

## A SCRIPTURE STUDY ON REVERENCE

(Br. Ted Smith, given in Bellingham Home Ecclesia 11/15/70)

Text, Exodus 3:4, 5: “And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

We have made a special study of the subject of Reverence, and have made a list of Scriptures for your consideration. The root meaning of the word from which reverence is translated is “fear.” Following are some illustrations of how this word is variously used: Exodus 2:14: “And he said, Who made thee a prince and judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said Surely this thing is known.” (The meaning here is fright.) Jesus’ attitude toward God is shown in Isa. 11:2: “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” (We know that Jesus was not afraid of God, but he did have great respect, reverence for his Heavenly Father.) A wife’s respect for her husband is shown in Eph. 5:33: “and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” In the context of this verse, Paul tells husbands “To love their wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it;” and that husbands were “to love their wives as their own bodies.” (A wife is not taught to be afraid of her husband, but she is taught to reverence her husband, to respect him as head of the home.)

The reasonable conclusion is that the literal meaning of the word would be CONCERN OF MIND; and as to just what the CONCERN OF MIND would be, would depend upon the circumstances. Let us note a few illustrations: 1 Sam. 23:16, 17: “And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God, and he said unto him, Fear not [literally, do not be afraid, don’t be frightened] for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.” Prov. 13:13: “he that feareth the commandment [not afraid or frightened at God’s commandments, but having respect for them] shall be rewarded.” Lev. 19:30 (in this verse, fear is properly translated reverence): “Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary.”

Continuing our study now we learn that there is a reason why men have respect or reverence for God: Note the following three scriptures: 1 Sam. 12:24: “Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he has done for you.” Job. 37:23, 24: “Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him.” Psalms 130:4: “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”

Next we learn that reverence must be learned or taught. Deut. 4:10: “Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.”

What proper reverence for God leads to: Exodus 18:21: “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.” Exod. 20:20: “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.” Lev. 19:14: “Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God.” Lev. 19:32: “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God.” Lev. 25:36: “Take no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.” Lev. 25:43: “Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor; but shalt fear thy God.” Deut. 6:2: “That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments.” 2 Sam. 23:3: “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” Neh. 5:15: “But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.” Prov. 8:13: “The fear of the LORD, is to hate evil.” Prov. 16:6: “By the fear of the LORD, men depart from evil.” Ecc. 12:13: “Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Exod. 1:17: “But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.” Gen. 22:12: “And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” Job 1:8: “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” Psalms 112:1: “Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.” Psalms 128:1: “Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.” Acts 10:22: “And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews.”

Reverence is wisdom—Job 28:28: “The fear of the Lord is wisdom.” Psalms 111:10: “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Prov. 9:10: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Reverence is the beginning of knowledge: Prov. 1:7: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

Here is a partial list of the blessings that belong to those who reverence God supremely: Psalms 25:14: “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” Psalms 31:19: “Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for

them that fear thee;...” Psalm 34:7: “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” Psalm 103:13: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.” Psalm 147:11: “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.” Psalm 34:9: “O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.” Psalm 103:11: “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.” And verses 17 and 18: “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” Psalm 115:13: “The LORD will bless them that fear him, both small and great.” Prov. 10:27: “The fear of the LORD prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.” And Ecc. 8:12: “even though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.” Psalm 25:12: “What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.” Psalm 115:11: “Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.” Prov. 14:26: “In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence.”

The thought is continually repeated throughout the scriptures, that we are to do everything in reverence to God. Psalm 5:7: “But as for me I will come unto thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.” Prov. 3:7, 5, 6: “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD.” “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” The church is to walk in “the fear of the Lord”: Acts 9:31: “Then had the church rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and was edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord...” 2 Cor. 7:1: “having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

A walk in reverence and in a serious state of mind is repeated in the New Testament: Rom. 11:20: “Be not highminded, but fear”—it is unmerited favor to be grafted into the “olive tree.” Phil. 2:12: “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” V. 13: “For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” 1 Pet. 1:17: “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” V. 18 and 19: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Pet. 3:15: “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.” In what way?—“with meekness and fear.” Jude 23: “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.”

Reverence is all-important—it is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge; it avoids evil and does what is right; and it wins God’s love and choicest blessings. This is what the world needs so badly.

We must have reverence as a disposition and it needs to be learned—Prov. 2:1-5: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: THEN shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD.” Reverence increases by a consideration of God’s attributes. And we should remember that the “fear of man is a snare.” Prov. 29:25.

A book of remembrance is being written for those who reverence God: “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.” Mal. 3:16-18.

Concluding scriptures: Heb. 12:28: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” And Prov. 15:16: “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.” For as Solomon says (Prov. 22:4); “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor and life.”

Suggestion for personal study: “DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.” Reprint page 5186.

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### GETTING READY TO MOVE

The house in which I have been living all my lifetime is getting very much out of order and repairs do not seem to last long, and a light wind causes it to tremble (Eccl. 12:3-7), so I am getting ready to move (2 Cor. 5:1-4). The house to which I am moving is of such surpassing loveliness that no language can describe it (1 Cor. 2:9, 10) and has every convenience and comfort any one could ask or even think of (Eph. 3:20, 21).

My elder brother, my best friend (John 15:13, 14; Heb. 2:11, Prov. 18:24) formerly lived here in a house similar to mine (Heb. 2:17) but his father promised him the grand home mentioned above on conditions of loyalty and obedience (Heb. 12:2) and he has offered to share it with me and others of his friends on the same conditions (1 Pet. 1:13-15; 2 Pet.

1:3-11; 1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Pet. 3:11, 14). He has been nearly 2000 years preparing this home for his friends, his brethren (John 14:2, 3), a great mansion, and all who will live there are selected with great care. (2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:28, 29; Luke 12:32; Rev. 14:1-5; Psalm 107:3, 7)

He has furnished me with abundant information about this home and the beauties of that country, so that I am not only ready to move, but rejoicing that the day is so near when I shall see him, be like him and share his glory as his joint-heir (1 Pet. 1:3-8; 1 John 3:1-3). One of my friends has written me that he gave up everything here, that he might live in those mansions (Phil. 3:7-14; 2 Tim. 3:10-12; 4:6-8), and others have written me also (2 Pet. 1:13, 14; Jude 24; 2 John 8). I hear that many others, some living in fine houses with bright prospects, are also giving up everything here to live in that home (Matt. 10:37, 38; Psalm 45:10).

I am enjoying so much the samples of the fruits he has sent me from that country (Gal. 5:22, 23, Phil. 4:7, 8; Eph. 3:17-19; 5:19, 20), that I long to go where I will enjoy them in their fullness (Psalm 16:11) and meet those who have preceded me (Rev. 2:7, 10, 17; 3:5, 11, 12, 20, 21). And my brother wants to see me too (John 17:24) and assures me that his Father and my Father loves me even now (Psalm 103:13, John 16:27).

He has prepared a great banquet especially for this select company (Rev. 19:5-9) all of whom have made themselves ready (Matt. 25:10; Rev. 19:7, 8) for this great event beside which all other hopes and ambitions are mere bubbles in comparison (Rev. 22:20).

I trust that you are also getting ready to move. (Matt. 6:19-21)

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Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.—Samuel Smiles.

Hope awakens courage. He who can implant courage in the human soul is the best physician.—Von Knebel.