another Babylonian wisdom text, The Babylonian Theodicy, the fear of the gods is seen as a way to produce one's material worth: "He who waits on his god has a protecting angel. The humble man who fears (palih) his goddess accumulates wealth."³ In Egyptian literature there is a connection between fear of the gods and worship. In Ugaritic literature, awe and worship are used to express the fear of the gods.⁴

With all of these various uses of fear, one common feature is observable. This common feature is that the concept of fear is almost seen in a cultic relationship. The

¹William Dyrness, Themes in Old Testament Theology (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), p. 162.

²W. G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (London: Oxford University, 1960), p. 105.

³Ibid., p. 71.

⁴Loren R. Fisher, Ras Shamra Parallels, Vol. 1. (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972), p. 212.

exception is the meaning of terror or dread. Ringgren states: "We notice that fear of the gods is the basic idea which is expressed in cultic service, in sacrifice, prayer, etc."¹

So one can see that there was a natural connection made in the heart and mind of the ancient Israelite between fearing, serving and worshiping God. The same should be true today. The overwhelming majority of references makes it very clear that the fear of God refers to a kind of conduct or action. It is not solely a mental or emotional state. This is seen in Abraham who feared God and thus offered his son (Gen 22:12). There is a parallel between fear and obedience in Psalm 128:1. Samuel exhorted all Israel to serve and obey God out of fear. Fear was constantly associated with walking in God's ways and obedience.² Therefore, Israel's concept of fear cannot be restricted to reverence and awe alone. Neither should it be so today.

¹Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, p. 112.

²See the following references: Exod 14:31; Deut 5:29; 6:2, 13; 1 Chr 16:25; Neh 1:11; Ps 19:7-11; 86:11; Eccl 12:13.

CHAPTER III

THE FEAR OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is a common belief today, that the believer is not to fear God in any way. Several New Testament verses are quoted such as 2 Timothy 1:7 which says: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." This misunderstanding says that fear is not to be a part of the believer's life, including the fear of God. But if one looks at the entire New Testament, one concludes otherwise. The New Testament exhorts and commands believers to fear God.

The Greek Terms Used for Fear

One of the Greek terms for fear is *δουλέα*. It has the meaning of cowardly or timidity.¹ This is the word which is used in 2 Timothy 1:7. Paul says that believers, positional in Christ, have not received a timid or cowardly spirit. The following verse points out this is why Christians should not be ashamed to give testimony of the Lord. This verse, understood in context, is not actually associated with the concept of fearing God.

¹William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Second edition. Revised and augmented from Walter Bauer's fifth edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 173.

This word is used in many other verses with the same meaning. Revelation 21:8 says that cowards will partake of the second death, because they were never saved. Other verses would include Matthew 8:26 and Mark 4:40. The cure for cowardice and timidity would be the peace and power of God appropriated in the life of a believer (John 14:27).¹

A second Greek word is *εὐλαβεία*. This word is used for fearing God and is most often translated as "reverence."² It is used in Hebrews 5:7 of Christ as One who reverently submitted to the Will of God. This concept is to be a part of the believer. Hebrews 12:28 speaks of it being present as the believer worships God. It is a spirit of reverent obedience and submission to God. God's relationship in salvation can never be broken with His own. But, for the believer, the process of sanctification can be stifled, broken and interrupted without this kind of reverent spirit of obedience. It includes one's entire lifestyle. Other verses where this word is used include the following: Luke 2:25, Acts 2:5; 8:2; 23:10; Hebrews 11:7.

A third Greek term for fear is *φοβος*. It appears to be the strongest word for fear. It gives the idea of alarm, fright, being struck with terror.³ The unsaved are

¹Charles C. Ryrie, "Should a Christian Be Afraid?" Bibliotheca Sacra 110 (1953):77.

²Arndt, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 321.

³Ibid., pp. 863-864.

in this state of alarm from being struck with the awesomeness of death (Heb 2:15), of eternal condemnation (Heb 10:31), and of earthly future judgments (Rev 11:11; 18:10, 15).¹

In a sense the Christian is to have a protracted state of alarm. As he is continually struck with his own sinfulness and God's holiness, this spirit is manifested (1 Pet 2:17). It also causes a Christian to be rightly related and respecting the government authorities (Rom 13:7, 1 Pet 3:14, 15). In this sense, the concept behind φόβος applies to the saved as well.

The Fear of God in the Early Church

From the very outset of the church, fear was a chief characteristic of her members (Acts 2:43). Each person feared because each was struck with the person and power of God.

Fear was the mark of the godly church. Luke gives a summary statement of the church in Acts 9:31. The fear of the Lord was an integral part. It applied to the manner in which they conducted their lives. It included a strong apprehension of sinning against God.² Throughout the book of Acts, it is recorded that as the church feared God,

¹Ryrie, "Should A Christian Be Afraid?" p. 78.

²John A. Galle, "The Place of Fear in the Believer," an M.Div. Thesis (Grace Theological Seminary, 1980), pp. 12-13.

people were saved. This shows the importance of a proper walk before God. The church, even today, must be saturated with a sense of reverential awe that results in service and obedience. On the other hand, believers need not be frightened of any type of judgment from God that will remove them from His love and receive ultimate rejection.

The Apparent Contradiction of 1 John 4:18

One finds in 1 John 4:18 an apparent contradiction between fear and love. Is this a verse in opposition to the teaching of other parts of Scripture? It is clear that the New Testament teaches man to fear God. Thus, can this verse be harmonized with Scripture, or, it is a true contradiction.

The word used in 1 John 4:18 is φόβος . This is the predominant word used for fear in the New Testament. Other factors must also be considered. In this verse κόλασιν is associated with fear. This word is used elsewhere only in Matthew 25:46. The word is found there in the context of unbelievers being judged and condemned into everlasting punishment (while the righteous go into eternal life). Thus, it would seem that the fear in 1 John 4:18, seems to be associated with eternal punishment. This type of fear is the opposite of confidence and boldness. It is not a healthy fear. It is the fear which enslaves. It is the fear of punishment. In this sense, the believer has no fear. He does not fear eternal judgment. The fear of which John

wrote, is not the same as the fear commanded toward God which regulates one's lifestyle.

A distinction must be made between reverence for God and the fear of eternal judgment. A sense of awe in the face of the majesty and righteousness of God is proper. Also, the future day of judgment need have no terror or dread for the one who is united in faith and love with Christ. All such terror and fear is banished by the perfect love of God.

The Fear of God in the Life of the Believer Today

Peter commands all believers to conduct themselves in fear while they are on this earth (1:17). In light of the holiness of God, Peter exhorts the believers to develop the type of fear that will be necessary to pass the judgment they will face. The preceding verse contains the command for believers to be holy. Holiness involves the process of sanctification in meeting the approval of God in one's lifestyle. Fear is an important part of that process of becoming holy. Therefore, fearing God is no option for the child of God today.

There are many misconceptions as to what the fear of God includes for the believer today. Partly behind the concept of fearing today is real fear. But this fear is not a fear of being rejected by God. There are numerous verses that speak of God sealing one's salvation for eternity. But what one fears is a holy God's disapproval of a life of sin.

So the fear of God is that attitude which causes one to respond in obedience to God. Obedience is a very broad term which includes worship, service and holiness.

Reverence could be a term for understanding fear. But, as one understands reverence in this society, it falls far short of the biblical concept. It is reverence accompanied with the upmost respect and supported by a life of obedience.

There is more to fearing God than obedience. The fear of God also includes a knowledge of God (Josh 4). The knowledge of God is a key concept of fearing God. The knowledge of God creates fear and sustains fear. Along these lines, Hoyt defines the fear of God as "the knowledgeable-consciousness of God which leads to appropriate attitudes and actions."¹ To these ends, the believer will be held accountable for fearing God.

¹Hoyt, "An Exposition," p. 36.

CONCLUSION

The fear of God is a multi-faceted concept. To uncover its breadth in meaning one must see its overall usage in scripture. By doing this, as was hopefully achieved in this paper, it helps to prevent an isolated or extreme position when looking at the concept in a particular passage or verse.

Having these guidelines drawn, chapter one deals, in a synthetic way, with the fear of God in the Pentateuch. In the early history of Israel, this is where the foundation of the concept was started and where, throughout her history, the concept was thereon built. In the Pentateuch, one sees a variety of meanings for fearing God. The first reference to fear is in Genesis 3:10 and has the meaning of real fright and awe. This was fear of judgment because of sin. There was also a fear at the revelation of God or His will. It was demonstrated that man, although fallen, still possessed the image of God and therefore was conscious of the presence of God which created fear. There was fear which resulted in belief. The knowledge of God created fear along with worship, obedience and humility.

The fear of God in the book of Joshua is covered in chapter two. There are three main passages dealing with the fear of God. The first passage notes that a knowledge of

God and His mighty acts creates fear (4:24). The purpose of the miracle crossing of the Jordan River was that all Israel might fear God. This is how the fear of God is developed. It is the response of a godly person to a holy and mighty God. The knowledge of God was intended to provoke the godly response of fear.

The second passage conveys a close assimilation between fearing God and worshiping God (22:25). The Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Mannaseh were concerned with their future generations. They were concerned that they might stop fearing the Lord. Therefore, in order to prevent this an altar was erected securing a place of worship.

The third passage associates fearing God with serving God (24:14). Joshua brought Israel together at Shechem for the purpose of a covenant renewal. Israel accepted the covenant and was therefore obligated to obey it. One of the requirements of the covenant was to fear God. This fear was to effect every area of the Israelite's life. This included service to God and complete obedience.

The fear of God is seen in the New Testament as is covered in chapter three. The "fear not" passages do not excuse one from fearing God. Fearing God in the New Testament seems to be more experiential rather than conceptual. This gives even more emphasis to fear being equated with obedience and service. It entails one's entire manner of living. It is a conscious-awareness and knowledge of God,

which results in proper attitudes and actions. It is an acknowledgement of God's presence in one's heart and mind. It is an acknowledgement of who God is, i.e., He is holy, just, righteous . . . Fear includes a proper attitude of respect, reverence, love . . . Fear results in proper actions of sanctification and service . . .

The final word is that fear begins with a knowledge of God. Therefore, the Word of God must be thoroughly studied. The fear of the Lord should be a characteristic of every believer. May it be so!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, William. "The Site of Tirzah and the Topography of Western Manasseh." Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society, 11 (1931):241-251.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. "The Place of Shechem in the Bible." The Biblical Archaeologist, 20 (February 1957):10-19.
- Arayaprathep, K. "A Note on yr' in Joshua 4:24." Vetus Testamentum 22 (April 1972):240-242.
- Arndt, William F. and Gingrich, F. Wilbur. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Second edition. Revised and augmented from Walter Bauer's fifth edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Balz, Horst. "The Word Group in the New Testament." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. 9. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.
- Bamberger, Bernard J. "Fear and Love of God in the Old Testament." Hebrew Union College Annual 6 (1929):39-53.
- Barr, James. Semantics of Biblical Language. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Barth, Karl. "The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom." Interpretation 14 (October 1960):433-439.
- Bennett, W. H. "The Book of Joshua and the Pentateuch." The Jewish Quarterly Review 10 (1898):649-53.
- Berthold, Fred. The Fear of God. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959.
- Blaikie, William G. The Book of Joshua. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903.
- Bright, John. A History of Israel. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- _____. "Joshua." Interpreter's Bible. Edited by George A. Buttrick et al. Vol. 2. New York: Abingdon Press, 1952.

- Brown, Francis; Driver, S. R.; and Briggs, C. A. editors. The New Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Lafayette: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1981, reprint edition.
- Bruce, F. F. The Epistles of John. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Bunyan, John. "A Treatise on the Fear of God." In The Works of John Bunyan. Vol. 1. Edited by George Offor. London: Blackie and Sons, 1875. reprint edition, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977.
- Burrows, Millar. An Outline of Biblical Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946.
- Butler, Trent. Joshua. Vol. 7. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Books, 1983.
- Cabush, David W. "The Fear of the Lord . . . Who needs it?" Psychology for Living 17 (September 1975):2-3, 15.
- Calvin, John. Commentaries on the Book of Joshua. Translated by Henry Beveridge. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949.
- _____. Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948.
- Carr, Charles. "A Case for Christian Psychotherapy." Journal of Psychotherapy and Theology 3 (Spring 1975): 99-103.
- Craigie, Peter. The Book of Deuteronomy. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.
- Davis, John. Conquest and Crisis. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969.
- De Cantanzaro, C. J. "Fear, Knowledge and Love: A Study of Old Testament Piety." Canadian Journal of Theology 9 (1963):166-73.
- De Vries, Simon John. "Note Concerning the Fear of God in the Qumran Scrolls." Revue De Qumran 5 (April 1965): 233-37.
- _____. "The Concept of the Fear of the Lord in the Old Testament." S.T.M. Thesis. Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1950.

- Dictionary of New Testament Theology. S.v. "Fear, Awe," by Wilhelm Mundle.
- Diserens, Ed. "Fear in the New Testament." A Companion to the Bible. Editor J. J. Von Allmen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Dorsett, Allen Edmund. "The Fear of God." Th.M. Thesis. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977.
- Druker, R. The Book of Joshua. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1982.
- Dyrness, William. Themes in Old Testament Theology. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979.
- Eaton, J. H. "Some Misunderstood Hebrew Words for God's Self-Revelation." The Bible Translator 25 (July 1974):331-38.
- Eichrodt, Walter. Theology of the Old Testament. 2 Vols. In The Old Testament Library. Translated by J. A. Baker. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.
- Encyclopedia Judaica. S.v. "Fear of God," by Louis Isaac Rabinowitz.
- Encyclopedia Judaica. S.v. "Love and Fear of God," by Eugene B. Borowitz.
- Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. S.v. "Fear," by J. L. McIntyre.
- Fay, Friedrich Rudolf. "Joshua." Translated by Philip Schaff. In Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Edited by John P. Lange. 12 Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Fisher, Loren R. Ras Shamra Parallels Vol. 1. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972.
- Freedman, H. "Joshua." Joshua-Judges. Socino Books of the Bible. Edited by A. Cohen. London: The Socino Press, 1961.
- Galle, John A. "The Place of Fear in the Believer." An M.Div. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980.
- Gardner, James H. "The Meaning of the Fear of the Lord in Psalm 34:11." B. D. Monograph, Grace Theological Seminary, 1960.

- Garstang, John. Joshua-Judges: The Foundations of Bible History. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931.
- Gesenius, William. Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Translated by Samuel Tregelles. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949.
- Giblin, C. H. "Structural Patterns in Joshua 24:1-25." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 26 (1964):50-69.
- Glueck, Nelson. The Other Side of the Jordan. New Haven, CT: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1940.
- Gordon, J. Wenham. "The Deuteronomic Theology of the Book of Joshua." Journal of Biblical Literature 90 (1971):140-48.
- Greenspoon, Leonard. Textual Studies in the Book of Joshua. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Hamlin, E. John. Joshua, Inheriting the Land. In International Theological Commentary. George Knight and Fredrick Holmgren, editors. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983.
- Harrelson, Walter. "Worship in Early Israel." Biblical Research 3(1958):1-14.
- Harris, R. Laird; Archer, Gleason; and Waltke, Bruce. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Harthan, Stephen. "The Fear of God in the Old Testament." A post-graduate seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, 1976.
- Hopkins, Buddy Wayne. "A Study of the Fear of God in the New Testament: φόβος and Related Hebrew and Greek Terms." A Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1966.
- Hoyt, Timothy. "An Exposition of the Fear of God in the Pentateuch." A post-graduate seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, 1979.
- _____. "The Fear of God in the Synoptics." A post-graduate seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. S.v. "Fear," by W. L. Walker.

- Jastrow, Marcus. A Dictionary of the Targumin, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature. Vol. 2. New York: Pardis Publishing House, Inc., 1950.
- Jeffers, Adrian. "Israel's Conquest and Settlement of Canaan." A Th.D. dissertation. Grace Theological Seminary, 1967.
- Jewish Encyclopedia. S.v. "Fear of God," by Adolph Gutt-macher.
- Johnson, Martin R. "An Investigation of the Fear of God as a Central Concept in the Theology of the Wisdom Literature." An M.A. Thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1974.
- Johnson, S. Lewis. "The New Man in the Old Relationships." Bibliotheca Sacra 121 (1964):107-116.
- Jones, Tommy. "Deuteronomy 20:17-18: Yahweh's Command of Extermination." An M. Div. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1984.
- Kaiser, Walter. Toward an Old Testament Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.
- Kaufmann, Yehezkel. The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine. Translated by M. Dagut. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1953.
- Kautzsch, E. Gesenius Hebrew Grammar. Edited by A. E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.
- Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. Joshua, Judges, Ruth. Translated by James Martain. In Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951.
- _____. The Pentateuch. Vols. 1 and 3. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament. Translated by James Martain. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951.
- Kenoyer, Michelle. "An Inductive Study of the Fear of Yahweh In Deuteronomy." An M.Div. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980.
- Kierkegard, Soren. The Concept of Dread. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Kline, Meredith. Treaty of the Great King. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.

- Lambert, W. G. Babylonian Wisdom Literature. London: Oxford University, 1960.
- Leuba, James H. A Psychological Study of Religion. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912.
- Liddell, Henry George; and Scott, Robert. A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and augmented by Henry Jones and Robert McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Lys, Daniel. "Fear in the Old Testament." A Companion to the Bible. Editor J. J. Van Allmen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- McAllaster, Allen R. "Hebrew Language and Israelite Faith." Interpretation 14 (October 1960):421-32.
- Margolis, Max L. The Book of Joshua in Greek. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Guethner, 1931.
- Marshall, I. H. "Uncomfortable Words." Expository Times 81 (June 1970):276-280.
- Meek, Theophile J. "Result and Purpose Clauses in Hebrew." Jewish Quarterly Review 46 (July 1955):40-43.
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. Interpreting the Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.
- Morosco, Robert E. "Theological Implications of Fear: The Grasshopper Complex . . ." Journal of Psychology and Theology 1 (April 1973):43-50.
- Murray, John. "The Fear of God." In Principles of Conduct. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957.
- Norwood, Daniel Wallace. "The Theological and Practical Significance of Yir'at Yahweh in the Old Testament." A Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1966.
- Oehler, Gustav F. Theology of the Old Testament. Edited and translated by George E. Day. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.
- Otto, Rudolf. The Idea of the Holy. Translated by John W. Harvey. New York: Oxford University Press, 1923.
- Ottosson, Magnus. Gilead, Tradition and History. In Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series. Translated by Jean Gray. Lund Sweden: CWK Gleerup, 1969.
- Pfeiffer, R. H. Introduction to the Old Testament. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948.

- _____. "The Fear of God." Israel Exploration Journal 5 (1955):41-48.
- Pfister, Oscar. Christianity and Fear. Translated by W. H. Johnston. New York: Macmillan Company, 1948.
- Rad, Gerhard von. Wisdom in Israel. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.
- Rankin, W. M. "Reverence." Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. 10. Edited by James Hastings. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1928.
- Ringgren, Helmer. Religions of the Ancient Near East. Translated by John Sturdy. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973.
- Ryrie, Charles C. "Should a Christian Be Afraid?" Bibliotheca Sacra 110 (1953):76-81.
- Saydon, Paul. "The Crossing of the Jordan." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 12 (April 1950):194-207.
- Schaeffer, Francis. Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1976.
- Schroeder, Wilhelm Julius. "Deuteronomy." Translated by Philip Schaff. In Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Edited by John P. Lange. 12 Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Seitz, Oscar. "What do these Stones Mean?" Journal of Biblical Literature 79 (September 1960):247-254.
- Skinner, John. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis. In The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1930; Second edition.
- Snaith, Norman. "The Altar at Gilgal: Joshua 22:23-29." Vetus Testamentum 28 (July 1978):330-35.
- _____. The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament. London: The Epworth Press, 1944.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. Joshua. In The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972.
- Stockton, E. D. "The Fortress Temple of Shechem and Joshua's Covenant." Australian Journal of Biblical Archeology I (1968):24-8.
- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. S.v. "Σεβωμναι," by Werner Forester.

- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. S.v. "φοβος and φοβησις in the Old Testament," by Gunther Wanke.
- Thornley, J. "The Meaning of 'The Fear of the Lord' in the Old Testament." An M.Div. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1979.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Wenham, G. J. "The Deuteronomistic Theology of the Book of Joshua." Journal of Biblical Literature 90 (1971): 140-48.
- Williams, Ronald J. Hebrew Syntax: An Outline. Second edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Wolff, H. W. "The Elohistic Fragments in the Pentateuch." Interpretation 26 (April 1972): 158-73.
- _____. The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions. Walter Brueggemann and Hans W. Wolff, editors. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.
- Wood, Leon. A Survey of Israel's History. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- Woudstra, Marten. The Book of Joshua. In The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. R. K. Harrison, editor. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981.
- Wright, G. Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.
- Wright, G. Ernest. The Challenge of Israel's Faith. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.
- Yeivin, Sh. The Israelite Conquest of Canaan. Oosten: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1971.
- Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. S.v. "Fear," by G. B. Funderburk.

