



The Blessings of Fearing the LORD!

May 16, 2021

Isaiah 66:1-6

The fear of the Lord is the love, reverence, awe and passion that prompt the believer to obey God. It is that state of mental and emotional sanctification where the believer sees God as holy and a reverent trembling results. It is the necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship where total obedience to the commands of Christ is seen as a loving response to a loving God.

It is a behavioral restraining element even in the heart of those who do not follow Christ. In other words, it is a cultural acknowledgment within man's conscience of the Law of God (Ro 2:15). It is a necessary component of any Godly and moral society.

It is the understanding that God will one day judge the earth and all who ever lived.

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Here are a few simple thoughts on these verses:

1. These verses describe God's displeasure with His people, who worshipped Him outwardly, but not inwardly.
2. Even more than temple sacrifices, the God of the Universe desires broken and contrite hearts. Theirs were not so. MacDonald wrote:

66:1, 2 The opening words of the last chapter of Isaiah were written to the unrepentant people of Israel. They need not think that, in that condition, they can please God by building a temple for Him. After all, He is the universal Creator and Owner, enthroned in heaven, with the earth as His footstool. The dwelling place He desires is the heart of a person who is humble and contrite, and who trembles at His word.

3. As a result, God finds their offerings detestable. When they offered an ox, it was like they killed a man instead in God's sight.
4. So God will send them delusions and realized their fears. Again from MacDonald:

66:3, 4 Those who are impenitent offend God by their religious observances. When divorced from practical holiness, their sacrifices and offerings are crimes and abominations. They can choose their hypocritical ways, but they cannot choose the consequences. God will do that. Those who refuse His call to repentance and who go on in ways that He hates will taste His wrath.

5. But to the truly humble, those who tremble at His Word, He offers encouragement. He says that even though their "brethren" hate them and persecute them, thinking they are doing God some kind of service, the LORD will take vengeance on His enemies. Once more from MacDonald:

66:5, 6 Those faithful, God-fearing Jews who tremble at His word will be persecuted by their own brethren. The wicked persecutors will think that they are doing God service, as is evidenced by their pseudo-pious taunt, "Let the Lord be glorified, that we may see your joy," that is, your joy at being miraculously delivered. But the Lord will intervene to shame their foes. The work of judgment will begin at the temple; there the voice of Jehovah will reveal that the time of recompense has come.

This is a Picture of Now

1. In so many ways, God's people continue to worship Him outwardly, not inwardly.
2. Eventually, a lack of holy fear manifests. Remember what our LORD said?

Matthew 15:7-8 (KJV) *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, **8** This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

3. When we no longer tremble at His Word...when we lose our reverent fear, our worship becomes polluted in His sight. Judgement of some sort tends to follow.
4. Beloved, look around! Look at the strong delusions (2 Thess 2:11) and reprobate minds! (Rom 1:28) *Reprobate* means, "Abandoned in sin; lost to virtue or grace." (Webster 1828)
5. And those who do tremble often face cracks, criticism, and being cast out—CANCELLED—and that with righteous indignation! Jesus spoke on this:

John 16:1-3 (KJV) *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. **2** They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. **3** And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

6. Nevertheless, the implicit exhortation in our Text is to continue to tremble..to continue to Fear the LORD. God will deal with His enemies. Saints, continue to tremble! God "looks" (or is pleased by) upon those who Fear Him! John Calvin wrote:

So far as relates to "trembling," it might be thought strange at first sight that he demands it in believers, since nothing is more sweet or gentle than the word of the Lord, and nothing is more opposite to it than to excite terror. I reply, there are two kinds of trembling; one by which they are terrified who hate and flee from God, and another which affects the heart, and promotes the obedience, of those who reverence and fear God.

Hence infer that true godliness consists in having our senses brought into a state of obedience to God, and in making no boastful or wicked claims for ourselves. The nature of faith is to yield obedience to God, and to listen to him attentively and patiently when he speaks. But when we are puffed up and carried away by a vain confidence in ourselves, we have no piety or fear of God; for we cannot make even the smallest claim for ourselves without despising God.

7. I submit great blessings come upon those who truly Fear God!

The Blessings of Fearing the LORD

In the King James Bible, the phrase "Fear of the LORD" is given 30 times. In each, some kind of blessing is implied or described! Let us be encouraged in them!

1. **1Sa 11:7** *And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the **fear of the LORD** fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.*

- **Courage!** Saul asserted himself as king and the people rallied to defeat Jabesh Gilead!
2. **2Ch 14:14** *And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the **fear of the LORD** came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.*
 - **Victory!** When Asa reigned in Judah, he humbly sought the LORD for help against his enemies. (2 Chr 14:11). He defeated his enemies and the people nearby were afraid!
 3. **2Ch 17:10** *And the **fear of the LORD** fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.*
 - **Peace!** Jehoshaphat feared God and cleansed Judah of Asherah worship and sent leaders throughout his cities to teach God's Word. God blessed such obedience with peace!
 4. **2Ch 19:7** *Wherefore now let the **fear of the LORD** be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.*
 - **Integrity!** Jehoshaphat installed judges throughout the land. Godly fear would make them righteous, incorruptible judges!
 5. **2Ch 19:9** *And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the **fear of the LORD**, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.*
 - **Faithfulness!** Reverence and awe of God aligns with and produces fidelity!
 6. **Job 28:28** *And unto man he said, Behold, the **fear of the Lord**, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*
 - **Perspective!** Remember what Job went through: the loss of his 10 children, servants, property, and health! Nevertheless, He Feared God and did not charge Him with wrong. (Job 1:22, ESV)
 7. **Psa 19:9** *The **fear of the LORD** is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*
 - **Purity!** Fearing God according to His Word brings cleanness and practical holiness.
 8. **Psa 34:11** *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the **fear of the LORD**.*
 - **Discipleship!** The next verses promise long, good life filled with blessed speech and the pursuit of peace. God's eyes are upon such and He hears their cries! (Ps 34:12-15)
 9. **Psa 111:10** *The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*
 - **Obedience!** The Fear of the LORD encourages "doing" His Commandments!
 10. **Pro 1:7** *The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
 - **Knowledge!** The Fear of the LORD enables us to perceive and understand that which is true!
 11. **Pro 1:29** *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the **fear of the LORD**:*
 - **Humility!** To choose to Fear God is the opposite of the prideful, stiff-necked scorners!
 12. **Pro 2:5** *Then shalt thou understand the **fear of the LORD**, and find the knowledge of God.*

- **Maturity!** In context, if one seeks wisdom whole-heartedly, one will find it, and thus, increase his/her knowledge of God.
13. **Pro 8:13** *The **fear of the LORD** is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*
 - **Passion!** The Fear of the LORD brings about a holy (not prideful) zeal!
 14. **Pro 9:10** *The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*
 - **Wisdom!** The Fear of the LORD is the starting point for Godly wisdom...the application of Godly knowledge!
 15. **Pro 10:27** *The **fear of the LORD** prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*
 - **Longevity!** Less mistakes and self-inflicted drama often translates to more years!
 16. **Pro 14:26** *In the **fear of the LORD** is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*
 - **Safety!** A person who Fears God brings builds a secure household.
 17. **Pro 14:27** *The **fear of the LORD** is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*
 - **Vitality!** The word “fountain” means “wellspring.” The Fear of the LORD creates a reserve of strength, enabling better decisions!
 18. **Pro 15:16** *Better is little with the **fear of the LORD** than great treasure and trouble therewith.*
 - **Contentment!** Better to obey God than have worldly treasures!
 19. **Pro 15:33** *The **fear of the LORD** is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.*
 - **Posture!** The Fear of the LORD is “how” one obeys, or applies knowledge. Humbly!
 20. **Pro 16:6** *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the **fear of the LORD** men depart from evil.*
 - **Escape!** Sometimes, the way of escape is reverent fear! (1 Cor 10:13)
 21. **Pro 19:23** *The **fear of the LORD** tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.*
 - **Rest!** “The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” (ESV)
 22. **Pro 22:4** *By humility and the **fear of the LORD** are riches, and honour, and life.*
 - **Riches!** Although relative, humble obedience tends to produce material blessings!
 23. **Pro 23:17** *Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the **fear of the LORD** all the day long.*
 - **Happiness!** Joy instead of jealousy; delight instead of discouragement!
 24. **Isa 2:10** *Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for **fear of the LORD**, and for the glory of his majesty.*

- **Reverence!** “Fear” in this verse, as well as Isaiah 2:19 and 2:21 below, may be better translated terror. They describe God’s judgment on a rebellious people. Although in Christ, we don’t have to fear such judgment, let us consider a few attitudes that respect the judgment and wrath of Almighty God and view those as blessings!

25. **Isa 2:19** *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.*

- **Mercy!** Judgment should have fallen upon us! Let us fear the God who spared us!

26. **Isa 2:21** *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.*

- **Grace!** Although we should be cowering in fear because of the coming Judgment, we have been graced eternal life in Jesus our LORD!

27. **Isa 11:2** *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the **fear of the LORD**;*

- **Jesus!** This verse refers to the Stem and Branch of Jesse...the Messiah...Jesus Christ. Among His holy attributes will be the fear of the LORD! When we Fear God, we follow Christ’s example!

28. **Isa 11:3** *And shall make him of quick understanding in the **fear of the LORD**: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:*

- **Discernment!** This verse literally means the Messiah will “smell” or “sense” that which is right. When we follow Christ in awe and reverence, He helps us discern and judge rightly!

29. **Isa 33:6** *And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the **fear of the LORD** is his treasure.*

- **Treasure!** God grants righteousness, wisdom, and knowledge to His people through Jesus Christ. Our rightful response of reverence and awe is precious and brings stability!

30. **Act 9:31** *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the **fear of the Lord**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

- **Growth!** God honored their deep love and respect for Him! I believe He still does! “The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.” (NLT)

CRC, let us Fear the LORD and be blessed!

Amen!