

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE DYNAMICS OF HAVING A FEAR OF GOD
IN THE WALK OF THE BELIEVER

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ABSTRACT

THE DYNAMICS OF HAVING A FEAR OF GOD IN THE WALK OF THE BELIEVER

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Guaranteed immunity from Hell appears to have adversely affected the motivation of the believer. A possible correlation exists between the believer's knowledge of having eternal security and a lack of having a fear of God. This lack of godly fear has manifested itself in various types of presumptive behavior, among which includes non-compliance to clearly stated biblical commandments and directives, the removal of the repentance requirement for the convert, and biblical illiteracy. Consulting commentary of Early Church Fathers, theologians throughout the New Testament church age, along with current research data, and completed surveys from believers, this project will probe the validity of this correlation. The presentation of corroborative findings which will be presented throughout this project will clearly indicate that the church is on a slippery slope of hyper-grace, and only the re-introduction of the concept of having a fear of God will place her back on solid ground.

Abstract length: 150 words

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Over the last 2,000 years a quiet, yet increasingly apparent phenomenon has evolved; while it is of a tri-fold nature, it has netted a single effect. The first of these manifestations has been the inconspicuous disappearance of the God-mandated, Old Testament requirement to have a fear of God. Secondly, there has been either a deliberate, or perhaps unwitting omission of the repentance requirement from the Gospel of Jesus Christ as is mandated in the New Testament. The final leg of this tripartite occurrence, and the one which precipitated and thus, has actually facilitated the first two, is the neglect of the Protestant church to formulate sound doctrine and dogma which is specifically and solely based upon the directives of Christ as presented in the Gospels, and codify these commandments and directives into a concise Christology. Furthermore, it has failed to present a solid theological paradigm which, over the years, could have been an efficient theological tool for doctrinal dissemination to the world, both as a unifying element for the church, as a proselytizing instrument for the unsaved. These three manifestations have converged to create a perfect spiritual storm which has relentlessly pummeled the church over the last two thousand years with torrential rains of tolerance. Consequently, the church has developed a high tolerance for both sin and cultural influence.

Statement of Limitations

This project will not address the theological issue of whether a believer can forfeit or lose his salvation: neither will it seek to endorse a position on either side of the issue. The findings of all presented research is highly probable in nature, however is subject to variations based upon

related circumstantial and environmental elements. Also, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents were within the age range of eighteen to thirty-four.

Theoretical Basis

It is a commonly held belief that fear is an effective deterrent to undesired behavior. Whether it be the threat of a time-out for the misbehaving toddler, the potential loss of driving privileges for the habitually speeding motorist, or pending disciplinary action for the chronically late employee, negative sanctions are strong behavior modifiers. God's utilization of fear as a deterrent to ungodly behavior is clearly seen in Exodus 20:20. In fact, this verse should be considered the 20/20, or theme verse for this thesis because of the theological acuity and precise insight it gives to the meaning of the phrase "the fear of the Lord." Jesus states that the First and Great Commandment is to love God, and He also tells us to Fear God in Matthew 10:28. This Dualistic Worship Paradigm (DWP) of a loving God who must also be feared will be developed throughout the body of the thesis. Ironically, God's character attribute of love is what also prompts Him to demand that man also fear him; He is an extracting God of judgment, however He allows man to avail the preventative measure of fear, and thus parlay that element fear into an avoidance measure.

Statement of Methodology

This project will probe the overall issue from theological, etymological, conceptual, and philosophical aspects. This examination will include recent as well as archival research. In order to establish a comprehensive chronological overview on the issue, this research will consist of the gleanings of the writings of the early church fathers, up through the Protestant Reformation, and into the current age. Quantifiable research will also be utilized to establish the overall

behavioral effects produced by fear, and will specifically explore the efficacy of having a fear of God as a sin deterrent. Lastly live research will be collected from Christian believers via an IRB approved survey.

Chapter two will address the overall historical context of the concept of “the fear of God” throughout scripture. There will also be chronological examination of theological observations over the last 2,000 years. Chapter three will include etymological, as well as philosophical considerations, and will examine various psychological constructs concerning fear itself, the fear of God, the wrath of God, the concept of repentance, and the concepts of attrition and contrition. This research will also include quantifiable data from a clinical setting, as well as comprehensive empirical data. Chapter four will exclusively address the analyzed results of an IRB sanctioned survey. Lastly, chapter five, the concluding chapter, will be both diagnostic and prescriptive, and will be followed by an appendix which codifies the commands, directives, and admonitions of Christ as contained in the Gospels. There will also be a passionate call to pastors and preachers to incorporate one sermon out every seven sermon to the topic of having a healthy fear of God; pastors will be encouraged to focus more on the demands of Christ upon the believer in these sermons. Pastors will also be adjured to redefine the functionality of their calling so that they consider themselves as watchmen over their flocks. The overall methodology is designed to serve as a catalyst to reintroduce the concept of a having a healthy fear of God into the preaching of mainstream Christianity.

Literature Review

Books and Journal Articles

“Escaping Hell: Divine Motivation and the Problem of Hell,” by Andrei A. Buckareff and Allen Plug

This scholastic article discusses the issue of the incompatibility of loving God and fearing Him at the same time. The relevancy of this observation will be thoroughly examined and incorporated into philosophical portion of the thesis wherein it is forwarded that the believer must seek out and maintain a dualistic emotional relationship with God.

“The Wrath of God,” by W. C. Robinson

In this age where the discussion of the wrath of God has been muted, Carson refreshingly takes a brief, yet sober overview of the issue as he touches upon many pertinent aspects. The prolific theologian firmly makes the case that God’s wrath is still alive! Carson touches upon the concepts of anthropomorphism and anthropopathism as they relate to man’s concept of God’s love, with the author forwarding that man’s exaggerated emotional projection of the meaning of God’s love has resulted in undisciplined behavior among believers.

“The Semitic Background to Repentance in the Teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus,” by James G. Crossley

Crossley is an excellent researcher who has conducted an elaborate study which explores the Old Testament concept of repentance to determine whether repentance is a state of mind, state of action, or both. Once he has established that it is a behavior-based concept, he segues into the New Testament and verifies that this same concept of repentance is the one which was taught by both Jesus and John the Baptist. This scholastic article will underscore the importance of stressing that the new convert must undergo a behavior-based repentance.

“Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst,” by W.A. Hoffecker

The theological views of Friedrich Schleiermacher are examined, who is considered the most influential theologian of the 1800's. Schleiermacher, like his colleagues Paul Tillich and Helmut Thielicke, discusses at length the inner religious experience during which the believer develops a “God-consciousness.” While most of Hoffecker's liberal theological leanings are antithetical to this thesis, he does forward that Schleiermacher endorses that one should have an absolute dependence to God, which will result in a relationship having a dualistic nature, in which both feelings of dependence and freedom are experienced.

“On the Biblical Notion of Human Dignity: Fear of God' as a Condition for Authentic Existence,” by Job Jindo

Job Jindo forwards the logical theory that one cannot fear God unless one has information which serves as a foundational basis for establishing that fear. He presents for consideration advances two types of fear. One type of godly knowledge is propositional in nature and the other is perspectival; the first speaks of cerebral information, and the latter refers to experiential knowledge. Jindo's insight will be incorporated into the overall discussion of how one develops a healthy fear of God.

“Inventing the Great Awakening,” by Frank Lambert

In this historical overview of the state of the church in the 1700's, Frank Lambert touches upon the spiritual apathy of that time era and its causes. His observations will be incorporated into a discussion of the spiritual apathy in today's churches.

“The Role of Fear in Our Love of God: A Lutheran Perspective,” by Kristin Johnson Johnston

Using Martin Luther's theology on the fear of God as a springboard, Kristin Largen examines man's fear of God as it stands in counter-distinction amidst man's love of God.

Various aspects of the pros and cons on the issue are discussed, and will be brought out in the section of the thesis which examines the benefits of having a fear of God, as opposed to one having a fear of God.

“Luther’s Works, Volume 35: Word and Sacrament I,” by Martin Luther

Luther uses the adjective “cursed” to describe the effects that the knowledge of eternal security has had on mankind in causing him to live a careless lifestyle without a fear of God. My same observation of this carelessness in the contemporary church is the foundational impetus for the thesis; therefore Luther’s reflections will definitely be incorporated.

“Theology for the Laity: Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Part II, The Fear of the Lord,” by Reginald Martin

In his comprehensive examination on the issue, Martin discusses four types of fear, namely servile fear, filial fear, virtuous fear, and true holy fear. All four of these will be logically and theologically explored in an effort to develop a prescriptive theology for having a healthy fear of God.

“General Deterrence and International Conflict: Testing Perfect Deterrence Theory,” by Stephen Quackenbush

Stephen Quackenbush discusses general deterrence theory as it relates to international conflict, however many of the discussed principles are readily transferable into a discussion of God relationship with man. In Exodus 20:20, God specifically displayed His power to serve as a deterrent against sin for the children of Israel.

“After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology,” by Bernard L. Ramm

In his examination of American evangelical theology, Bernard Ramm discusses the negative effects of the Age of Enlightenment upon orthodox Christianity; its focus on self-

awareness has caused man to view his existence in a subjective manner. The effect of this subjectivity upon man's relationship to God will be incorporated into the body of the paper.

“The First Catechetical Instruction [De Catechizandis Rudibus],” by Saint Augustine

The theological wisdom of St. Augustine will be valuable in that he forwards that a true love for God can only develop from a genuine fear of God's sternness. The church patriarch makes the comparison of the love that a son has for his stern father whom he fears; his fear translates into respect, respect turns into admiration, and admiration evolves into love.

“The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch,” by Saint Clement of Rome

Clement, in his epistle to the Corinthians, makes the cogent observation that it is the fear of the God which causes men to lead holy lives. This direct cause-and-effect observation will be noted in the thesis discussion on the benefits of having a fear of God.

“Summa Theologiae, Volume 18: Principles of Morality,” by Saint Thomas Aquinas

Widely-respected theologian St. Thomas Aquinas offers sagely advice which will bolster the foundational theory of this thesis. He argues for the benefit of having a fear of God by making the logical argument that it is unwise for one to overemphasize the love of God to the point of overlooking the threats of God's wrath in scripture.

“Treatises on Penance: On Penitence and On Purity,” by Tertullian

Tertullian boldly advances the theory that if one does not fear God, there has been no true conversion. Similar to Augustine, Tertullian hints that one's conversion experience is spiritual in nature, and therefore opens one's eyes to the truth concerning God's sovereignty and omnipotence of God. The residual effect of having one's eyes opened is that he can now appreciate the judgmental side of the character of God.

Biblical Passages

Exodus 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.”

This verse is the crown jewel of Old Testament as it relates to the theology of having a literal fear of God. When God came to dwell among the children of Israel following their exodus from Egypt, His objective was to instill in them a healthy, godly fear by displaying His might and power. This would result in a mindset of humility which would subsequently manifest itself in compliant behavior to His commandments.

Leviticus 10:1-2- “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they dies before the Lord.”

God is no respecter of persons when it comes to punishment. He had given plain instructions to the Aaron and his four sons concerning which types of incense where strictly forbidden. Because of an apparent state of drunkenness, Aaron’s two oldest sons had inadvertently burnt the wrong incense. Therefore, God immediately slew them while they were wearing their new priestly apparel; this was done in front of the entire congregation. Though they were Moses’ nephews, they were not exempt from the judgment of God.

Numbers 14:22 – 23 - “Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it.”

This verse teaches that God’s patience has limits; it also teaches that repeat offenders will provoke Him to wrathful judgment. God had invested much planning, time, and effort into fulfilling His promise to Abraham that He would bring his descendants out of bondage. God had performed many supernatural acts to accomplish this. Nevertheless, He condemned the children of Israel to wander in the wilderness for thirty eight and a half years until they died.

Numbers 20:12- “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

A lack of godly fear typically results when one becomes stagnant in his relationship with God, or when the person becomes increasingly informal and casual in worship. While God is neither impulsive nor capricious, and strongly desires for man to love him, He relentlessly demands that man’s behavior never reflects anything less than an utmost reverence for His person; man’s behavior must never detract from His glory as being the Sovereign Monarch of the entire universe. Scripture teaches that God allowed Moses to become more intimate with Him than anyone who has ever lived. This closeness, however, bred an increasingly informal attitude by Moses in his overall relationship with God. There are several incidents in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers where Moses makes statements to God which border on disrespect. By the time of this incident occurs in Number 20:9-12, God’s patience with both Moses and Aaron was depleted, and He told both that neither was going into the promised land.

Deuteronomy 28:53 - “And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.”

Tragically, this prophesy was fulfilled in 2 Kings 6:24, and teaches us that the extent of God’s punishment for disobedience reaches far beyond our conceptual paradigm of the person of God. No Christian would ever imagine that God would make cannibalism a consequence of disobedience. However, here it is.

Deuteronomy 29:19-20 - “And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curse that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.”

God defines presumptuous sin in this verse, and gives strong consequences for such behavior. God’s forgiveness for sin is foundational to the teaching in the church. However, contemporary Christian dogma teaches that God’s forgiveness is perpetual. This teaching is contrary to biblical teaching on the issue, which is made evident in this verse of scripture.

Proverbs 9:10 - “For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.”

When a person adopts a mindset of fearing the discipline and punishment of God, his spirit is more conducive to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit takes up residence, the person will subsequently become sensitive to His leading, and eventually become more prone to be obedient to His instructions.

Jeremiah 5:22 - "Fear ye not me? Saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence which have placed the sand for the bound of thee sea by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?"

In this verse God looks the children of Israel squarely in the eye, and dares them to not literally fear Him. God makes it clear that He intentionally wants to evoke a visceral level of fear when one thinks of His awesome might and power. Certainly, this verse precludes any discussion on the issue of whether one should have only a reverence for God, or a literal fear of God.

Matthew 5:20 - "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In the preceding passage of scripture Jesus had been discussing the keeping of the commandments, and segues into a logical progression that it is in the keeping of the commandments that a man is afforded the behavioral label of righteousness. He concludes this passage by warning the believer that he must have a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, otherwise, he will be denied entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:21 - "Not everyone who saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."

Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount with this dire warning to all professing believers. He directed this sober advice to all who would choose to either ignore or disobey His commandments. Following this statement Jesus gives a graphic scenario which captures the probable conversation He will have with many professing believers who will discover at the time of judgment that they will not enter into heaven because of habitual sin. Not only were these professing believers, these individuals in the parable also had the gift of prophecy, and had done

other mighty works in the name of Jesus. Yet, Jesus called them “workers of iniquity” and denied them entry in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 10:28 - “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Jesus gave the disciples this sober advice, and also gave the most important reason why one should fear God. This advice was given to the disciples as they were preparing to embark upon their maiden preaching expedition. He was giving them a motivational point of reference upon which to draw during thoughts of defection or dereliction of duties when persecution would arise. If these twelve men who, arguably, were the closest to the Messiah, and were the charter members and foundation of the church were warned to fear of God, how much more must we, the successive believers, also fear God.

John 15:2 - “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.”

Jesus states that it is possible for the believer to be taken away for not bearing fruit. While the issue of what constitutes the bearing of fruit is debatable, this verse nevertheless establishes doctrine that the slothful behavior can be “taken away.” While the exact meaning of being “taken away” is not specified, the warning should elicit a certain level of godly fear among the wise believer, and motivate one to work diligently to bear fruit.

John 15:6 - “If a man abideth not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

This verse should act as a fear motivator for the potentially backsliding believer. The word “abide” in this context refers to constancy, or to one remaining inside of a house. This verse is reminiscent of Moses’ instructions to the children of Israel that, once the blood was

applied to the door at the time of the Passover, they were forbidden to leave out of the house until the morning. Jesus is affirming that the consequences for one not remaining in the body is that he will be casted away, will wither, and will subsequently be burned in the fire.

Acts 5:3-5 - “But Peter said, Ananias...thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

This verse reinforces the deterrence theory concerning fear as is forwarded by God in Exodus 20:20. Notice that great fear fell upon all of the people who heard of God’s striking dead this husband and wife. One’s fear of God translates into well-guarded behavior because of the realization that God is always watching and listening.

1 Corinthians 9:27 - “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

In this verse Paul establishes the fact that no one, including himself, has immunity against becoming a “castaway,” regardless of how much work he done for the Kingdom of God. The Greek word for castaway, *adokimos*, literally means to fail the test, or be rejected. As indicated in the Statement of Limitations, the issue of eternal security will not be discussed; nevertheless, it must be firmly established that one can become a castaway, or be casted away by God. The cogent application of this verse to the overall thesis is that if the Apostle Paul, who was arguably one of the most ardent workers in the history of the church, had a latent fear of becoming a castaway, this verse will undergird the basic premise of this thesis that all believers should fear the same fate?

Hebrews 4:1 - "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

The author of Hebrews forwards and clearly establishes the concept of one "coming short of the rest of God." Again, as was indicated in the statement of limitations, the issue of eternal security will not be addressed. This verse is included to establish the fact that it is possible for the believer to come short of entering into the rest of God.

1 Peter 4:17 - "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Peter makes the sober declaration that the righteous are "scarcely" saved. Peter, along with John and James, are considered the core disciples, and knew Jesus very well, and therefore knows of what he speaks. Therefore, Peter's warning-laced usage of the word "scarcely" should motivate the believer to live as righteous a Christian life as is humanly possible.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL-CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The concept of fearing God has always been at the very core of the Jewish faith. Whether it concerns the issue of blasphemy, or the violation of the Sabbath, all of the theological underpinnings of Judaism invariably converge at the foundational worship principle that one must fear God. Beginning with Abraham and continuing throughout the patristic era, the covenantal, paradigmatic and theological baton of fearing the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was passed down throughout the Old Testament. God has chosen to physically bind the Old and New Testaments into one volume as if cleaving the two in covenantal marriage; one seamlessly flows into the other. While the New Testament church has opted to vigorously take hold onto the Abrahamic covenant, it has conspicuously attempted to extricate the inextricable element of fearing God upon which the covenant is founded. The New Testament church has, as it were, taken the Abrahamic baton, and is recklessly running wildly in an exaggerated doctrine of grace like the proverbial bull in a china shop. This thesis takes the concept of having a fear of God from its relegated state of obscurity and increasing marginalization in contemporary Christendom, and thrusts it into a thorough examination of its theological implications and behavioral dynamics as it relates to the Christian faith. The entire project is an effort to regain reverential perspective and restore the preeminence to God's glory which can only be afforded by means of man manifesting the utmost fear of Him.

Civilized man has always sought to worship a power above himself. Whether his cultural confines dictated worship of a sacrificial or spiritual nature, man has always found a certain level of comfort and assurance in seeking out a favorable relationship with what he considered to be a

controlling supernatural entity. Unquestionably, man's motivation is self-preservation, which is driven by feelings of fear along with a desire for a certain level of prosperity or gain which could be afforded by serving the deity who was the object of worship. While some cultures only sought the favor its god(s) concerning temporal issues of earthly existence such as crops, fertility, and war, those of a more civilized, moralistic and intellectually enlightened persuasion would invariably project and assign these same elements onto his god. Also, those who were so inclined would typically formulate a religious ideological construct which included paradigmatic doctrine which addressed issues pertaining to the afterlife. Typically, the tenets of such a doctrine would conditionally link an individual's earthly behavior as the strongest determining factor concerning his post-life eternal disposition. Invariably, if the individual had lived a virtuous life which positively affected others, he would be rewarded an eternal existence in a paradise-like setting. However, should the person have lived a selfish, immoral life he would be punished in some form, such as either being consigned to repeat another life cycle as a lower life form, or be relegated to a place of hellish torment for either a fixed period of time or an eternity.

If a people culture served a god who governed temporal matters, their primary concern was not to anger the god so as to sustain a certain level of favor in order to sustain a relatively comfortable level of earthly existence. However, if a culture of people espoused a prominent teaching of having a fear of god, there would also be associated with this fear a latent, yet pronounced belief that an eternal place of torment awaited the disobedient in the afterlife. This not knowing of one's eternal fate would then have a direct effect upon the person's earthly behavior. One must therefore conclude that having such a mindset of a fear of the afterlife is a strong determinant upon a person's behavior while on earth.

This overall conclusion has been extensively researched, and the preponderance of evidence supports this theory, and will be presented in chapter three. It has been conclusively demonstrated that countries and cultures which teach of hell have significantly lower crime rates than those who teach of a forgiving deity and reinforces the concept of going to heaven.

Yahweh, or the God of Abraham, is unique in that worship of Him addresses both temporal and eternal issues. While He is a god who concerns Himself with the everyday issues of temporal life which impact those who worship Him, He will ultimately become the Judge, and Supreme Potentate who will determine their eternal destiny. Herein lies the crux of this thesis, and the overarching theme of this project. The overriding issue is one of determining, how, within the confines of the Christian faith, can there be the effective teaching on the concept of “the fear of God” to be used as a primary means of curbing sinful behavior in light of three basic tenets of contemporary Christian dogma. These three teachings include that salvation is guaranteed, with guaranteed immunity from having to go to hell being afforded to all believers; the second being that God’s love is unconditional for the believer, regardless of behavior; and lastly, that God’s forgiveness is also unconditional, and willful, presumptuous acts of sin automatically fall under the umbrella of grace and divine impunity.

Chronological Overview

In examining this issue, the concept of having a fear of God will be scrutinized from its point of origination, its teachings as it relates to Old Testament Judaism, as well as a New Testament analysis. A foundational supposition of the thesis is that the concept originated with Abraham in his relationship to YHWH (Yahweh or Jehovah) as documented in Genesis 20:1 of the Holy Scripture. Abraham begat eight sons, however it can be assumed with high probability

that he concentrated on passing his worship practices, and his conceptual teaching of having a fear of God on to his two oldest sons Isaac and Ishmael. Evidentiary to this theory is the prime importance which is afforded to the concept of having a fear of God in the respective religions which are associated with each son, namely Judaism and Islam. While the latter of the two religions will be touched upon concerning the concept of godly fear, the thesis will focus on the Judeo-Christian concept the phrase.

Fear of the Lord – Old Testament Examination

As previously mentioned, Abraham was the first individual to use the phrase. He was sojourning in the land of Gerar after having been in Canaan for approximately twenty-three years, and apparently had a high degree of apprehension that the men of the village would take his life to have his wife Sarah, as she was a beautiful woman. Abraham's contextual usage clearly equates the concept of having a fear of God with one restraining from committing willful sin for fear of divine reprisal. Clearly, Abraham assigned a strong behavioral association with the concept of one having a fear of God in that it served as an effective negative sanction for undesired human behavior.

God had forged a relationship with Abraham, and firmly established a tri-fold covenant with him. The first provision centered upon God having an everlasting relationship with Abraham, which is everlasting life; the second was he establishing of this same everlasting covenant, or eternal life, with his seed; and the third involved God's promise of giving the land in which he now dwelt to his seed. As mandated by God, Abraham implemented the practice of circumcision as a token of that covenant. While the Canaanites could only serve idols, Abraham literally communicated with his newfound God, and thus a relationship was forged between the

two. As is evidenced in scripture, God dictated His relational demands upon Abraham with an expectancy of unwavering obedience and immediate compliance. This tenor of their relationship was foundationally established in God's initial communication with Abraham. There was no formal introduction; God straightforwardly commanded Abraham to leave his brethren, and made no optional variance available. Even though God offered relational assurances of blessings as the relationship progressed, Abraham nevertheless retained that initial mindset of obedience and compliance, from which the concept of having a fear of God has emerged. It is upon this foundational relational precept that Abraham built his entire theology of worship to God.

While scripture does not document whether it was codified by God and given to Abraham as was the case with Moses, or whether it was spiritually revealed unto him and subsequently incorporated into a code of conduct, Abraham definitely worshipped God according to a behavior-oriented paradigm which he came to associate with a mindset of having a fear of God. Being similar to the First and Second Great Commandments as designated by Christ in the New Testaments, this code of conduct was both vertical and horizontal in nature, and addressed Abraham's behavior to both God and man. Evidently, one aspect of this code was to not commit murder. Abraham knew that the men of Gerar did not know God, and, not being subject to the same covenantal behavioral code of conduct as was he, they would have, without reservation, taken his life for the purpose of having his beautiful wife Sarah. Hence, Abraham referred to the probability of this happening as not having a fear of God.

Abraham's logic in using the phrase would have had to have been arrived at from either of two courses of deductive reasoning. The first could have been that since the men of the land did not serve and fear the same God he served and feared, they would not be bound by the same covenantal restrictions on personal behavior. They would, therefore, not hesitate to slay him. His

other line of logic could have been derived from an element of doubt early in his relationship with God that he would be protected by God should the men attempt to slay him. While the two lines of reasoning differ, the resulting behavior prompted by both would have, nevertheless, been the same. Abraham is advancing a conditional postulate concerning a fear of God which is also reinforced by the live research which is presented in chapter four of this thesis. Abraham and the survey respondents deduce that if one fears God, then he will temper his behavior. Whether this fear of God is relational or reactionary, or from one having eschatological apprehension concerning the judgment of God after death, the fear of divine reprisals was a central component in Abraham's theology.

This was the second such occurrence for Abraham in the land of Canaan, with both having identical circumstances. The initial incident had occurred twenty years prior in the land of Egypt, and interestingly Abraham did not refer to a concept of having a fear of God in that set of similar circumstances. He only stated that the men of the place would kill him to have Sarah. This comparison of narratives seem to indicate that Abraham's fear of God had developed and increased as did his knowledge of God by means of their growing relationship.

The next defining usage of the phrase occurs in the words of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. In advising Moses to enlist the help of other men as judges, Jethro states that they should have a fear of God. Jethro qualifies his usage of the term by stating that God-fearing men will value truth over bribes. The strong implication is that a person having a God-fearing frame of mind will deflect thoughts of accepting bribes, with the possible motivation being a fear a divine reprisal for such an action.

The most defining usage of the phrase is found in Exodus 20:20, which should be considered the foundational verse concerning the principle of having a fear of the Lord. As

previously mentioned, God gave the reasoning why He wanted the people to have a fear of Him in this verse. God had just introduced Himself to the children of Israel in a powerful display of might which evoked a sense of fear within the people, as specifically intended. Once Moses calmed the people, he proceeded to explain why God had done this. He told the people that God had come to test their obedience; he explained that He wanted to instill in them a mindset of fear of divine reprisal which would act as a deterrent against willful sin. Thus, the phrase “the fear of the Lord’ connotes a covenantal mindset of behavioral deterrence based upon knowledge of the judgment of God.

Scripture also describes what happens when one does not have a fear of God. Isaiah forwards a formulaic association that a hardened heart will result from a lack of having a fear of God; this hardened heart of which he speaks which arrives from a lack of godly fear will then manifest itself in willful sin. It appears that this state of having a hardened heart to having godly fear begins with a latent, subconscious indifference on the issue, and a lack of restraint in personal behavior. Should the person persist in being disobedience, it is possible that God will harden his heart, at which point he will become unable to obey God. This state of having one’s heart hardened by God is seen in the example of Pharaoh in the story of the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt. A similar state of having a reprobate mind is referenced by the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans.

In addition to the sin-deterrent purpose which God assigns to fearing Him, Solomon, the wisest man that every lived, adds an eschatological addendum to the concept. This third king of Israel causes the reader to give serious pause to the fact that one day he must stand before God in judgment for all of his earthly deeds. Solomon underscores God’s divine attributes of being omniscient and omnipresent, which affords the ability to monitor every thought and action of

man. Solomon therefore reminds the reader to keep the commandments of God and be mindful of his behavior, because his every action shall be examined at the time of final judgment.

New Testament Conceptual Overview

The Old Testament ends with the ominous words from God describing the coming of Christ as a great and dreadful day. Correspondingly, the New Testament opens with John the Baptist qualifying God's usage of this foreboding phrase as he preached of the coming of God's wrath, from which one must flee. Warning people to repent, John brought his hearers the news that God was implementing a new covenantal age having an unprecedented level of accountability for purposes judgment and eternal placement. John warned that now those who worship God must bear fruit, and the consequence of not bearing fruit would be that the tree would be cut down and thrown into the fire.

However, amidst all of these disconcerting statements would come some good news, which was the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though the wrath of God was going to rain down upon His creation, He was providing a means of escape in the form of His Son.

The Radical Shift by Jesus – A New, Eschatological Paradigm of Fear

In Matthew 10:28 Jesus warned man to fear the Father because He is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. With the words of Jesus, the New Testament saw a heightened sense of the overall accountability factor to the concept of having the fear of the Lord and a much more pronounced eschatological emphasis. Throughout the Old Testament, God's reaction to sin was immediate with punishment being meted out per offense, or series of offenses. This practice of per offense judgment is seen throughout the Old Testament on both a corporate level and individual cases. In the case where God's judgmental wrath was incurred by the individual, so

intense was even the residue that it would be felt by the son of the perpetrator, and at times upon the perpetrator's descendants to the third and fourth generation

The close of the four hundred and fifty silent years between Malachi and Matthew brought with it God's implementation of the new, Messianic covenant which was of a completely individualistic nature; God had spoken of this new covenant in the Old Testament. While God would continue to monitor man's every thought, action and deed, His practice of event-initiated judgment with corresponding punishment would now be superseded by the practice of waiting until the end's of one's life, at which point one's cumulative, overall life's behavior would be examined, and either the reward of eternal life would be granted, or eternal condemnation would be pronounced.

When Christ gave up the ghost on the cross the veil in the temple was rent, which symbolized that man separation from God which had occurred through Adam's original sin had now been reversed, affording man's re-entry into the spiritual realm of God...into the very presence of God. This newfound entrance onto holy ground brought with it an elevated level of spiritual intimacy with the Great God of the Universe by means of His Holy Spirit. However, with the added gift also came a heightened sense of spiritual accountability. No longer was the refraining from physical sin sufficient for a newly incorporated spiritual relationship with God; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would now require a spiritual righteousness. Jesus revised the meanings of what constituted adultery, as well as offered addendums to the traditional interpretation of such Old Testament concepts of an eye for an eye, and loving your neighbor but hating your enemy. Jesus strategically revolutionized the concept of godly fear in a supremely unique manner, adding definition to Old Testament theology by firmly placing objective faces on formerly subjective principles in the form of parabolic scenarios. His straightforward parables

typically ended with a firm underscoring of His final opinion on the issue at hand. Most of these parables addressed the issue the final judgment and hell. He consistently reinforced that certain behaviors will result in one's entry into the kingdom of heaven or conversely, certain behaviors would result in one being relegated into eternal darkness, each destination having been determined by the behavior of the believer. In moving through the Gospel of St. Matthew, the first such warning of Jesus is found early in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus unequivocally states that unless the believer's righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees he will not enter into the kingdom. While the issue of what constitutes righteousness is debatable, what is unmistakably clear that one must have righteousness for entry into the kingdom of heaven. This admonition should subsequently evoke a latent mindset of apprehension within a person which actively prompts a sober pursuit of the righteous behavior which is espoused by Christ in this sermon.

Jesus presents another direct and sober warning in the sermon. In Matthew 7:21-23 He plainly states that, regardless whether a person is a professing believer and has worked mightily for the kingdom, if he habitually practices sinful behavior, which is what constitutes iniquity, he will not enter into the kingdom. His sober warning is reiterated by Paul in Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 6:19-20, and Ephesus 5:3-6.

Jesus then offers what should be considered as the quintessential New Testament verse which indicates that He is a staunch proponent of having a fear of God. Just as Exodus 20:20 states the command and its reasoning, so does Jesus do the same in Matthew 10:28. He initially warns the believer not to fear man who can only kill the body, but warned that God should be feared because He can destroy both body and soul in hell. Speaking this phrase as the disciples

were preparing to embark upon their maiden preaching expedition, Jesus interjected this advice to the burgeoning preachers as a deterrent to defection in the face of persecution.

The next warning of Jesus which engenders a mindset of eschatological fear concerns the mandatory requirement of the believer having the humble and obedient spirit of a child. He plainly states that if one does not become as a little child, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. As was the case with a previous issue of what constitutes righteousness, one can debate at length what criteria comprises the state of being a child. However, what is not open for debate is the undeniably reality that a person must attain to a certain level of righteousness in order to qualify for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. As stated before, this possibility should motivate the believer to adopt a latent mindset of healthy apprehension which prompts him to actively pursue a holy, childlike lifestyle of godly obedience.

It should also be mentioned that Jesus warned that riches can keep one out of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus spoke of a literal hell on numerous occasions, and in His chapter of seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees He told them that Hell would be their inescapable fate. He repeatedly referred to it as a place of outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth due to intense and prolonged pain.

At this juncture it must be noted that Jesus told a variety of ‘warning’ parables. In fact, Jesus proportionately spoke much more frequently of Hell than he did of heaven. While His reasoning for doing so is unknown, the evidence nevertheless exists that the warnings are throughout the gospels. Warnings are always given when there is pending danger; and where there is danger, there should be a corresponding element of guarded fear on behalf of the one being warned. Could it be that Christ was attempting to instill a mindset of latent fear in the mind of the believer? To the wise Christian these warnings will evoke a latent fear and a heightened

sense of commitment to one's faith. To the tenuous and uncommitted believer the warnings amount to innocuous words which are marginalized or even ignored.

The first parable to be examined is found in Matthew 22:1-14. It centers on a marriage ceremony and tells the story of an invited guest who had accepted the invitation, come to the ceremony, and was comfortably seated. This person, however, had neglected to wear the proper wedding attire to the ceremony. When the Father of the bridegroom enters the ceremony the man discovers the awful price he must pay for his negligence. The Father orders that the ill-dressed guest be bound hand and foot like a piece of cattle, and cast into the outer darkness where there will be cries of pain because of torment. In Revelation 19:7-8 the wedding attire is being the righteousness of the believer. Christ is conveying a deafening message that this person is in the church, however is not properly dressed. What is strongly implied in the parable is that the Father of the bridegroom had preset a certain standard for the material of the wedding garment, and had undoubtedly made the specifications known to all the guests. However, this one guest had chosen to ignore the requirements and come dressed as he pleased. Being denied participation in the wedding is also the fate of the five foolish virgins in yet another parable which is found in Matthew 25:1-13. The parable speaks of individuals being denied entrance into the kingdom of heaven, in that they were not prepared to meet their bridegroom. Alarming, the parable ends with half of the virgins being shut out of the marriage ceremony.

In yet another parable, which is found in Matthew 25:14-30, a man travels a far distance to a country, deliver his goods to some servants, goes back to his original home, and returns after awhile to reckon with his servants concerning their stewardship over his goods during his absence. One of the servants had not worked to multiply what had been entrusted to him, and

consequently, His Lord took away his talent because of his slothfulness, and his fate was to be cast into the outer darkness where there was unbearable torment.

The Gospel of St. John contains two direct warnings for the believer who does not remain in the church body. The first concerns involuntary removal by the Father and is found in John 15:2. Jesus states that if one does not bear fruit as a believer, or is slothful, God will take him out of the body. Jesus then also addresses the issue of one voluntarily removing himself from the church body, or backsliding in John 15:6. He warns that the person will wither, or die, and mysterious men will gather him up as a dead branch, and cast him into a burning fire. The symbolic reference to hell is unmistakably clear.

Jesus' Theology on Godly Fear

Instead of having the four gospel writers to simply re-state and perpetuate what had become a somewhat marginalized theological principle of godly fear, Jesus used the collective stylus' of the four gospel writers to add quantifiable dimensions of substance and depth to the Old Testament concept of having a fear of God. Jesus inspired the four writers to devote a substantial percentage of the four presentations of His gospel message to the discussion of hell, complete with prescriptive warnings for its avoidance. In a formulaic manner, He offered direct statements on the issue, which were intermittently undergirded with the graphic reality of parabolic symbols. While the Master often discussed issues of love, forgiveness, being a servant, giving, and stewardship, it is unmistakable that He brimmed over with an all-consuming passion of warning. This warning manifested itself in the form of Him giving repeated sober and somber advice to His sheep in an effort to help them avoid being relegated to the place of eternal torment called hell, which He often described as a place of outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In conveying these warnings to His followers Jesus, as did Moses,

employed the well-known theory of argumentation called argumentum ad baculum. This Latin phrase means argument to the club or stick, and “takes the form of a warning that some bad or scary outcome will occur if the respondent does not carry out a recommended action.”¹ The pressing issue at hand centers on the motivation for Jesus so frequently employing the argumentum ad baculum form of preaching which is so clearly evidenced in His articulation of the torments of hell, and in His repeated warnings to His followers on how to avoid hell’s eternal grasp. Without question the primary motivators were His obedience to the Father and His love for the sheep. Jesus specifically rendered His life to afford the sheep eternal life. However, His ministry and earthly works, which all culminated and converged at the Cross, would have been in vain had He did not vigorously articulated to the sheep the proper means by which to appropriate the wonderful gift which His sacrifice was going to afford them. He would have been doing the equivalent of burying an inestimable treasure without leaving a map to its whereabouts.

Remember Lot’s Wife! – Luke 17:32

One of the final warnings of Jesus was ironically derived from the first recorded incident of God exacting judgment upon an individual. Jesus only touched upon the 2,000 year old incident, however His mentioning of one of the characters in only three short words yielded a deafening warning for followers of Christ. Because of God’s mercy resulting from Abraham’s intercession on his behalf, Lot, his wife, along with two of their daughters, had been allowed to

¹Brian Jackson, “Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House): Fear Appeals in American Evangelism,” in *Rhetoric Review* 26, No. 1 (2007), 43-44, <http://academicsearchprimerebshost> (accessed March 5, 2013).

escape the God's wrath upon the four cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. All were forewarned not to look back. His wife, however, upon hearing the explosion from the fire and brimstone being rained down, and perhaps prompted by her emotional ties to her daughters and grandchildren who had remained in the city, instinctively looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Her act of disobedience would become perpetual signpost for all Christians. God took an eternal snapshot, and Lot's wife became forever etched in time as the prototypical symbol of the fate which awaits one who, upon being saved from a city destined for the wrath of God, disobediently looks back, or goes back into that city. Quite obviously, God set up the eternal pillar of Lot's wife as a warning of some sort for all those who would follow in her footsteps to escape out of the city. The task then becomes one of determining who are those who would follow her out of the doomed city; also to determine why would God chose salt as the compositional element for the pillar--after all, the salt would have just dissolved during the first major rain storm. The answers lie in the words of Jesus. He would make an association of the event as an element of the gospel two-thousand years later, referring to it as a haunting warning for the believer...one having deep theological implications.

Monument or memorial which stands as a token representation of an event which should be commemorated, or one which should never be forgotten, however it can be used to evoke the memory of an evil or forbidden deed which should never be repeated. The sixty-six books of God's word are amazingly inter-connected with references being inextricably interwoven throughout scripture; systematic theological arrows consistently point directly towards each other throughout the word of God. However, the story of Lot's wife is never referenced for the balance of the Old Testament; no theological arrows ever point back to her until the words of Christ.

Jesus calls believers the salt of the earth. He contextually refers to salt as an element which is placed within the believer, however can lose its flavor, and ineffectively lie dormant within the person, never to have its flavor restored. In assigning a spiritual value to the salt of which Jesus speaks there is only one parallel element which God instills within the believer which one can allow to lose its effectiveness; undoubtedly, this salt represents the Holy Spirit. It acts as a spiritual preservative for the now saved soul of the believer, who now stands for the cause of Christ in a continually decaying dying world, which is symbolized as a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah. Scripture states that God established a covenant of salt with Aaron and his sons and daughters to receive the wave breast and heave shoulder offerings. The covenant was called a covenant of salt because it would last forever. God also established a similar covenant of salt with David and his sons concerning a perpetual reign upon the throne of Israel. When one combines this interesting mixture of symbolic elements with the contextual warning of Christ's admonishment to remember Lot's wife, the phrase takes on a decidedly new meaning. Lot's wife represents that once salted, or spirit-filled believer, who was saved by the Christ and brought out of the world, however now looks back, or goes back, into the world from which the believer was saved. One is left with the haunting image of a torrential rain storm bearing down upon the statue of Lot's wife; and as she dissolves, her once strong, salty body slowly decomposes into an invisible, flavorless liquid which rolls back down the hill into the very city from which her physical body had escaped, but a city in which her heart had remained, and in which her soul would now be forever entombed.

Christ's Covenant of Free Agency for the Believer

An overall systematic study on His theology clearly reveals that Jesus, God the Son, incorporated the same element of covenant free agency for His followers which God the Father originated in the Old Testament with the children of Israel. Upon entering the promised land Moses instructed the children of Israel to have representatives from half of their twelve tribes to stand upon Mount Gerizim as blessings were pronounced, and simultaneously have representatives from the other half of the tribes were to stand upon Mount Ebal as cursings were pronounced. The official blessings are comprised of fifteen verses which are found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. However, Moses preceded that list of blessings with a list of cursings in Deuteronomy 27:14-26, and followed them with a list of fifty-three additional curses, which are found in Deuteronomy 28:16-68. As Moses ended his sermon to the children of Israel, he made the statement, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life..." This same choices were given to the children of Israel by Joshua.

This concept of covenant free agency has been God's preferred method of relating to humankind since the creation. While Adam and Eve were given the option of eating from any tree in the Garden of Eden, the emphasis of their story concerned their choice of eating from the two "decision" trees. According to the Doctrine of Original Sin, their choice to eat of the forbidden tree plunged the creation into a state of spiritual darkness, and placed Adam's progeny, which is all of humankind, into a cursed state of certain spiritual death. Both he and his descendants would now become slaves to an inbred sin nature which would be forever etched onto their spiritual DNA. This generational curse is referred to by God's in His words to Adam that "cursed is the ground for thy sake" (mankind is made from the dust of the ground). Therefore, every newborn infant who neither has the cognitive nor physical ability to commit sin,

is pre-judged as guilty of sin, and condemned to both a physical and spiritual death, and ultimately will be relegated to a place of eternal torment. He has thus incurred a tremendous spiritual injustice by the sin of his original father. In taking this discussion to its logical end, Paul's concept of justification in the epistle of Romans takes on a decidedly added dimension. The Greek root word for justification is *dikaioo*², which means "to justify, vindicate, declare righteous, to put someone in a proper relationship with another, usually referring to God's relationship with humankind. Paul declares how Adam's sin brought the injustice of eternal condemnation upon all, however the actions Christ justified all. Christ's actions were purposed for the undoing of Adam's sin, and thus removes the flaming sword and cherubim from the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Christ has become the new proxy for all of mankind; He has corrected the injustice.

There is a revolutionary aspect in continuing with this train of logic. Mankind has, conceptually, been placed back into a pre-fallen state inside of the Garden of Eden. He is spiritually now in the same justified, albeit neutral state, as was Adam and Eve prior to their fall. righteous, to put someone in a proper relationship with another, usually referring to God's relationship with humankind. Paul declares how Adam's sin brought the injustice of eternal condemnation upon all, however the actions of Christ justified all. Christ's actions were purposed for the undoing of Adam's sin, and thus remove the flaming sword and cherubim from the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Christ has become the new proxy for all of mankind; He has corrected the injustice.

²*The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 21st Century ed., s.v. "justify," 1344, Greek Concordance.

There is a revolutionary aspect in continuing with this train of logic. Mankind has, conceptually, been placed back into a pre-fallen state inside of the Garden of Eden. He is spiritually now in the same justified, albeit neutral state, as was Adam and Eve prior to their fall. Although man has been saved from the eternal damnation, has been imputed with the righteousness of Christ, and now has access to the tree of life, man has yet to eat of the tree. This would explain why Christ speaks of the believer eating of the tree of life as a future event, for he states in Revelation 2:7b, “to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” John also states in Revelation 22:14a that “blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life” (Rev. 22:14a). These statements clearly imply that the earthly believer is now journeying towards the tree of life after being placed into the Garden of Eden. He now, therefore, stands in a state of accountability and will be personally held responsible by God for his actions. Both trees are now before him; he can either choose to remain on the straight and narrow path which has paved by Christ and journey towards the tree of life, or he can venture over to the broad and wide gate and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, repeating the deed of Adam and Eve, because he will certainly be tempted by the same serpent as were they. Would this not place him back into the same fallen state from which he was rescued?

Dualistic Worship Theology Throughout the Church Age

There is evidence that the church has always employed the dual elements of love and fear in its worship theology with God. Augustine believed that “piety begins with fear and is

perfected in love.”³ Tertullian states, “Where the fear of God is, there is seriousness and an honorable and yet thoughtful diligence.”⁴ Kristin Lagen, researcher on the life of Martin Luther quotes fellow researcher Voker Leppen, who states, “The glaring ambivalence between a quotes fellow researcher Voker Leppen, who states, “The glaring ambivalence between a punishing God and a freeing God is the distinct characteristic of Luther’s spirituality and theology.”⁵Lagen continues by stating that “The profound tension shapes the theological ambivalence that Luther could never resolve.”⁶ Scott and Kosso, in their extensive study of religious works throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, forward observations which identify a consistent presence of a Dualistic Worship Theology throughout these time periods. In assessing the theology of Thomas Aquinas they state, “In the end, the important point for Aquinas...is that fear should be recognized as not only necessary here on earth but in the life to come. Fear and love of God free the Christian from the deadly vices of pride and presumption and assure him of a proper stance before God himself.”⁷ Dual Worship Theology is also found in the theosophical works of

³St. Augustine, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. and trans. J.H.S. Burleigh (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 240.

⁴David W. Bercot, ed. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: A Reference Guide to More than 700 Topics Discussed by the Early Church Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1998).

⁵Lagen, Kristen Johnson, “The Role of Fear in Our Love of God: a Lutheran Perspective.” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2011); 27, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType+cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nyp1&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 24, 2013).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, ed., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), xxvii.

Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, who felt that her love and dread of God were linked. The Renaissance also saw the emergence of Jewish Mysticism, which spawned writings known as the Kabbalah. They state, "...tradition as well as psychological and social needs drove the writers of the Kabbalist works to see fear and power as two complementary aspects of a single divine entity."⁸

Evidence of Dualistic Worship Theology is also present in the Doctrine of Eternal Security. In his commentary on the well-known teaching, R.E.O. White speaks of how the church sought to assure the believer of his salvation while not compromising the truth concerning God's judgment. He states, "pastoral necessities dictated a dual approach. Converts needed assurance...But pastoral experience demanded warning..."

Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall...Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted....Watch and pray, lest you enter temptation....Many will fall away, most men's love will grow cold....He also endures to the end will be saved." Judas, Ananias, Demas, some who "by rejecting conscience have made shipwreck of their faith," are remembered. The Colossians are promised presentation before God "provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting." The church at Ephesus is warned that Christ may remove its lampstand, and Christ will vomit the lukewarm Laodiceans from His mouth. Most fearful were warnings to Hebrew Christians: "lest they be judged to have failed," "that no one fail by disobedience." "For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect of judgment....It is impossible to restore again to repentance those once enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their account....bearing thorns...worthless...near to being cursed...burned."⁹

⁸Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, ed., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), xxxi.

⁹R.E.O. White, "Perseverance," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 907.

Well noted author and theologian Millard Erickson concurs with this dualistic component of the Doctrine of Eternal Security, stating “There need be no anxiety...On the other hand our understanding of the doctrine of perseverance allows no room for indolence or laxity.”¹⁰ As is reinforced by the survey responses in chapter four, the overwhelming majority of responding believers express a strong opinion that having a fear of God is a necessary component of worshipper in order to sustain a proper relational balance.

New Testament Writers

New Testament writers mirrored the teachings of Jesus on the issue of fearing God, invariably attaching eschatological overtones to the concept; the final judgment of God is consistently emphasized. It is stated in I Peter 4:18 that judgment will be begin at the house of God, and also warns that “if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” Instead of speaking directly to the issue of godly fear, the writers commented on behavior which directly resulted from that lack of fear. John alludes to the fact that there is sin which is not unto death, and that one should pray for a brother who commits such sin. However, he states conversely, “There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it” (1 John 5:16). While the sin is not named, and neither is the distinction made between spiritual or physical death, such distinction is unnecessary. What is of prime importance here is that the believer must be made to realize that it is possible for him to sin and cause his death.

In his brief, yet staggeringly sober epistle, Jude comments in verse six on the issue of apostasy, and submits for examination to the potential backslider the compelling example of

¹⁰Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 1007.

fallen angels, stating "...angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." In his scathing commentary on carnal believers, Jude considers them deluded concerning their faith, and have been uprooted and are dead again in their trespasses as sins. Paul also addresses the issue of having godly fear from a standpoint of judgment. He tells the Corinthians that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and in 2 Corinthians 5:11 warns believers of the terror of the Lord. Paul advises the Philippians that they should establish a mindset of fear and trembling, and strongly implies that it is from such a frame of mind that they should work out their salvation. He tells the Corinthians that one must cleanse himself from all filthiness in the fear of the Lord, reinforcing the concept that it is a fear of God which causes one to refrain from sin. Taking the concept from its abstract realm, Paul makes the concept relatable by divulging the reason for his fear of God. In 1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul intimates that he disciplines himself lest he should become a castaway. Undoubtedly he makes this confession to reinforce to the Corinthians that no one, including himself, is exempt from mandatory compliance to the commandments of God, lest he find himself in a state of what Paul calls a castaway, or *adokimos*, which means "failing the test, rejected."¹¹

Paul juxtapositions the concept of godly fear alongside easily identifiable behavioral examples for the believer. It is highly probable that Paul had both read and taken quite seriously God's "watchman warning" which is given to all ecclesiastical leaders. As explained in Ezekiel 3:16-21, God forwards that if the watchman did not warn a righteous person who had turned to commit iniquity (i.e. the professing Christian who turned aside to willful sin) to repent of that sin, not only would the former righteousness of that person not be remembered and he would die in his sin, his blood would be required of the leader. In other words, the spiritual leader would be

responsible for that person's death. It is quite apparent that Paul was well aware of God's warning to preachers as contained in the aforementioned passage in Ezekiel because he warns believers that certain behaviors will disqualify one from entry into the kingdom of heaven. He boldly tells the church at Corinth that even though they profess to be believers in Christ, if they participate in behavior which classifies them as fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, they shall not go to heaven. He forwards similar lists to the Galatians and the Ephesians. In forwarding these lists to believers, Paul makes the applicable of the concept of *adokimos* unmistakably clear for the believer, and removes any blood from his hands. All of these warnings by the New Testament writers were undoubtedly intended to instill a healthy godly fear into believers.

Following Jesus, however, the most vocal and strongest proponent for having a fear of God among the New Testament writers is without question the author of Hebrews. In the fourth chapter the author firmly establishes the possibility that one can fall short of entering into the rest of God. Throughout the epistle the writer proceeds with unapologetic candor to profusely admonish with compelling warnings which are supported by compelling theological reasoning. He forces the reader into a theological corner, making him come down from the neutral state of proverbially straddling the fence. Aggressively addressing major doctrinal issues away from which others shy, he warns that one can only be a partaker of Christ if he remains steadfast in his

¹¹*The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 21st Century ed., s.v., "castaway".

walk of faith from beginning to end; his assertion is reminiscent of the warning of Christ to remember Lot's wife, and that salt cannot be re-seasoned. Unlike other New Testament writers, the author of Hebrews does not simply defer to such euphemistical phrases such as "not entering into heaven;" rather, as does Christ, he literally refers to hell. He boldly relates that post-conversion, willful sin cannot be re-atoned for, and fiery judgment awaits the perpetrator. Relentless in his passion, he offers compelling logic for his strong disdain for the willfully sinning person. He forwards that the atoned-for sinner devalues with same precious blood of Christ which has saved his very soul from damnation, and symbolically puts it under his feet; he crucifies Christ afresh. He concludes this passage by warning the believer that it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God.

While Christ sets forth Lot's wife as a sober reminder to the would-be backslider, the author of Hebrews forwards a similar memorial for the presumptuously sinning believer in a relatable example of Esau. Using as a springboard the common element of a birthright blessing to link Esau in the book of Genesis and the believer, the author forwards how Esau senselessly sold his priceless birthright for the taste of food, and afterwards cried with desperation to retrieve the irretrievable. His obvious correlation is that it is possible for the believer to sell his birthright for the taste of sin. The author of Hebrews leaves the reader with the sober reminder that God is a consuming fire.

Early Church Fathers

The earliest documentation of the opinions of the church fathers concerning godly fear and the believer is found in the writings of St. Clement of Rome as he addressed the church at Corinth who states, "how honorable and excellent is the fear of Him, and how it brings salvation to all who in this fear lead holy lives, with a conscience undefiled."¹² Tertullian was much more

absolute in his observation of the concept of fear God. He believed that the absence of a fear of God indicated there has been no conversion. His view was reminiscent of Jesus teaching that you will know a tree by the fruit it bears. Tertullian stated, “As soon as you know the Lord you must fear Him; as soon as you have made His acquaintance you must revere Him.”¹³ In his extensive study of the church fathers, translator William P. Le Saint concludes, “Fear of God’s punishment is repeatedly proposed in Scripture as a motive for repentance and amendment of life.”¹⁴ He also notes that there is a commonality of thought among the church fathers, among whom he names Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Gregory the Great. He forwards that “St. John Chrysostom states simply that if the fear of God’s punishments were not a good and salutary motive for repentance, Christ would not have spoken so frequently and at such length on the subject of hell.”¹⁵ St. Jerome offers the notion that fear and love are not compatible emotions in one’s relationship with God. He states, “Further, where there is fear, there is no love...For he who loves keeps the commandments, not because he is compelled by fear of punishment or by the desire for reward, but because the very thing that is commanded by God is best.”¹⁶

¹²St. Clement of Rome, “The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch,” trans. James A. Kleist, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, No. 1*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Paulist Press, 1946), 23.

¹³Tertullian, “Treatises on Penance: On Penitence and On Purity,” trans. William P. Le Saint, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, No. 28*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Walter J. Burghardt (New York: Paulist Press, 1959), 26.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶St. Jerome, “The Letters of St. Jerome,” trans. Charles Christopher Mierow, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, No. 33*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Walter J. Burghardt (New York: Paulist Press, 1963), 119.

St. Prosper of Aquitaine was a strong proponent for having a literal fear of God. He was one of the few theologians throughout history who used the word terror in conjunction with the concept of godly fear. St. Prosper felt God uses the four elements of teaching, enlightening, terror and fear to bring about the total submission of a man's will. He even assigns a cathartic value onto the moment when one comes to a realization of the fear of God. He states, "When this fear [of God] is struck into a man even with the shock of a great fright...it rather dispels the darkness that oppressed the mind, so that his will, which was before depraved and captured, is now set right and free."¹⁷

As previously touched upon, St. Augustine's views on the issue are summed up in his statement that "Piety begins with fear and is perfected in love."¹⁸ He forwards that one's relationship with God must begin with a fear which motivates repentance, however in time the fear evolves into love, and one maintains the same level of repentance-spawned behavior. He states, "Moreover, love must be built up out of that very sternness of God, which makes man's heart quail with a most salutary fear, so that man, rejoicing to find himself loved by Him whom he fears, may make bold to love Him in return, and at the same time may shrink from offending His love towards him, even if he could do so with impunity."¹⁹

¹⁷St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," trans. P. De Letter, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, No. 14*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Paulist Press, 1952), 136.

¹⁸St. Augustine, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. and trans. J.H.S. Burleigh (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 240.

¹⁹St. Augustine, "The First Catechetical Instruction [De Catechizandis Rudibus]," trans. Joseph P. Christopher, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, No. 2*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Paulist Press, 1946), 24.

An overview of early monastic thinking indicates vacillation on the issue. Certain monks, which included John Cassian, Isidore of Seville, and Hildemar of Corbie, were critical of extremist positions which they felt led to developing "the wrong types of fear, such as acedia or "anxiety of heart" (leading to spiritual paralysis), or timor sevilis, i.e., "base fear" or "dread of negative consequences."²⁰ While the noted monks retained a position of caution on the issue, they conceded that fear acted as a "catalyst for the soul to repent..."²¹

Middle Ages Through the Enlightenment

The Middle Ages saw an increase in the fear of judgment among believers to the degree that a "Christian was shown as being in constant danger of damnation right up until the moment of his death."²² One's fear of God became a barometer of genuine spiritual authenticity and political character. "A person who was trustworthy was a person who feared God and His judgment, whereas an untrustworthy person did not fear His judgment, either in theory or in practice."²³

St. Thomas Aquinas had a common sense reaction to the issue of whether one should have a fear of God. Thomas Gilby, translator of Aquinas' writings, sums of the theologian's views on the issue by stating, "Nowhere does St. Thomas preach a love of God so refined and

²⁰Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, ed., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), xxiii.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., xxii

²³Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, ed., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002),

unreal as to be regardless of the promises and threats in revelation.”²⁴ St. Thomas also makes a distinction between two types of fears. He believed that “the fear of being separated from Him [God] is a Gift of the Spirit, and that within limits the fear of punishment is a perfectly healthy reaction.”²⁵ Scott and Kosso assess that “Aquinas embraces rather than avoids fear in order to underscore how human beings might achieve a correct relationship with God.”²⁶

Christian theology saw a radical shift with the ushering in of the Protestant Reformation which was initiated by a theological maverick named Martin Luther. In his translation of Romans 3:28, Luther added the word *sola* to the word *fide*, which spawned the doctrine that salvation is by faith alone. Although Luther correctly emphasized the fact that Christ alone is the author and finisher of one’s salvation, he may have also inadvertently removed any redemptive value from man’s behavior, and thereby marginalizing any meaningful element of accountability for the believer. Logic, unfortunately dictates that where there is no accountability, there is no fear. However, Luther realized the theological tightrope he was walking in discounting the works of man at risk of diminishing man’s fear of God. Researcher Kristen Largen states, “Luther believed that the fear of God provided an important antidote to that temptation, which Luther thought was so extremely deadly.”²⁷ Furthermore, he states, “to those who are smug and have

²⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Principles of Morality, Volume 18*, trans. Thomas Gilby (Great Britain: Eyere and Spottiswoode Limited, 1965), 130.

²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Principles of Morality, Volume 18*, trans. Thomas Gilby (Great Britain: Eyere and Spottiswoode Limited, 1965), 130.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Kristen Johnson Largen, “The Role of Fear in Our Love of God: a Lutheran Perspective.” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType+cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 24, 2013).

altogether discarded the fear of God, God's blows and wrath must be presented in order that they may be warned by the example of others and cease to sin."²⁸

The Medieval Age and Renaissance saw an increase in people's respect for the teachings of the Christian church. The citizenry at large "feared things that were made plausible and possible, as objects of fear, through the dogma, tenets, and proponents of Christianity."²⁹ The conceptualized state of fear became tangible and took upon objective dimensions and theological elements. "People feared sin and the wrath of God; they feared eternal damnation in hell and pain in purgatory."³⁰

Eighteenth century America witnessed a notable decrease in godly fear. A lack of qualified clergy led to a diminished level of orthodoxy, and thus, a resulting lack of godly fear. This caused a decline in piety among church members. Historian Frank Lambert states, "The decay was evident among members who for various reasons no longer practiced the piety they had once professed."³¹ Solomon Stoddard, the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards, placed the blame squarely at the feet of preachers; he "blamed pastors for not making their congregations aware of the eternal peril they faced as a result of sin."³² Stoddard believed that the fear of hell

²⁸Kristen Johnson Largen, "The Role of Fear in Our Love of God: a Lutheran Perspective." in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebshost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType=cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 24, 2013).

²⁹Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, ed., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), xix.

³⁰J. Aaron Simmons, *God and the Other: Ethics and Politics After the Theological Turn* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 295.

³¹Frank Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 38.

³²*Ibid*: 39.

was the only deterrent to sin, as he declared in a 1713 sermon, “The misery of many men is that they do not fear hell...if they were afraid of hell, they would be afraid of sin.”³³

Undoubtedly influenced by his grandfather, Jonathan Edwards continued as a strong advocate for having a fear of God. His classic sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741) was instrumental in setting America ablaze in the First Great Awakening (ca. 1735-43). However, as America’s godly fear increased, a philosophical nemesis was brewing in Europe with the Age of Enlightenment. Immanuel Kant called it “...humanity’s coming of age. It was the emergence from the immaturity that caused human beings to rely on such external authorities as the Bible, the church, and the state to tell them what to think and do.”³⁴

In the face of increasing religious liberalism, American preachers began to incorporate the practice of argumentum ad baculum into their sermons. According to Brian Jackson, “In American religious rhetoric, the argumentum ad baculum has been used to invoke fear in parishioners so that perceived dangers would be averted by pious humility and repentance.”³⁵ Termed hellfire and brimstone sermons, they became a staple in American preaching.

³³Ibid.

³⁴C. Brown, “The Enlightenment,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 377.

³⁵Brian Jackson, “Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House): Fear Appeals in American Evangelism,” in *Rhetoric Review*, 26, No. 1 (2007), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost> (accessed March 5, 2013).

Contemporary Insights

Kristen Johnson Largen offers the following collective assessment of the image of God held by most Christians in the United States. She states,

[God is]...akin to a benign grandfather to whom one can turn for favors, and ignore when convenient. This God is comfortable, easygoing, reasonable, and predictable. This God does not make difficult demands of us, does not ruffle our feathers, and pretty much leaves us alone on a daily basis...this God has been fully domesticated, tamed, and declawed. In short, this God is an idol, a God who is just like us, a God before whom we do not take off our shoes, a God before whom we need not bow our heads.³⁶

Even though she offers the foregoing scathing commentary on the contemporary church, which is obviously the result of a lack of having a fear of God, Largen, paradoxically, does not promote the teaching of godly fear. She states, “Finally, I argue that fearing God simply does not make sense in a secular culture, and does nothing to draw people to Christianity or encourage them to view Christianity favorably as a force for good in the world.”³⁷ Furthermore she states, “Related to this is the experience of many people who have left the church precisely because their overarching experience of the Christian faith is one of menace and dread.”³⁸

Brian Jackson from the University of Arizona is a staunch advocate against the use of fear to, and he would consider it, as a form of cajoling someone, under duress, to conform to behavior which is he gives the label of ‘scare-for-salvation.’ He boldly states, “My conclusion is

³⁶Kristen Johnson Largen, “The Role of Fear in Our Love of God: a Lutheran Perspective.” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType=cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 24, 2013).

³⁷Ibid., 32.

³⁸Ibid., 31.

that the overt, dramatic appeal to fear in the religious tradition is an unfortunate strategy that relies on terror...as the primary motivation for changing one's life."³⁹

Thomas Reeves offers a scathing portrait of the church, which he basically satirizes in laxity and indifference, assessing that "Christianity in modern America is, in large part, innocuous, it tends to be easy, upbeat, convenient, and compatible. It does not require self-sacrifice, discipline, humility, an otherworldly outlook, a zeal for souls, a fear as well as love of God. There is little guilt and no punishment, and the payoff in heaven is virtually certain."⁴⁰

While professors Andrei Buckareff and Allen Plug do not specifically address the issue of the fear of God, they do discuss the fear-related issue of hell. They see as incongruent the notion of integrating fear into any aspect of God. They state that "People have genuine, heartfelt problems with worshipping a being who consigns persons to an everlasting state of damnation yet claims to be a loving parent who desires nothing more than to commune with them."⁴¹ They forward an alternative to the biblically taught concept of hell called escapism wherein God will allow those relegated to hell to leave at some point in time.

Brian McLaren is also a staunch opponent to the teaching of a fear of God. What makes his opinion stand out is that he is also a pastor. He caricatures the fundamentalist concept of

³⁹Brian Jackson, "Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House): Fear Appeals in American Evangelism," in *Rhetoric Review*, 26, No. 1 (2007), 44, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost> (March 5, 2013).

⁴⁰Thomas C. Reeves, *The Empty Church: Does Organized Religion Matter Anymore?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 67.

⁴¹Andrei A. Buckareff and Allen Plug, "Escaping Hell: Divine Motivation and the Problem of Hell," in *Religious Studies* 41, No. 1 (Mar. 2005), 46, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20008570> (accessed December 22, 2012).

God to absurdity, stating “So the God of the fundamentalists is a competitive warrior—always jealous of rivals and determined to drive them into defeat and disgrace...is superficially exacting—demanding technical perfection in regards to ceremonial and legal matters...is exclusive, faithfully loving one in-group...and rejecting...all others.”⁴² He continues in his observation that “The fundamentalist God is also deterministic—controlling rather than interacting...and...he is ultimately violent, eventually destined to explode with unquenchable rage, condemnation, punishment, torture, and vengeance if you push Him too far”⁴³ McLaren so grossly distorts the personality and actions of God in this caricatured portrait that any reader would find any notion of fearing God to be as remote and the viability of loving such a god.

Author Frederica Beard, who offers a more conservative view on the issue, quotes Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, who stated, “We have lost the fear of hell and have not yet attained the deeper fear that attends the contemplation of the beauty of holiness.”⁴⁴ Beard suggests that there is a process wherein one grows from a fear of God to a love for God. She quotes James Leuba who says that “the striking development of religious life is the gradual substitution of love for fear in worship.”⁴⁵ In the same article she quotes M. Richet of the Academy of Medicine and the American Journal of Psychology who state, respectively, that “We

⁴²Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 102.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Frederica Beard, “Is Fear Essential to Well-Being?” *Biblical World* 50, No. 1 (July 1917), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3136129> (accessed July 2, 2013).

⁴⁵Ibid.

have lost the fear of hell and have not yet attained the deeper fear that attends the contemplation of the beauty of holiness,”⁴⁶

Suzanne Guthrie cites a malaise among believers, and a lack of true repentance. She thinks “it’s just sloth: because we know we are forgiven, we don’t bother with the process of repentance. And maybe pride: we’re so sure of mercy, we make the leap to thinking we’re right all the time. And greed: we become consumers of mercy without getting any of the benefits of progress.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶Frederica Beard, “Is Fear Essential to Well-Being?” *Biblical World* 50, No. 1 (July 1917), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3136129> (accessed July 2, 2013).

⁴⁷Suzanne Guthrie, “Repentance,” in *Christian Century*, 127 (11), June 2010, 13, <http://www.academicsearchfhpremierebscoho> (accessed March 5, 2013).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH AND THEORY

Etymological Considerations

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance indicates that the majority of the entries for the English translation for the Hebrew word used to denote fear is yare⁴⁸. The word is most commonly used as a verb and denotes a behavioral based context. It literally means to be afraid, be frightened, to revere, respect. The corresponding noun form of the word is yira⁴⁹ and means to have a fear, reverence, or piety.”

The New Testament equivalent of the word is phobeo, which is also a verb and it means “to fear, to be afraid, alarmed.”⁵⁰ The noun form of the word, which is phobos, means “fear, terror, respect, and reverence.”⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the English word phobia is derived from this same etymological root, and it means “an irrational persistent fear or dread.”⁵²

As previously stated, “the fear of the Lord” as a phrase originated with Abraham, and therefore would have been passed down to his two oldest sons. Research indeed verifies that the concept of “the fear of Lord” has the utmost prominence in Judaism. There is an unparalleled sense in having the fear of God, or morashamayim, engrained within the very fabric of the Jewish faith. The Jewish encyclopedia states that the fear of God is “The Hebrew equivalent of

⁴⁸*The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 21st Century ed.*, s.v. “Fear.”

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²*Merriam Webster's Desk Dictionary*, s.v. “Phobia.”

‘religion.’⁵³ Other foundational principles which underlie the concept of the fear of God in the Jewish faith are that the fear of God is identical with love and service, it implies hatred of evil and wrong, it has an intimacy with the concept of wisdom, and it may also be dread of God’s punishment in consequence of sin and shame. The overriding virtue which sums up the Jewish concept is obedience. The Talmud contains a quotation which captures the essence of the principle. It states, “He who has the Torah without the fear of God is like a treasure who has the keys to the inner treasure, but not to the outer, how than can he reach the inner? (Shab. 31b)”⁵⁴

The concept of having a fear of God, which is termed taqwa, “is perhaps that most important single term in the Qur’an.”⁵⁵ Researcher Erik Ohlander continues, stating,

Among Quranic exegetes, the notion of the ‘fear of God’ as a religious construct is most often defined by the noun taqwa: thus al-Jalalayn notes that: ‘ittaq means that you guard yourself against Divine punishment by placing between it and yourself the shield of worship (ibada).’ A word derived from the root W-Q-Y, which is its most primitive etymology connotes ‘to protect’, ‘to guard’, or ‘to defend’ something against something else – a sense in which it is used in the Qur’an 19 times – the Quranic understanding of taqwa connotes a reverential or pious fear of God, the guarding of oneself from actions unbecoming of a believer and by extension from the punishment of the Hereafter.⁵⁶

This striking similarity of having a strong theological principle of fearing God among both religions is definitely a strong indicator that Abraham passed on a similar theology to both

⁵³*The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Fear of God,” <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6045/fear-of-god> (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Erick S. Ohlander, “Fear of God (Taqwa) in the Qur’an: Some Notes on Semantic Shift and Thematic Context,” in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 137, <http://www.academicsearchprimer/ebscosthost> (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁵⁶Ibid., 139.

of his sons. In both conceptual paradigms there is a preventive-deterrence factor of fear which is embedded into the overall fabric of worship, and sets the foundational tenor for the individual's relationship with God. Perhaps this explains why adherents to both religions are rarely found to be perpetrators of most crimes committed in America, notwithstanding the terrorists who are invariably linked to a Muslim heritage.

While a consistent corporate erosion of having a fear of the God has been found in Christendom over the last 2,000 years, it has also begun to appear in the Muslim faith. Over the last twenty years Ohlander states that "Shifts in western scholarship on the Qur'an away from the historical-philological approach have only made their presence known within the last decade or so."⁵⁷ Although the conservative of the faith attempt to marginalize this burgeoning trend stating, "The application of postmodern literary criticism to the Quranic text seems to have barely scratched the surface of possibility;"⁵⁸ the erosion has nevertheless begun. It must be noted that an apparent dichotomy exists between the Jewish faith and the Christian faith. While the Jewish faith synonymously attaches the element of obedience to one having a fear of God, live research presented in chapter four of this thesis indicates that Christian believers equate the fear of God with awe and reverence; respondents attach no behavior-based applicability to the concept of having a fear of God.

⁵⁷Erick S. Ohlander, "Fear of God (Taqwa) in the Qur'an: Some Notes on Semantic Shift and Thematic Context," in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 139, <http://www.academicsearchprimer/ebscohost> (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁵⁸Ibid.

Conceptual Considerations

In the previous section etymological considerations were examined in order to examine the contextual implications when the term is used in the three religions listed above. In addition to these contextual meanings there are also ideological constructs and theological concepts which are associated with the mindset of one having a fear of God.

Biblical Conceptual Definition According to the Third Commandment

The third commandment of the Decalogue is “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” The word “vain” comes from the Hebrew word *saw*, which primarily means “worthlessness.”⁵⁹ Therefore, one is commanded to assign an inestimable amount of honor to the name of God so that one’s overall behavior must glorify Him. One must simply draw the analogy that a woman who bears a child is given the title of mother. With that title comes a host of responsibilities, it also demands an incredible amount of honor. God has given spiritual birth to the believer and is called the Father. However, because God is also sovereign and omnipotent, He must also be feared. Agur, in Proverbs 30:8-9, makes the same case for the definition of the phrase. He states, “Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” Thus, the third commandment is synonymous with fearing God.

⁵⁹*The Strongest Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 21st Century ed.*, s.v. “vain.”

Biblical Conceptual Definition According to Proverbs 9:10

According to Proverbs 9:10, a fear of God must precede wisdom. The term wisdom as used in the verse is the Hebrew word *hokma*, which connotes expertise in spiritual things. The second part of the verse states that a knowledge God gives one understanding on how to fulfill his relationship with God; the word for understanding is *bina*, and connotes insight and discernment. Thus, one must have a literal fear of God, acquired either by information or experience, which is strong enough to serve as a behavior modifier. The person then becomes pliable clay in the hands of God.

Various Types of Fear and Conceptual Definitions

Worldly, or human fear is “the apprehension that we may lose the material things that make our lives pleasant.”⁶⁰ St. Thomas says, “Hence worldly fear is that which arises from worldly love as from an evil root, for which reason worldly fear is always evil. (S.T. II-II 19.4)”⁶¹

Servile fear is a mandated, compelled fear, and is solely based upon a dread of reprisal and vengeance. “St. Augustine observed that those who exhibit this fear shun sin, not because they love God, and not because they hate sin. Rather, because they fear God’s punishment.”⁶² This type of fear is closely related to the concept of attrition which is found in Catholicism. According to its dogma, “Attrition is that imperfect contrition which arises from the fear of the

⁶⁰Reginald Martin, “Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Part II: The Fear of the Lord,” in *The Rosary Light & Life* – Vol. 64, no. 6, Nov-Dec 2011, <http://www.rosary-center.org/1164n6.html> (accessed June 3, 2013).

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

eternal punishments of hell, as contradistinguished from that sorrow for sin which arises from the love of God, and grief at having offended Him.”⁶³ This type of fear is considered to be imperfect, being solely based upon a fear of hell. Because it is associated “with a crippling personal scrupulosity and spirit of harsh judgment, it is neither personally satisfying nor a source of peace and growth in the Christian community.”⁶⁴ Apparently, one ascribes to attritional fear at the point of conversion to establish a mindset of obedience to the commandments of God; however he progresses to a contrition-based fear which includes a relational component.

A third type of fear is called initial fear. According to Stephen Loughlin, “Initial fear is that which is exhibited by the neophyte as he begins his growth in charity.”⁶⁵ As if describing a caterpillar-turned-butterfly who is beginning to emerge from its cocoon, Loughlin states of the neophyte that “He acts with the love of God and justice, as well as the fear of punishment, which later eventually fades through the acquisition of charity.”⁶⁶

Filial fear, or chaste fear, can be described as a childlike love which one develops in his relationship with God. According to Stephen Loughlin, “Filial or chaste fear is the ideal fear for the Christian in his relation with God.”⁶⁷ One develops a spiritually generated, profound love

⁶³“Attrition and Contrition,” in *The Catholic Layman*, Vol. 7, no. 80 (Aug. 1858), 88, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30066757> (accessed December 12, 2012).

⁶⁴Reginald Martin, “Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Part II: The Fear of the Lord,” in *The Rosary Light & Life* – Vol. 64, no. 6, Nov-Dec 2011, <http://www.rosary-center.org/1164n6.htm> (accessed June 3, 2013).

⁶⁵Stephen Loughlin, “The Complexity and Importance of *Timor* in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*,” in *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 12.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid, 13.

which prompts an awestruck allegiance. “This fear is so important to the Christian life that Aquinas considers it as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, gifts offered as antidotes to the seven deadly or capital vices or sins,”⁶⁸ adds Loughlin.

Catholicism adds a fifth type of fear, which is called true, holy fear. Reginald Martin states, “In our Catholic theology, true fear, “holy” fear, is a growing sensitivity and awareness of sin.”⁶⁹ This fear is actually awestruck reverence which has advanced to the level of an unwavering love and allegiance and causes one to “turn away from sin – not because we fear punishment for doing wrong, and not because we seek some reward for doing good – but because our love for God makes us more and more want to do God’s will.”⁷⁰

There is also what is known as the fear of divine vengeance. This stored-up, subconscious sense of attrition is a latent fear which is central to this thesis, wherein one’s fear of divine judgment after death acts as a deterrent to succumbing to sinful temptation. Author Kim Rivers discusses the usage of mnemonic images as a helpful tool in creating a certain state of mind, which will translate itself into a desired mode of behavior. Accordingly, “This fear helps create a desired psychological state-one that prepares the viewer for a right relationship with God-but also is used to provide an image against which one might judge moral behavior.”⁷¹ To forward a

⁶⁸Stephen Loughlin, “The Complexity and Importance of Timor in Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae,” in *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 13.

⁶⁹Reginald Martin, “Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Part II: The Fear of the Lord,” in *The Rosary Light & Life* – Vol. 64, no. 6, Nov-Dec 2011 <http://www.rosary-center.org/1164n6.htm> [accessed June 3, 2013]

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, eds, “*Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2002), xxiii.

biblical example, had Esau imagined the devastating consequences for selling his birthright, he would have sold his heritage for a bowl of lentils.

Theoretical fear is a label which might be associated with the type of fear endorsed by Thomas Aquinas. "...Aquinas believes that fear is essentially a shrinking from "future evil..."⁷² This type of fear is closely related to the previously mentioned fear of divine vengeance in that both fears are products of the intellect and imagination, however the latter is the product of external images which have been stored up on in the mind and have synergistically resulted in a mindset of fear. In comparison, theoretical fear is solely a product of the human imagination based upon factual information received by the thought processes. Scott and Kosso state, "In other words a person can fear theoretical events ideas in that they are good or bad intrinsically. The link to God and the afterlife follows easily from this notion of rationality."⁷³

Philosophical Considerations

Although seven types of fear have been presented, only the last four will be examined at this juncture because of their relevance, applicability, and corroborative value for this thesis. Filial or chase fear is not analogously transferable to the relationship between God and the believer because the relationship between father and children must be physically active. If pending punishment is not going to be readily administered by and towering, and at times intimidating, physical parent, this type of fear will not serve as a deterrent.

⁷²Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, eds, *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2002), xxiii.

⁷³*Ibid.*, xxvi.

True, or holy fear, is a spiritual stage to which the believer rarely aspires. It is at this level of spiritual development where the believer stops and evaluates his every action and decision to ascertain whether God will be pleased or not. Most act, or react, and only when conscious or repercussions appear do thoughts of faith and God brought to the fore.

Fear is a consequence related emotion, and therefore must be assigned, or attached to a relatable, cognitive point of reference. Although one is told to fear God, unless that individual has firm established this foundational reference point of fear, simply telling him to do so is a futile verbal exercise. A child can persist in attempting to touch a hot stove many times, and each time be turned away by a caring parent; however, once the child actually touches the hot stove and experiences pain, a point of reference is established from which a healthy fear will develop, and ultimately become a behavior deterrent.

The tantamount, all-consuming problem facing the church is that, although the hot, physical stove indeed exists in the spiritual realm, the effects of it being touched has not yet been realized in the temporal realm for believers, for their sin nature blinds them. Consequently, they are unwittingly drawn to the hot stove by spiritual gravity (the darkness) in the same manner in which metal is drawn to a magnet; once they touch the stove, there can be no removal of the hand. This is why God warned Adam and Eve that death would be the result if they touched the fruit of the forbidden tree. Once Eve touched the fruit, it was impossible for her to remove her hand, regardless of the searing pain of the hot stove.

In the final analysis only the last two types of the five types of fear which have just been discussed can have any efficacious value for the believer. Mnemonic images, as discussed in the fear of divine vengeance, when used in conjunction with theoretical fear would perhaps yield the type of fear which God speaks of Exodus 20:20. For God's desired effect to be realized, the pastor would preach sermons on the parables of Christ which speak of the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The sermons would provide verbal stimuli which would generate mnemonic images in the memory which would begin the process of instilling a healthy, godly fear into the individual. Augustine considered this fear of God as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is at this point that the Holy Spirit appropriates the knowledge of hell and the stored, still somewhat vague, mnemonic images from the pastor's sermons into a cognitively real point of reference from which the person derives a theoretical fear. It would seem that this permanent reference point then becomes an effective deterrent to willful sin. The Holy Spirit has essentially created a "hot stove" in the mind of the believer.

One of the pressing issues at hand is to ascertain the necessity of instilling a mindset of godly fear into an individual, as well as the overall efficacy of having such a fear of God instilled into the worshipper. The answer is overwhelmingly affirmative on both issue, and will be borne out by forthcoming statistical evidence. However, without even consulting empirical evidence, the answer would, nevertheless, be affirmative as it has been set forth as a relational directive from God according Exodus 20:20. Mankind is in a fallen inner state; and mankind is quite comfortable in that fallen state. Therefore, his behavior must be altered so as to conform to the

behavioral specifications as set forth by God. While some believers completely submit to the Holy Spirit and are transformed into a conformed state, others require coercion, which is evidently the reason God instituted the element of fear into the worship equation with Man. Jewish worshippers have a strong coercive reference point in the form of the historical narrative of the Old Testament which records numerous accounts of God executing his wrath and judgment upon the children of Israel. However, for the Christian there is no “hot stove” to touch; the only reference point is a strong foundation of grace which serves as the theme of the New Testament. While Christ frequently speaks of futuristic judgment, the gospels never once record an incident wherein Christ exacted in a physical manner upon, notwithstanding the incident of Him scourging the moneychangers and overthrowing their tables in the temple courtyard. Indeed, Scott and Kosso state that “...a Christian fears God’s punishments in the abstract. While the laws of God exist in the worldly realm, the afterlife with its punishments or salvation must be imagined (i.e., theorized.)”⁷⁴ Again, the responsibility of the pastor becomes one of bringing the warnings of Jesus from a futuristic realm of conceptual abstraction into the current, daily walk of the believer. While the preacher is speaking, the Holy Spirit is able to appropriate the words of the warning pastor, parlaying and then impressing them into a concrete state of concrete of dormant, albeit vivid, theoretical fear. This process of appropriation, and its resulting

⁷⁴Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, eds, *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2002), xxvi.

effectiveness of its reasoning lies in the fact that theoretical fear is rooted in images which are etched onto the innermost recesses of the person's mind, and thus become mnemonic in nature. These mnemonically-embedded conceptual images are involuntarily memorized in the subconscious, and would readily surface when one is confronted with the temptation to indulge in the types of behavior, the consequences of which would result in the manifestation of the mnemonically-engrafted, undesirable situational consequence. An overall desired code of conduct will ultimately result as these mnemonically-induced behaviors become instinctive. This would explain why the association of the concept of a theoretical fear which is evoked from mnemonic images would be theoretically efficacious when applied to the Christian faith. Scott and Kosso state that "This fear helps create a desired psychological state---one that prepares the viewer for a right relationship with God---but also is used to provide an image against which one might judge moral behavior."⁷⁵

The Efficacy of Fear

God has incorporated an efficacious, or a fear based upon rationale into His creation for purposes of preserving life; all creatures instinctively take precautions so as not to become prey for likely predators. Fear, then, can be appropriated as a latent asset, rather than a debilitating liability. Healthy fear deters one from participating in risky, dangerous, or detrimental behavior. M. Richet of the Academy of Medicine states, "Fear is, en derniere analyse, a protection against

⁷⁵Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso, eds., *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2002), xxix.

death.”⁷⁶ This type of fear is typically deductible in nature in that there is a quantifiable source of the fear from either a visual perspective, and/or a logical and rational vantage point. For example, rational fear by a pedestrian would cause him to never attempt to venture across the highway when there is a steady stream of cars traveling at a high rate of speed. Neither would a sane person open the door to a lion’s cage and venture inside. God has even designed man’s brain chemistry to respond to fear; certain hormones are secreted in the face of fear which aid all creatures to run faster. Fredericka Beard states, “Fear is an instinct primary in time and universality; its bases form part of the constitution of both animals and men; it is an emotion rooted in the very fiber of the race.”⁷⁷

Ontological thinker and theologian Paul Tillich has thoroughly considered the issue of fear. He states, “Objects are feared. A danger, a pain, an enemy, may be feared, but fear can be conquered by action.”⁷⁸ In making a clear distinction between anxiety and fear, Tillich claims that “anxiety is ontological; fear, psychological,”⁷⁹ and continues to quantify anxiety in terms of finitude. He surmises that once one realizes that he is both mortal and finite, it creates a sense of vulnerability, and thus, a level of anxiety is realized. He categories anxiety as latent state, however forwards that, “As an ontological quality, anxiety is as omnipresent as is finitude.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶Frederica Beard, “Is Fear Essential to Well-Being? *The Biblical World* 50. No.1 (Jul 1917), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3136129> (accessed July 2, 2013).

⁷⁷Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951) 191.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Tillich's assessments are readily relatable to the Dualistic Worship Paradigm which has been discussed in this treatise, however any theoretical association must replace the word anxiety with the word apprehension, as we are discussing a believer's worship relationship with his loving heavenly Father. The believer should aspire to a state of unhesitating, effusive love for God, yet establish, and simultaneously maintain an acquired level of apprehension concerning God's judgment. This need to separate God's judgment from God's love is reinforced by Tillich who states, "Occasion in which anxiety is aroused must be distinguished from anxiety itself."⁸¹ This means that one's latent state of apprehension over God's judgment should only surface in the face of temptation. Millard Erickson concurs with the conceptual application that the absence of anxiety of God's judgment against personal sin demonstrates an absence of concern over one's finitude. He states, "To seek to overcome the state of anxiety, the tension between finiteness and freedom, by denying one's finiteness is the most obvious form of sin. It leads to various manifestations of pride and self-exaltation."⁸²

The observations of both Tillich and Erickson reverberate in the theology of twentieth-century theologian Helmut Thielicke, who states that "Anxiety is a this-worldly emotion. But its object cannot be localized in this world."⁸³ Similar to Tillich, Thielicke draws a clear distinction between fear and anxiety by associating fear with a quantifiable entity or identifiable object from which the emotion of fear is derived. Therefore, one can strategize a means by which to allay or

⁸¹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 191.

⁸²Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 1985), 605.

⁸³Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1968), 239.

circumvent the sense of fear. However, anxiety is a conditional state of vulnerability. Thielicke states that “anxiety is akin to the feeling of absolute dependence.”⁸⁴

As with Tillich’s observations, there is an immediate analogy in Thielicke’s conceptual definitions of fear and anxiety to the relationship between God and one who chooses to worship Him. The absolute dependence of which he speaks appears to be cognitively realized by the believer at the point of true, biblical repentance of which Jesus speaks (see foregoing discussion), and could very well qualify as the beginning of wisdom which is spoken of in Proverbs 9:10. The knowledge that one’s eternal destiny lies in the hands of God should create a dormant, yet powerful state of apprehension which instinctively elevates to a conscious level as a deterrent to willful sin. Otherwise, this state of healthy fear should always remain innocuous, and be constantly dwarfed by one’s abundance of love for God.

Seventeenth century preacher Jonathan Edwards considered the act of instilling fear into the sinner a necessary lesser of two evils. There were only two options in relating to the unrepentant sinner: either scaring him into repentance, or ignoring him into hell. Although he was criticized by his contemporaries, and is criticized today as well, Edwards stood firm in his conviction to preach a godly fear into people. He unashamedly stated, “Some talk of it as an unreasonable thing to think to fright persons to heaven; but I think it is a reasonable thing to endeavor to fright persons away from hell, that stand upon the brink of it, and are just ready to

⁸⁴ Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1968), 239.

fall into it, and are senseless of their danger; 'tis a reasonable thing to fright a person out of a house on fire.”⁸⁵

Deterrence Theory

As has been mentioned, the thematic verse for this thesis is Exodus 20:20. In what might be considered a preemptive relational tone-setter, God intentionally invoked fear into the children of Israel to specifically serve as a sin deterrent. Stephen Quackenbush, researcher on deterrence theory as it relates to international conflict, forwards the definition that “Deterrence is the use of a threat (explicit or not) by one party in an attempt to convince another party not to upset the status quo.”⁸⁶ He classifies deterrence as being either general or immediate in nature. He considers general deterrence as non-critical in nature with both parties maintaining a workable relationship. However, immediate deterrence signals entry into a critical phase, and an attack by one party upon another is imminent. Quackenbush concludes that “If general deterrence succeeds, crises and wars do not occur.”⁸⁷

God’s intimidating display of power in Exodus 20:18-20 was a form of general deterrence. However, in the tenth chapter of Leviticus God elevated the deterrence level to immediate, or lethal, when Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s two eldest sons, became drunk, and the newly ordained priests offered strange fire before God, an act of which God had specifically

⁸⁵Brian Jackson, “Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House): Fear Appeals in American Evangelism,” in *Rhetoric Review*, 26, No. 1 (2007), 46, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost> (accessed March 5, 2013).

⁸⁶Stephen L. Quackenbush, “General Deterrence and International Conflict: Testing Perfect Deterrence Theory,” *International Interactions* 36.no. 1, (2010), 60, <http://www.academicsearchpremier/ebsohost> (accessed February 14, 2013).

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

forewarned the brothers against doing. As a result God struck the brothers dead with fire in front of all of the people; and this was done while the brothers were wearing their new priestly garments for the first time.

Just as Adam and Eve chose not to fear God and His possible discipline, so did Nadab and Abihu make the same choice. In fact, it appears that man has a natural inclination to consciously avoid adopting and maintaining a voluntary mindset of godly fear. God has made man a free moral agent, and most individuals, even within the confines of the Christian faith, disengage their theologically-oriented cerebral processes from even remotely entertaining the concept of having a fear of God. Predictably, research has conclusively corroborates this fact. Soenens et al., forward that most people prefer an autonomy supportive perception of a loving God because He “(a) allows the believer the necessary freedom to make choices about how to organize his or her life and (b) takes the believer’s perspective.”⁸⁸ Researchers discovered that these individuals experience feelings of warmth, security, and satisfaction. It is therefore not surprising that in the absence of a having biblical, factual examples of God’s discipline and judgment in the Old Testament that Christians would default to such an image of God.

Researchers also gauged how people react when faced with a controlling perception of God. Soenens et al. continue by stating, “Furthermore, a perception of a controlling God correlated positively with attachment to God; was unrelated to a loving God image; and, interestingly, was related positively with feelings of dissatisfaction with God. In other words a controlling God perception seems to engender ambivalent feelings toward God.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸B. Soenens et al., “How do Perceptions of God as Autonomy Supportive or Controlling Relate to Individual’s Social-Cognitive Processing of Religious Contents? The Role of Motives for Religious Behavior,” *International Journal For The Psychology of Religion* 22, no.1; (January 2012), <http://www.atlareligiondatabase/atlaserialsebscohost> (accessed January 15. 2013).

⁸⁹Ibid.

In applying this research to the subjects of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, Soenens et al. state, “Thus, the psychological freedom provided by an autonomy supportive God seems to allow religious individuals freedom to interpret religious messages in a personal and flexible way.”⁹⁰ In contrast, if one perceives God as controlling, he will view His love and approval as being conditionally based. Those subscribing to this view are more disciplined in their faith, and “...feel pressured to adhere strictly to principles imposed by God and religious leaders, leading one to interpret religious contents in a more literal way.”⁹¹ This pressure most accurately captures the conceptual definition of what it means to have godly fear, and would most likely typify the include believers of a fundamentalist leaning.

Researchers also forward that some individuals perceive God as possessing both character types, and relate to him accordingly. Calling this a “mixed” God style, Sonens et al. state, “The current findings suggest that at least some religious people perceive God as enacting both autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviors.”⁹² This category is most congruent with the Dualistic Worship Paradigm, and most accurately describes how God has consistency interacted with mankind over the last 4,100 years. Respondents in the research which will be presented in chapter four of this thesis subscribe to this type of “mixed.” Many even felt that it was necessary to maintain a proper relation balance with God.

⁸⁹B. Soenens et al., “How do Perceptions of God as Autonomy Supportive or Controlling Relate to Individual’s Social-Cognitive Processing of Religious Contents? The Role of Motives for Religious Behavior,” *International Journal For The Psychology of Religion* 22, no.1, (January 2012), <http://www.atlareligiondatabase/atlaserialsebscohost> (accessed January 15. 2013).

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

The thesis discussion will now examine various means whereby a believer might be able to most efficaciously adopt this “mixed” God style, which is the style which Christ preached.

Knowledge of God’s Judgment as a Motivator for Healthy Fear

The dilemma facing the Christian church is determining how to incorporate a healthy fear of God into the church when the fear is neither instinctual nor is there an experiential reference point from which to draw. Reinforcing the concept that increased knowledge of God fosters a healthy fear, researcher Jindo Job forwards, “In other words, there is a certain kind of knowledge that leads to a state of fear and reverence, which best explains the connection between the knowledge of God and the fear of God.”⁹³ Job differentiates between two types of knowledge which are foundational to the development of a fear of God; one is called perspectival, or an experiential knowledge, and the other is propositional, or descriptive knowledge. In the Old Testament the children of Israel lived with, and experienced the presence of God; therefore, they had a perspectival knowledge of God. When God executed His wrath of judgment upon a perpetrator of His law, it evoked an immediate, visceral reaction of fear. In the absence of a perspectival knowledge of God resulting from the lack of supernatural manifestations, one must rely on propositional knowledge, which is the insight gained through the study of Old Testament biblical narrative wherein is chronicled a pattern of God’s punitive reactions to willful and chronic disobedience.

⁹³Job Y. Jindo, “On the Biblical Notion of Human Dignity”: ‘Fear of God’ as a Condition for Authentic Existence.” *Biblical Interpretation* 19, no. 4/5 (December 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType+cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed January 18, 2013).

However, in order for propositional knowledge to be as effective as perspectival knowledge, there must be extensive personal study of the word of God, as well as reinforcement from the pulpit. As was previously mentioned, the Holy Spirit appropriates acquired scriptural information to instill a healthy form of latent theoretical fear, which eventually becomes instinctual, thereby allowing the person's relationship with God to take on an emotional element. God verifies the importance of propositional knowledge by stating by Hosea 4:6a, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."

What is somewhat perplexing, however, is that there is historical evidence which undermines the effectiveness of witnessed punishment as a deterrent to combating undesired behavior. The Wolfenden Report is a compilation of data gathered during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in London. It is stated in the report that when public hangings were being conducted upon perpetrators who stole property, pickpockets would be roving through the gathered crowds picking their pockets. Furthermore, the report states, "We have on record that of 167 thieves prepared for hanging, 164 had witnessed public executions for theft."⁹⁴ Such findings led the report to conclude that "The commission of crimes, particularly of serious crimes, is due to inner, often unconscious causes, and is not based upon anything so conscious or reasonable as a proper assessment of the probable consequences however horrible these may be."⁹⁵ This statement could possibly explain why the children of Israel could never completely adopt a mindset of having a lasting fear of God. It also reinforces the assessment of the Apostle Paul that

⁹⁴Charles Berg, *Fear, Punishment, Anxiety and the Wolfenden Report* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1959), 63.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 64.

there is a sin nature living within man which causes him to rebel against the commandments of God; it also supports Augustine's assertion that having a fear of God is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It undergirds and lends credence to the theory that having godly fear is a spiritually-derived awakening which is realized as part of the born again experience. This would explain why Christ so compellingly preached that one must be born again, because it is in that point that a person is liberated from the impulsive, irrational bondage of sin and rightly fears God.

Conditionality as a Motivator for Having a Fear of God

God's covenants with mankind in the Old Testament were consistently conditional in nature (see previous discussion on Free Moral Agency Worship). Man has been afforded the prerogative of choice in any given situation; however man must also bear the brunt of the consequences associated with any given choice. It appears that God has designed His entire relational experience with man based upon one of behavior-elected conditionality; this is evident throughout the law. In fact, God has incorporated behavior-elected conditionality into the entire universal system of created higher beings. Whether angel or man, each is given a conditional blank slate concerning his eternal disposition upon which he must write his own eternal destiny. In His infinite wisdom God forces the created being to alone bear the ultimate accountability and thus, the responsibility, of determining whether he rewarded with entry into heaven, or relegated to eternal damnation in hell.

God's relationship with mankind has been conditional since the beginning. The inherent element which is contextually inseparable from the situation of choice is the concept of

conditionality; there must always be a consequence and resulting condition which arises from choice. Adam and Eve were given the option of choosing between the two main trees in the Garden of Eden. Moses told the children of Israel to choose life or death, blessing or cursing. Joshua told the children of Israel to choose whether they would serve God or idols. The Gospel now invites man to choose Christ. Once one accepts Christ as his Lord and Savior, the issue then becomes one of examining the conditional elements which He has incorporated into His New Testament Gospel message.

The seven “except” conditional requirements decreed by Christ

Christ began employing conditional warnings early in His earthly ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount, which is the only documented complete sermon of Christ, He begins with what would become a series of seven conditionally-based propositional sayings. All seven of these sayings follow the same pattern wherein each began with the word “except,” is followed by a certain condition which must be met, and is completed with the phrase, “ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” In each instance Jesus makes it clear that if the prescribed behavior is not attained nor adhered to, the person will be denied entry into heaven, which is a euphemistic way of saying that the person would be relegated to eternal damnation. The seven stipulated behavioral requirements for entry into the kingdom are: your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees; ye must become as a little child; you must repent or perish; ye must be born again; you must be born of both water and spirit to enter into the kingdom; and, if you do not eat the body of Christ, you will perish.

The seven “if-then” propositional/conditional postulates decreed by Christ

Moses prefaced his formal list of Old Testament blessings in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy by beginning each blessing with the word “if”; he would then state what blessing would result give the result and always completed the propositional phrase by announcing the corresponding blessing, which was preceded by the word “then.” Moses did the same with a list of conditional cursings. This type of statement where the outcome is predicated upon a prescribed condition might be considered an “if-then” conditional postulate of logic. While the formulaic presentation of the phrases are slightly different than the preceding “except” statements, the basic message is similar in that if a given condition, or set of circumstances and requirements are met, then a distinct outcome will result. A careful study reveals that Christ employed this means of conditional postulating in addition to the preceding “except” conditional warnings. John the revelator is the one who brilliantly captures Christ’s concentrated utilization of this reasoning technique throughout the Last Supper. The first one is found in the fourteenth chapter of John when Christ states that if a person truly loves Him, then he will keep his commandments; Jesus continues relating that if a man keeps His commandments, then he will be loved of the Father, and once loved by the Father, both the Father and the Son will come to live inside of that man. Jesus continues in the fifteenth chapter of John stating that if one does not bear fruit, then he will be taken out of the body. He conversely states that if one bears fruit, then he spiritually purged so that he will bear even more fruit. Christ continues stating that if a man backslides, or voluntarily removes himself from the church, then he will be subsequently cast out of the body; the person will then wither, and ultimately be cast into the fire to be burned, which is an obvious reference for hell. Lastly, He states that if you keep His commandments, then you will remain in His love. In conclusion, based upon the preceding scriptural evidence, Christ’s covenant with men is clearly conditional.

Quantified Research

Empirical research to prove a possible and probable correlation between the type of God image projected in a given a society, and the corresponding effect of that image upon the level of anti-social behavior had been lacking up through the end of the twentieth century, as no research is in the public domain. However, the twenty-first century has seen the emergence of highly motivated researchers who have aggressively sought out conclusive answers to the issue, and their findings are being presented in this section.

Azim Shariff, who is arguably the most well versed researcher in this area, summed up the aggregate findings of his overall body of research when he entitled one of his projects, “Mean Gods Make Good People.” Partnering with Ara Norenzayan, Shariff conducted a study to monitor a person’s level of cheating in an anonymous situation to correlate cheating patterns to the type of god a person believed, either a forgiving a punishing God. In the article Shariff discusses the findings of researchers Johnson and Kruger, who have forwarded what is called the supernatural punishment hypothesis. In describing the concept they state that it “specifically predicts that it is the punishing aspects of gods and the threat of divine punishment, rather than any loving or compassionate traits, which are responsible for keeping adherents from crossing ethical boundaries in anonymous situations where they would otherwise be tempted.”⁹⁶ The key word in the entire hypothesis is “anonymous;” peer pressure and public opinion are strong motivators for pro-socially desired behavior; however when one controls his behavior within an anonymous situation, it most likely reflects a strong belief in an omnipresent deity who is monitoring his behavior, and there is the an ever-looming threat of punishment, either on an immediate level or will be exacted in the future. In forwarding a theory that the stick is more powerful than the carrot, Shariff and Norenzayan surmise that carrots, or rewards, for behavior

encourages individuals, however it does not prevent undesired behavior, and state that “The temptation to cheat cannot be overcome by the promise of reward nearly as much as it can be overcome by the threat of punishment.”⁹⁷ This statement has staggering implications for the basic theology of contemporary Christendom.

In order to clearly determine that it is the type of god in which one believes which controls cheating, and not just one’s belief in a god, the researchers designed the testing apparatus to distinguish the difference. The researchers established and forwarded, “Self-described believers were no more or less likely to cheat than nonbelievers...”⁹⁸ The researchers conclude the article with the following quantifiable research observations:

Participants who attributed greater levels of punishing attributes to supernatural agent were less likely to cheat on a behavior task.”...”Levels of religiosity or belief in God had no effect on cheating rates. Believers cheated just as much as nonbelievers.”...”In other words, how much you believe in God matters less than what kind of God you believe in.”...”That believing in a comforting and forgiving God is related to greater levels of cheating is a provocative claim, and one that certainly requires more evidence before it can be made with any confidence.”...”This hypothesis raises the possibility that the widespread belief in benevolent deities is a modern phenomenon—the consequence of a gradual change in religious beliefs”...”...punitive deities may be more effective at keeping anonymous strangers from cheating each other, whereas rewarding deities may be more effective at encouraging more trust and cooperation within groups of people who interact recurrently.”⁹⁹

The single most alarming finding of the entire project, and one which is central to, and also a compellingly corollary for the basic thesis of this project, is the statement that

⁹⁶Azim F. Shariff and Ara Norenzayan. “Mean Gods Make Good People: Different Views of God Predicts Cheating Behavior.” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 21, no. 2 (April 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebshost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType=cookie.ip.url.cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed January 18, 2013).

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

“...university students with stronger beliefs in God’s punitive and angry nature tended to be the least likely to cheat on an academic task, whereas stronger beliefs in God’s comforting and forgiving nature significantly predicted higher levels of cheating.”¹⁰⁰

These findings lead one to consider the overall contemplative processes of the individual who chooses to commit anti-social behavior. This examination takes one to the concept of utilitarianism, which forwards “that human behavior is mainly calculative, determined by the perceived balance of rewards and punishments associated with a given action.”¹⁰¹ The theory is in accordance with the basic design of God’s universal system for judgment purposes in that He intentionally designed angels and man as free will agents, and their independent choices to be used as the primary criterion for judgment. Deterrence theory emerges from this afforded contemplative state of choice because “...a person who otherwise contemplates crime but decides to forego it because of the fear of the costs (punishment) is ‘deterred’.”¹⁰²

This theory of deterrence is compellingly applicable to the modern day church; one need only substitute the concept of a person committing a crime with the action of a believer committing a willful sin. However, the previously mentioned dilemma of the church in not having a reference point by which to calculate the deterrence quotient (i.e. is the crime worth the time) again arises. C. Tittle, E. Botchkovar, and O. Antonaccio forward, “Presumably, anywhere and under all circumstances, individuals who perceive higher chances of suffering more severe

¹⁰⁰Azim F. Shariff and Ara Norenzayan. “Mean Gods Make Good People: Different Views of God Predicts Cheating Behavior.” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 21, no. 2 (April 2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebshost.com/login.asp?direct=true&AuthType+cookie,ip.url,cpid&custid=nypl&dp=aph&AN=60106983&site=ehost-live> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰¹Charles Tittle, Ekaterina Botchkovar, and Olena Antonaccio, “Criminal Contemplation, National Context, and Deterrence,” *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 27, no. 2 (2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebshost.com/DOI10.1007/s10940-010-9104-8> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰²Ibid.

penalties will more likely refrain from criminal behavior than those who perceive such chances to be lower.”¹⁰³ The researchers submit another presupposition which is non-transferable. They state, “Presumably, deterrence is at a maximum when both certainty and severity are high...”¹⁰⁴.

Numerous small projects were conducted, however they only generated a cordial head nod at best from theologians and academic onlookers. However, on June 18, 2012 Azim F. Shariff, along with Mijke Rhemtulla published findings from a ground-breaking study which shook the very foundation of the entire religious community at its core, and permanently laid to rest any speculation that there is a direct correlation between belief in a forgiving God and an increase in anti-social behavior¹⁰⁵. In this study the researchers cited the findings from some of their colleagues, stating:

Though supernatural punishment is associated with increases in normative behavior, laboratory research reveals the concept of supernatural benevolence to be associated with *decreases* in normative behavior.”...”...human punishment is a highly effective deterrent to anti-social behavior within groups, but on that faces inevitable limitations of scale...Divine punishment, on the other hand, has emerged as a cultural tool to overcome a number of those limitations.”...”Moreover, the evidence thus far suggests that though the more ‘positive’ religious attributes may provide their own benefits, such as better self-esteem or health coping, their role in encouraging moral behavior may be, at best, minimal and, at worst, negative.”...”Participants in the punishing God and both human conditions overpaid themselves less than in 50 cents more than what they deserved...those who wrote about a forgiving God overpaid themselves significantly more – nearly two dollars.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Charles Tittle, Ekaterina Botchkovar, and Olena Antonaccio, “Criminal Contemplation, National Context, and Deterrence;,” *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 27, no. 2 (2011), <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohostDOI10.1007/s10940-010-9104-8> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Azim F. Shariff and Mijke Rhemtulla, “Divergent Effect of Beliefs in Heaven and Hell on National Crime Rates,” *Plos One* 7, 6 (June 2012), e39048, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohoste39048.doi10.1371/journal.pone.0039048> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

Armed with all of this preliminary laboratory evidence, researchers Shariff and Rhemtulla set out on a massively unprecedented quest to establish the ultimate correlation between the type of God image projected throughout a culture, and the corresponding propensity and prediction of the committing of criminal offenses and other anti-social behavior.

In order to insure the ground-breaking results would be comprehensive in nature, accurate in representation, and unbiased in appearance and compilation, the trans-cultural and trans-continental study was conducted without funding, and in conjunction with the United Nations. The sample pool was global in nature, consisting of a total of 67 countries and 143,197 participants.¹⁰⁷ World Value Surveys and European Value Surveys were used in collecting data continuously, albeit not continually, over a twenty-six year period which included 1981-1984, 1990-1996, 1994-1999, 1999-2004, and 2005-2007. Crime rates were supplied by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, and were derived from the ten crimes for which the agency had the most reliable data. The categories included homicide, robbery, rape, kidnapping, assault, theft, drug crimes, auto theft, burglary, and human trafficking.

Regardless of spatial and cultural variability, national personality, wealth, wealth distribution, and general religiosity, there was an overwhelming consistency in the overall findings of the research project. The report states invariably that, “The degree to which a country’s rate of belief in heaven outstrips its rate of belief in hell significantly predicts higher national crime rates.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, a nation which culturally subscribes to a strong belief in heaven will inevitably experience a higher number of crimes than a country which does not; it

¹⁰⁷Azim F. Shariff and Mijke Rhemtulla, “Divergent Effect of Beliefs in Heaven and Hell on National Crime Rates,” *Plos One* 7, 6 (June 2012), e39048, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohoste39048.doi10.1371/journal.pone.0039048> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

appears that when a nation believes in heaven there is a corresponding higher crime rate than a nation that believes in hell.

The researchers then offer theories as to why this phenomenon exists. Among them are that "...divine forgiveness offers individuals a way to cleanse their moral palate, and thereby feel more licensed to transgress again. That is, divine forgiveness, like its earthly variant, may act as a counter-deterrent."¹⁰⁹ In this speculative assessment of the psychological mechanics behind the now well-founded correlation, the perpetrator of sin subconsciously likens God's forgiveness to a credit card. When a person is tempted he does not struggle because he knows that forgiveness is available. Once the sin is committed, it goes onto the person's credit card account and a credit card statement is generated via the individual's conscious. If and when the person's conscious starts to remind him of the offense, he need only formally ask for forgiveness for the action, and the balance on the credit card statement is paid off.

The researchers also offer the plausible theory that "...the direct causal explanation for this effect is that individuals who believe in heaven and not hell take punishment less seriously and are thus more likely to commit crimes."¹¹⁰ Elaborating upon this same motive Shariff states "...it's possible that people who don't believe in the possibility of punishment in the afterlife feel like they can get away with unethical behavior. There is less of a divine deterrent."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Azim F. Shariff and Mijke Rhemtulla, "Divergent Effect of Beliefs in Heaven and Hell on National Crime Rates," *Plos One* 7, 6 (June 2012), e39048, <http://www.academicsearchprimerebscohoste39048.doi10.1371/journal.pone.0039048> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Huff Post Religion, <http://www.huffpost.com> (accessed March 14, 2013).

No extensive scholastic research, however, was needed to reach such a conclusion. One need only inquire of a parent or teacher; a child prone to disobedience will always test limits. As the gospel is being presented today, the believer has no limits; this serves as a double anti-deterrent to sin; the willfully-sinning believer is taught that there is always guaranteed forgiveness, and there is guaranteed entry into heaven.

Is the Research Borne Out by Evidence?

Even though all of the foregoing research has been conducted, the findings cannot be considered conclusive if not borne out by hard core, live statistical data which yields similar correlations and conclusions. In order to test the corroborative viability of their research in the real world, the United States will be used as the test subject. According to Christianity Today the United States has the largest national Christian population in the world at 246,780,000, or 79.5% of the population¹¹². “The next largest religions in American are Judaism and Islam. Combined they represent less than three percent of the United States population.”¹¹³ Indeed, when placing statistics concerning crime in the United States alongside these numbers, the research of all the studies bear out in the real world. NationMaster.com lists the United States as having the most reported crimes of any other nation in the world, which is 11,877,218,¹¹⁴ and is followed by the United Kingdom, which is listed as the distant second placed country at 6,523,706, which is only half the number of reported crimes indicated by the United States. The report includes data

¹¹²Mary Fairchild, “Christianity Today - General Statistics and Facts of Christianity,” <http://www.christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christianitoday.htm> (accessed February 24, 2014).

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Total Crimes Statistics, <http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/crime/crime-total-crimes> (accessed February 24, 2014).

which was compiled from 82 countries, and indicates a total number of world crimes as 63,531,202. Therefore, even though the United States is fractionally only 1/82 of the world's countries, it contributes to 1/6 of the total crimes for the entire world.¹¹⁵

In addition, ABC News reports that the United States has more guns and gun deaths than any other country in the developed world. It was forwarded that, "A study by two New York City cardiologists found that the U.S. has 88 guns per 100 people and 10 gun-related deaths per 100,000 people – more than any of the other 27 developed countries they studied."¹¹⁶

The research contained in chapter four of this thesis project has conclusively proven that when a person, or nation, has a belief in a forgiving God and holds a corresponding belief in heaven, that person, or nation, invariably demonstrates a markedly higher propensity to engage in anti-social behavior. As is evident in the survey research contained in that chapter, it appears that a fear of God is something which must be inculcated into a person from childhood to have any lasting effect.

Some of the respondents to the survey expressed the opinion that [American] people are going to do what they want to do anyway, therefore preaching on the fear of God is will not prove to be an effective deterrent. This opinion underscores the theory that a fear of God must be either experiential, or perspectival.

¹¹⁵Total Crimes Statistics, <http://www.nationalmaster.com/graph/crime/crime-total-crimes> (accessed February 24, 2014).

¹¹⁶Sydney Lupkin, *U.S. Has More Guns-And Gun Deaths-Than Any Other Country, Study Finds*, <http://abcnews.go.com/US> (accessed February 24, 2014).

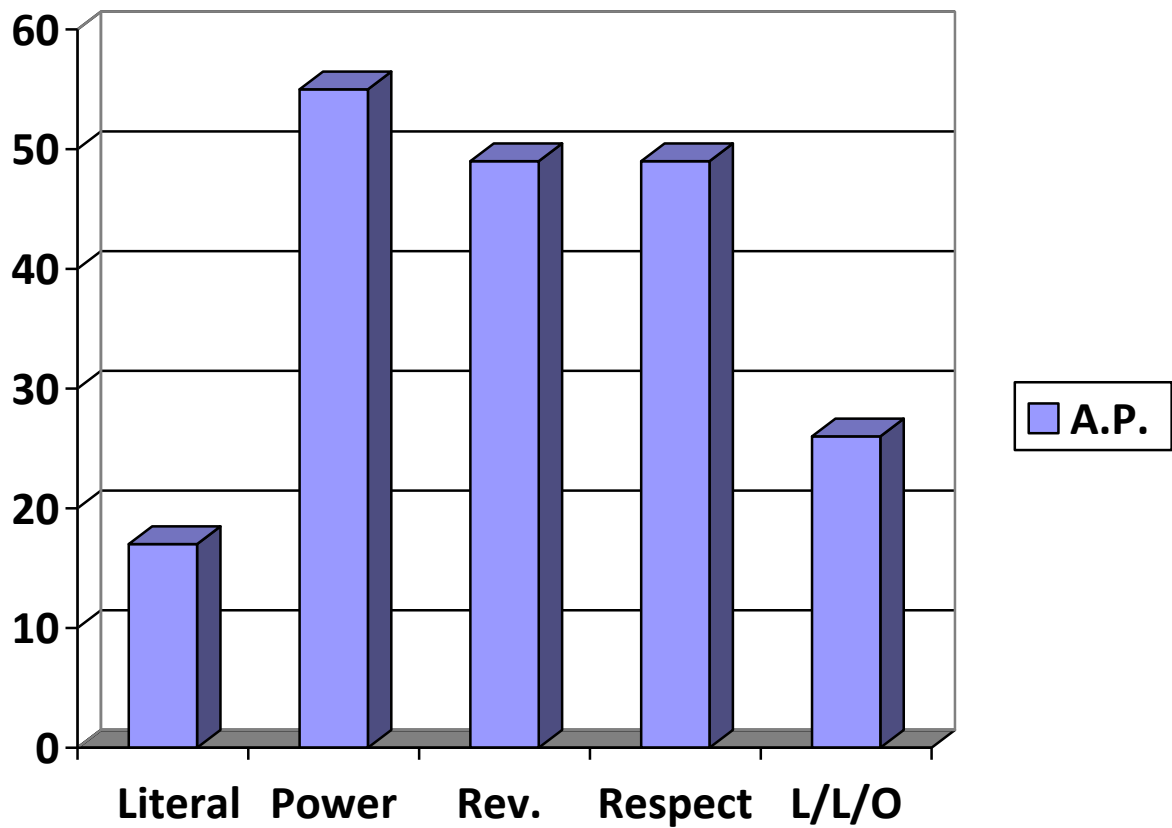
In the final analysis, the empirical research data which has been presented in this chapter must override the personal opinions of any of the respondents of the survey. The overwhelming preponderance of evidence clearly proves that the cultural teaching of a punishing God who will relegate the sinful to a place of eternal torment is a very effective deterrent.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESEARCH DATA

On September 27, 2013 the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University approved a survey which had been submitted in conjunction with this thesis. The survey, which consisted of eight questions, was entitled “The Fear of God,” as was intended to gauge the beliefs of Christians concerning the stated issue. The survey form was designed so the participant would remain anonymous, with the exception of gender and age range. All participants were assumed to be believers in the Christian faith. Participants were requested to write in subjective answers; two of the eight questions also included a yes or no response. There were two survey pools for the study. The first study group consisted of Liberty University students; the age range of the participants was almost exclusively 18-34 years of age. The survey was administered on the second and third floors of DeMoss Hall from September 27 through 30, 2013. A total of 193 surveys were randomly passed out to both male and female students. The second survey pool consisted of 10 adult Bible study students, with the age range being equally distributed between the 35-54 years of age and 55 years and older categories. The overall age range distribution of survey participants were as follows: 186 were in the age range of 18-34, seven were in the age range of 35-54, and six were either 55 years of age or older. A total of 211 surveys were distributed, with 203 being completed and returned. Out of the 203 returned surveys four had to be eliminated because the respondents were either not Christian or was an atheist.

Question #1: What do you think it means to fear God?



Literal (17)– Participant used words: punishment, wrath, afraid, consequences, and judgment

Power (55)- Participant referred to the omnipotence of God

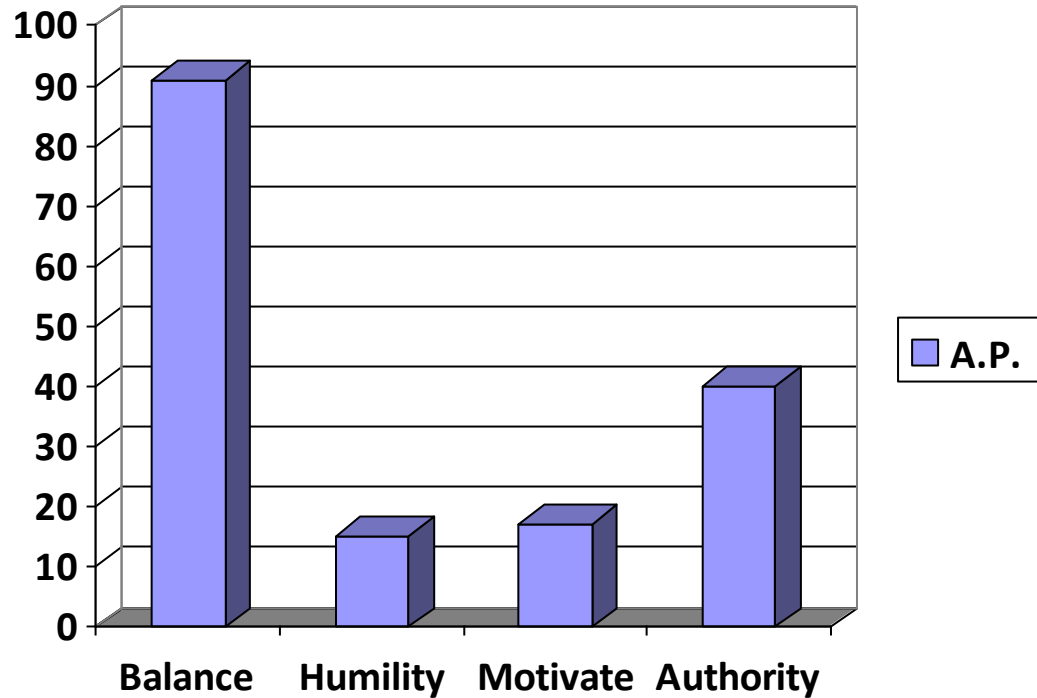
Reverence (49)– Participant alluded to a reverential awe of God

Respect (49)– Participant spoke of respect due to God as being the Supreme Being and Creator

Love/Loyalty/Obedience (26) – Participant spoke of parental, and holy aspects of God

A.P. = All Participants

Question #2: Why do you think scripture consistently teaches that, in addition to loving God, we must also fear Him?



Balance (91) - Participants felt that both love and fear are needed to maintain a proper relational and behavioral perspective with God

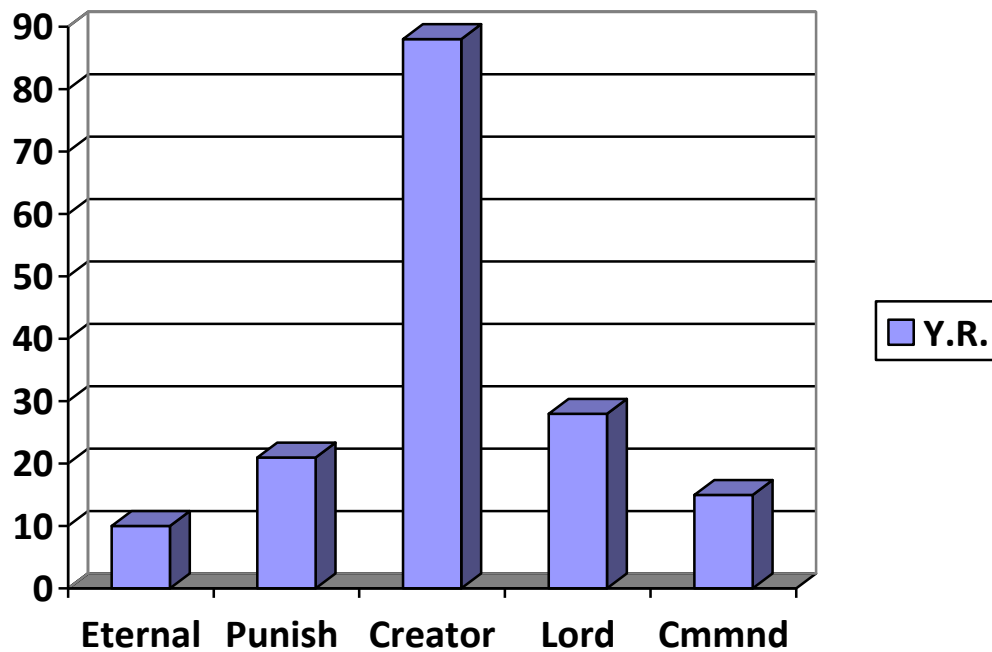
Humility (15) – Participants felt that an attitude of fear fosters humility and love

Motivate (17) – Participants felt that reinforcing fear will motivate godly behavior

Authority/Power/Creator (40) – Participants conveyed that God’s glory, power, and authority demands an attitude of reverence and fear

A.P. = All Participants

Question #3: Do you fear God? Yes = 193; No = 6*; Why, or why not?



Eternal (10) – Participant alluded to the eternal consequence of Hell

Punishment (21) – Participant spoke of punished in this lifetime

Creator (88) – Participant spoke of God as Creator of the Universe; Lord; Omniscience; Omnipresent

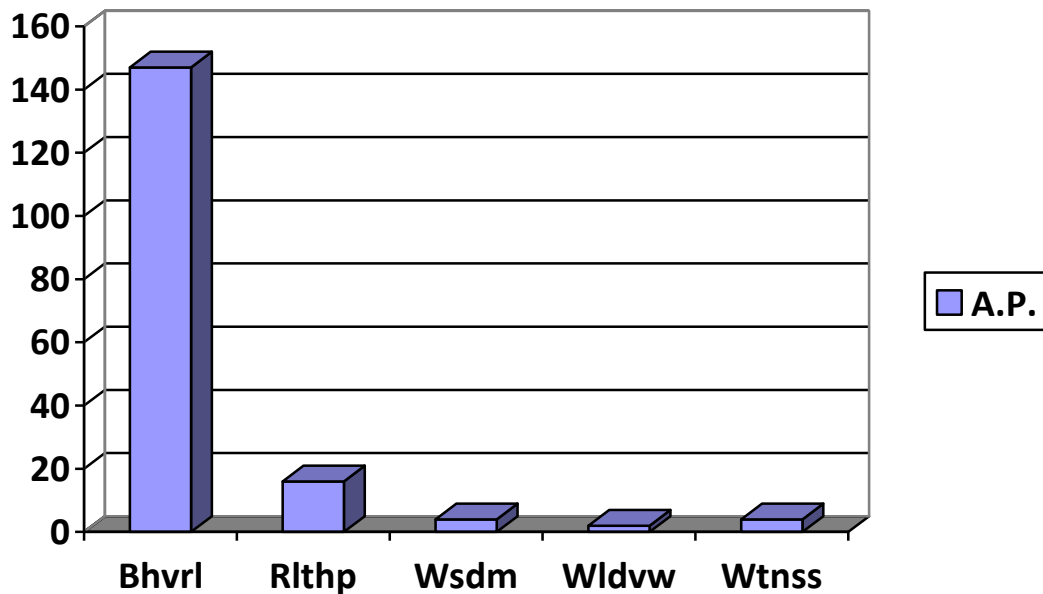
Lord (28) - Participant referred to the fact that Lordship of Christ demanded an attitude of fear

Commanded (15)– Participant stated that fearing God is commanded in the Bible

*Of the “No” respondents the most common response was that the person loved, not feared God

Y.R. = Yes Respondents

Question #4: How do you think the personal behavior and faith practices of the believer would be affected by having a fear of God?



Behavioral (147)– Participant felt the believer’s overall behavior would improve*

Relationship (16) – Participant felt having a healthy fear improves one’s relationship with God

Wisdom (4) – Participant, based upon Prov. 9:10a, stated that the believer would gain wisdom

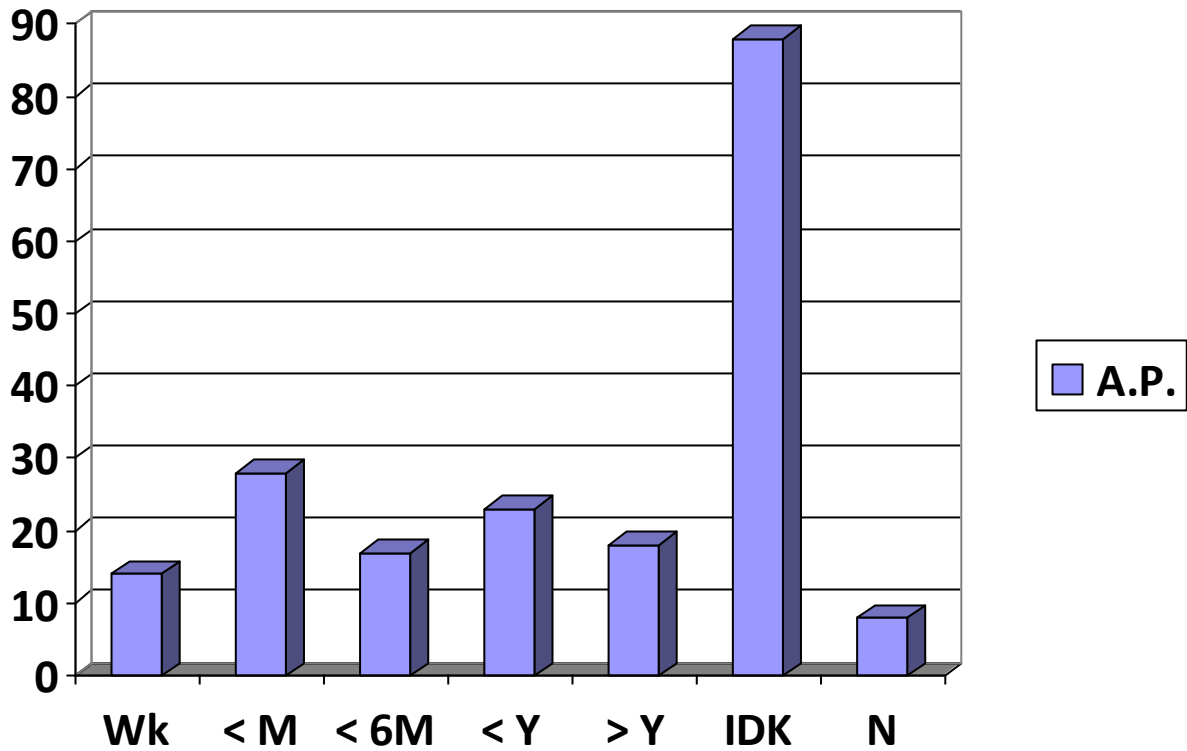
Worldview (2)– Participant felt that the believer would adopt a stronger Christian worldview

Witness (4) – Participant felt that fear would produce more Christlike behavior which would serve as a stronger witness to the unsaved

(13 Respondents in the behavioral category felt fear would act as a direct deterrent to sin)

A.P. = All Participants

Question 5: When was the last time you heard a sermon on the fear of God?



Wk = Week or less (14)

< M = Less than one month (28)

< 6M = Less than 6 months (17)

< Y = Less than 1 year (23)

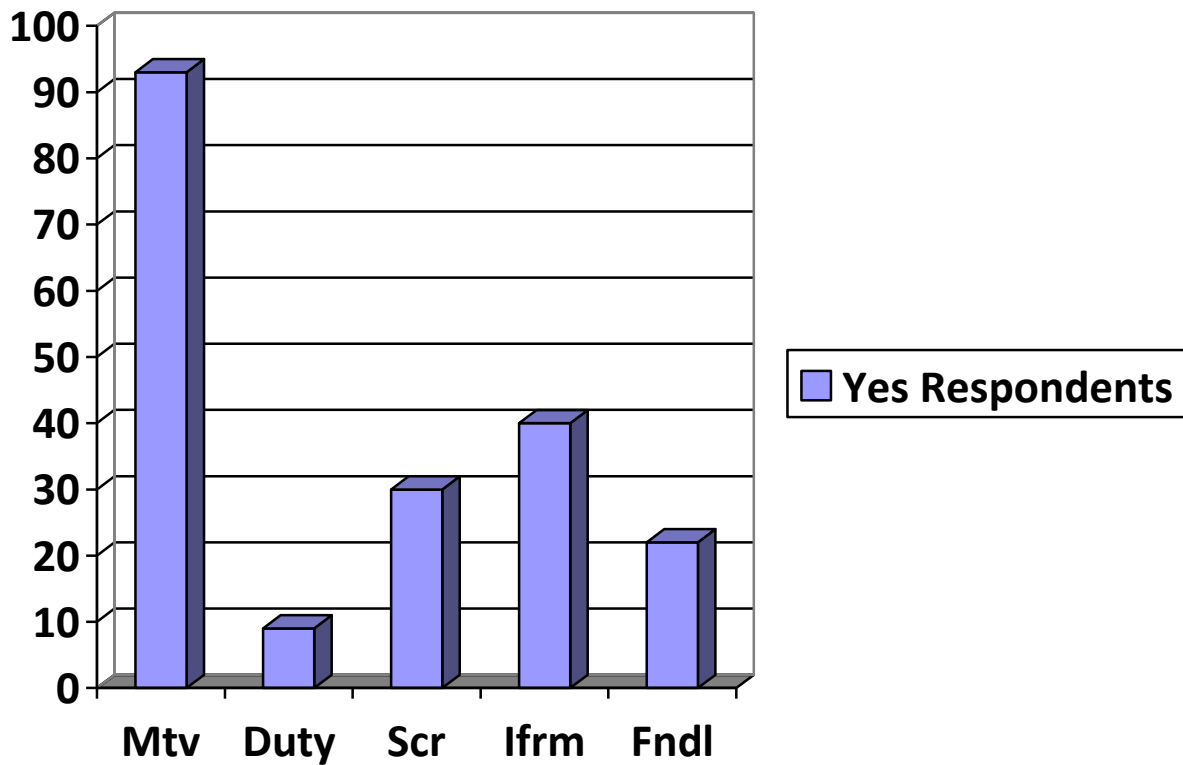
> Y = More than 1 year (18)

IDK = I Don't Know/Can't Remember (88)

N = Never (8)

A.P. = All Participants

Question #6: Do you think pastors should deliver sermons on godly fear? Yes = 194; No = 5*_ Why or why not?



Motivate Behavior (93) – Participant felt that it would motivate behavior

Duty (9) – Participant that it was the pastor’s duty

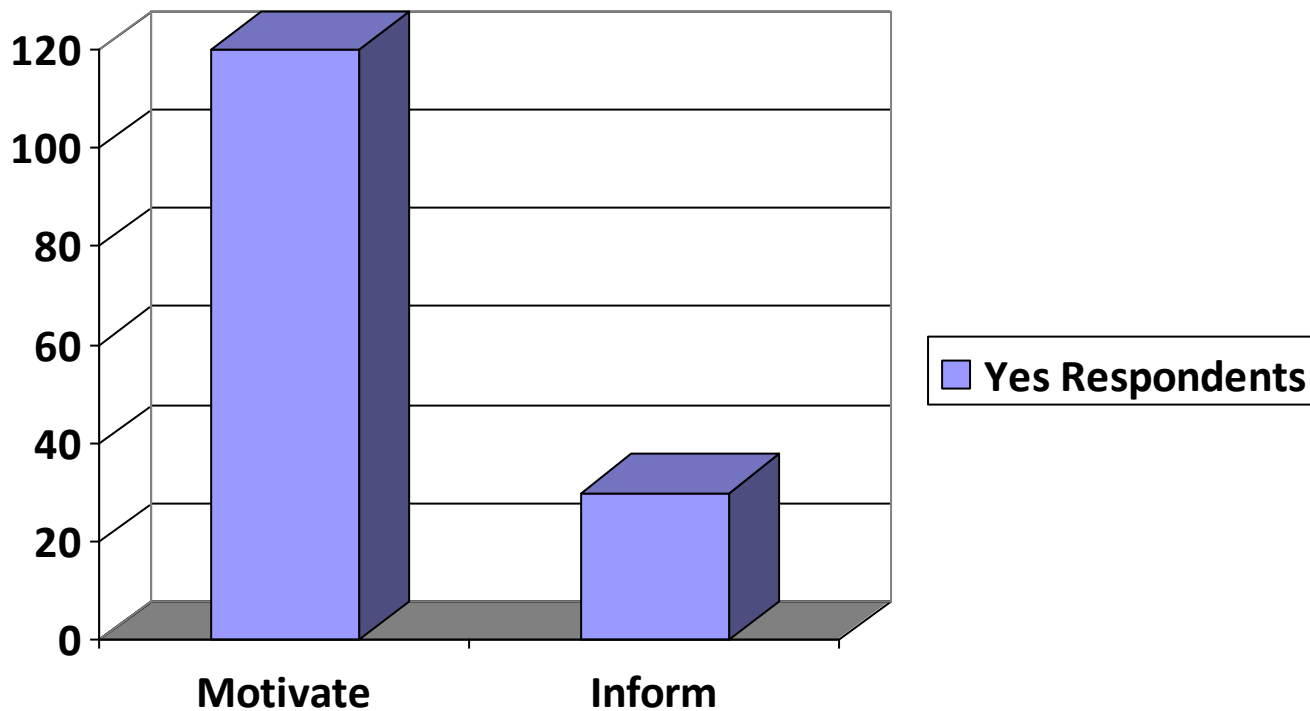
Scriptural (30) – Participant stated that it was scripturally mandated that the pastor do so

Inform (40) – Participant referred to the fact individuals need to be informed of this fact

Foundational (22) – Participant felt that fearing God is a foundational truth of the Christian faith

*Of those who replied “No” the most frequent reply was that it only scares people

Question 7: Do you think that hearing sermons on the fear of God would deter believers from willfully sinning? Yes = 150; No = 24*; Maybe = 25** Why or why not?



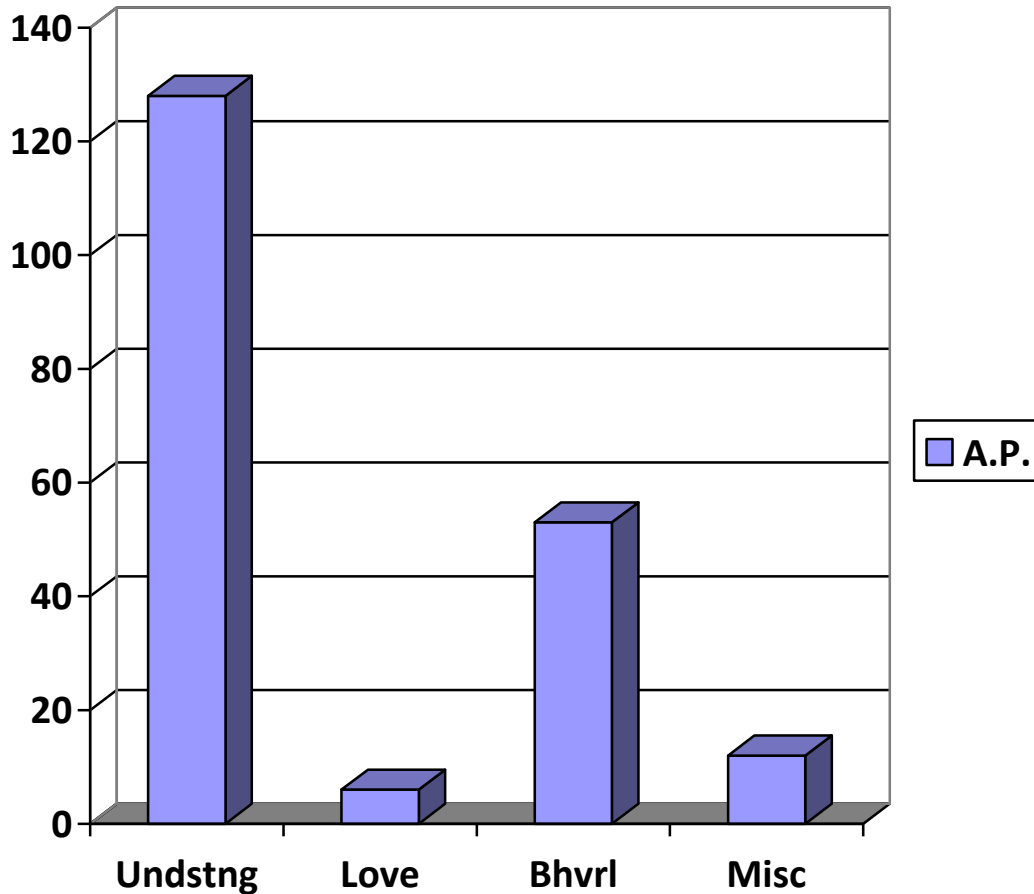
Motivate (120) – Participant felt that such sermons would motivate more holy behavior

Inform (30) – Participant related that the ill-informed would be known that there are consequences of their actions

*Of the “No” respondents the most common answer was that people are going to do what they want regardless of what the preacher says.

**Of the “Maybe” respondents the most common answer was that the effect of sermons on fear would vary from person to person, depending on various factors.

Question #8: Proverbs 9:10a states, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” Explain this verse in your own words.



Understanding (128) – Participant felt godly fear leads to relational insight and growth

Love (6) – Participant related that fear leads to obedience which leads to love

Behavioral (53) – Participant felt that fear prompts one to make wise behavioral choices

Miscellaneous(12) – Participant gave a somewhat unique reply

Observational Analysis

Generally, throughout the survey, male respondents tended to speak more in terms of power and discipline in reference to God, whereas female respondents focused on God's love and the paternal aspect of the relationship. Male respondents spoke more of hell than did female respondents, and when a respondent mentioned the word hell it was used more than once during the survey. Typically, when a respondent leaned more towards a literal interpretation of having a fear of God, he/she would refer to the Bible at some point in giving responses, or would make statements such as "it's in the Bible." Also, invariably, those respondents whose answers indicated more of a fundamentalist Christian worldview gave answers which were more bold, succinct, and articulate than other respondents appearing to be of a more liberal persuasion.

Question-by-Question Discussion

Question #1: What do you think it means to fear God? As is indicated by the chart, most respondents described having a fear of God as being a positional state of awe which is naturally evoked within the mind of the believer at the thought of the sheer omnipotence, power, and authority of God. Of the respondents who spoke of fear as being literal, words such as tremble, wrath, demanding, and dangerous were used. As previously mentioned, males, as well as the older respondents, tended to speak less in terms of love, and to write in more of a matter-of-fact manner concerning God's judgment.

Reply which stood out: "To know that He has the complete ability, power, and right to cast our souls into hell, and that He would be just to do this; and to understand His power is great."

Question #2: Why do you think scripture consistently teaches that, in addition to loving God, we must also fear Him? Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that loving God alone is not a strong enough motivator to cause the believer to exercise the self-discipline required to lead a Christlike life. Those respondents who spoke of a literal fear of God also forwarded that the believer should have a fear of God because He possesses the power to cast one into hell. It was very clear from their answers that they did not subscribe to the doctrine of “one saved, always saved.” It was also clear that they maintained a sober reminder in their subconscious that they would have to one day stand before God in judgment.

Reply which stood out: “You can’t love something without fear[ing] it to some degree. If you love your wife you fear of losing her if you’re [not] a dummy.”

Question #3: Do you fear God? Why, or why not? As was conveyed in the respondents’ answer to Question #1, an acute awareness and accurate perception of God’s power was the cerebral impetus for most of the responses for this question. Most indicated that there is an inherent sense of intimidation which one instinctively experiences at the realization of God’s omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. In regards to the reason why the respondent feared God, those of a fundamentalist persuasion made statements such as, “I know what He is capable of doing,” or “I have read the Bible.”

Replies which stood out:

“He has killed many people in the Old Testament, yes He is all loving but is wrathful as well.”

“No. Because when I sin, I mentally brace myself from my conscious to [not] hurt me, but it is not enough for me to be simply scared of punishment for me not to sin.”

“Absolutely, if you don’t fear God you probably don’t love Him, or at least partially understand Him.”

“It may look that way by observation but I would be the first one to say that my walk is not one of fear. This survey has given me a wake-up call!”

Question #4: How do you think the personal behavior and faith practices of the believer would be affected by having a fear of God? There was more unanimity in replies to this question than any other in the survey, in that 75% of participants responded in a like manner. The respondents’ predictions of the projected effects varied among respondents; with some feeling that the individual would become more reflective, and think twice about his or her behavior, while others felt the effect would be more radical with the individual altering his behavior as to more conform to the commandments of God. Invariably, all respondents felt that having a fear of God would yield a positive behavioral effect in the life of the believer.

Reply which stood out: “People would fear God so much that their belief [behavioral practices] would be second nature.”

Question #5: When was the last time you heard a sermon on the fear of God? While there were responses in all of the time categories, almost 50% of respondents could not remember.

Reply which stood out: “When Jerry Falwell was alive!”

Question #6: Do you think pastors should deliver sermons on godly fear? Why or why not?

Interestingly, half of the respondents approached the question from a doctrinal, ecclesiastical standpoint, feeling that having a fear of God is scriptural and foundational to the Christian faith, and thus it is the responsibility of the pastor to inform believers of the accountability factor of their faith and subsequent consequences. The other half focused on the effects that hearing such sermons would have upon the behavior of the believer.

Replies which stood out:

“Yes. Jonathan Edwards did and it started the Reformation.”

“Yes. Pastors seem to preach a “sugarcoated” message that does not include all that we need to hear.”

“...They need to teach ALL of the Bible.”

Question #7: Do you think that hearing sermons on the fear of God would deter believers from willfully sinning? As has been the trend throughout the survey, most (in this case 75%) of the respondents felt that having a fear of God would positively affect the behavior of the believer; of that percentage, approximately 20% used the word “deter.” Of the 25% who were unsure, or felt that such sermons would not deter the person, respondents conveyed that change must come from inner conviction by the Holy Spirit, and others stated that people are going to do what they want to do.

Replies which stood out:

“Yes; it will remind others that even under the grace of God there are consequences; salvation isn’t just a ‘get out of jail’ free card to sin”

“No. Because we can never not sin, we may try not to willfully sin, but at times our flesh will overcome.”

“Maybe. Look at Israel and the golden calf. They witnessed God’s power in a might way, yet they quickly fell away.”

Question #8: Proverbs 9:10a states, “For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”

Explain this verse in your own words. Most respondents felt that fearing God would cause believers to pause, take God seriously, and focus on their individual relationship with Him. They felt that relational insight would follow. Some felt that such insight would result in a true love for God, while others felt that it would foster wise behavior choices.

Reply which stood out: “Fear is meant to be a gift, another sense to guide our ways from danger, say heights (it’s dangerous).”

“Out of the Mouths of Babes...”

Here are additional replies from Liberty University students which are being included because they indicate wisdom and maturity in faith well beyond their young years.

“If we do not fear the Lord there is no reason to obey the law.”

“If we do not have a sense of fear (reverent or not), we would not have the desire to obey.”

“I love God but I fear His wrath.”

“[I do not fear God]. I mix up (separate) the God of the Old Testament and New Testament in my mind.”

“When you respect someone (almost as a child fears a loving father with the power to chastise) you’re entire life/behavior changes.”

“Don’t throw fire at people but teach them.”

“No [I do not fear God}. I have little conviction and no action. I would like to.”

“[I fear God]. Once He let me know that I had sinned.”

“We do not know what God is going to do.”

“[Preaching fear]...is only a way to bully people into the faith – not a genuine heart change.”

“No. I love God. I don’t fear Him. Fear has such a bad connotation to it.”

“People don’t take God seriously enough.”

“Nope [I don’t fear God]. Because if I do the things that’s fair, right, honestly, nothing would fear us out.”

“A fear of punishment on failing to live up to God’s standards can compel one to live obedient to Him.”

“Preaching fear hinders confidence”

“Doesn’t feel like I fear God because I keep running back to the same shameful sin.”

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Integration of the Survey Results into Thesis

A survey of eight questions was completed by over 200 respondents, and concepts gleaned from their responses affirm the basic thesis of this overall project that the typical Christian believer does not have a fear of God, and because there is no fear of God there is no motivation to exercise restraint in personal behavior which is against the laws of God.

Question one establishes the fact that believers have not been taught the biblical meaning of the phrase “the fear of the God.” Question five indicates that pastors have elected to either not preach upon the fear of God altogether, or rarely preach sermons on the issue. These findings reinforce the foundational aspect of the thesis that there is a lack of the fear of God in the church, and reveals that this is primarily due to a lack of teaching on the issue by clergy.

Responses to questions two and four indicate overwhelmingly that believers think the concept of fearing God is positive in that it maintains a proper relational perspective with God, and it also serves as a strong deterrent and behavioral restraint. However, these same respondents paradoxically indicate in question three that they do possess this type of a fear of God. These responses reinforce the thesis assertion that this lack of a fear of God on the part of the believer will manifest itself in a lack of behavioral discipline.

An overall assessment of live survey data indicates that respondents consider the fear of God to be a beneficial theological concept which will yield the positive repercussions of prompting behavioral restraint, maintaining a proper relational perspective with God, and motivating the overall worship behavior of the believer. Question six indicates that respondents

want to hear sermons on godly fear. It appears that respondents want to have a fear of God, even though they are not taught to do so by preachers. As a child want to have a healthy fear of the discipline of a loving parent, so it appears that these respondents want to have a fear of God.

Empirical Research Data

Jesus states that the church is the salt of the earth; this truth has been verified by the empirical data which has been presented in this thesis. Research has very conclusively proven that the religious teachings of a culture invariably predicts the behavior of that culture. If an image of a forgiving god is projected, along with the expectation of going to heaven, there is increased anti-social behavior and crime. Whereas, if the image of a punishing God is taught in the culture, along with the admonition to escape hell in the afterlife, there is diminished anti-social behavior.

Within the United States, 80% of the population professes to be Christian. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the American culture subscribes to the Christian image of God as being unconditionally loving, perpetually forgiving, and guaranteeing entry into heaven for the professing believer in Jesus Christ; thus hell does not exist for Americans, and there is a cultural, as well as a corporate lack of the fear of God. Even those American not professing a religious affiliation will, nevertheless, formulate a similar, culturally influenced image of God. To reiterate, research has proven that countries teaching of a forgiving deity along with the individual going to heaven have higher crime rates. The criminal statistics for the United States perfectly aligns with these research findings.

The association of this research data with the thesis is very apparent. America's image of God is inextricably connected to its culture therefore the research findings are readily

transferrable into the church. The contemporary church consistently teaches of God's forgiveness and heaven, therefore there will be increased willful sin among active, practicing believers.

While the sins are not punishable by the culture (i.e. adultery, abortion, and pornography), they are against the laws of God.

Summation

As stated in the abstract and in the statement of problem at the beginning of this project, the overwhelming preponderance of evidence has proven that a lack of a fear of God, along with guaranteed immunity from hell results in an increased amount of anti-social, or sinful behavior. Furthermore, based upon all of the information and research collected in preparation for this thesis, as well as the enormous amount of statistical data which has been analyzed, the firm conclusion can be forwarded that a fear of God will be adopted by an individual to the degree that it will deter behavior only if all of the following three criteria are met. They are that the individual must be convinced that hell is a literal place in the afterlife; that a higher being has the discretion and authority to cast one into that literal place; and, that there always exists the possibility that one might be relegated to spend an eternity in such a place. Only if a person is resigned to all three of the foregoing criteria will there be a corresponding employing of the human will to comply to the commandments of God. Fear is a consequence-related, and hypothetically-induced. If there is no specific consequence which acts as a recurring point of deterrence, the intended fear will become a non-existing peripheral notion having ambiguous connotations, and will neither elicit a response, nor invoke any reaction.

As these findings relate to a follower of Christ, it appears that the most efficacious relationship for the believer should be one of a dual nature wherein both love and fear are co-existent. There should be conscious state of love which is simultaneously undergirded by a latent fear of God's divine judgment.

Throughout this thesis research has been presented from various sources. There has been a thorough examination of the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments. There has been a gleaning of the theological minds of the early fathers, as well as the other Christian theologians throughout the last two millennia. Empirical research has been examined, as well as live research via surveys. Based upon all of these resources, the overall conclusion can be firmly forwarded that fear is an effective deterrent to anti-social behavior, which translates into the fact that a healthy, godly fear is an effective willful sin, lukewarm worship practices, and backsliding.

Alarmingly, the church today faces a double dilemma. Not only is there the absence of teaching the believer to have a fear of God, there is also no codification of behavioral requirements for the believer based upon the commands and directives of Christ. This lack of a universally accepted Christology is perplexing seeing that Christ explicitly sets forth commands and mandates throughout the four gospels. Theologian Otto Weber states, "...our brief overview has shown that there never has been "the" Christology of the Church as a tangible and unified phenomenon."¹¹⁷The church has opted to construct a Christology by gleaning from the New Testament witnesses as found in the epistles. Weber accurately assesses that "This witness never was limited that it could be fitted into any given thought structure."¹¹⁸Weber also feels there are tensions which exist between the Synoptics and John, and even within the Pauline epistles, stating that "It is not really possible to draw up a kind of "summary" of all these witnesses."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 143.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹¹⁹Joseph Verheyden, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *The Expository Times* 117, no. 10 July 2006, <http://www.academicsearchpremier/ebscohost> (accessed March 5, 2013).

Contrary to Weber's observation, however, there was a codification of a behavioral which attempted to give rise to a unified Christology. It was so widely accepted that it is mentioned by early church fathers Irenaeus in the West and Clement of Alexandria in the East. Irenaeus. In fact, "At one time, it was even very much in the running to be accepted in the canon,"¹²⁰ and is even mentioned in the New Testament Apocrypha. Called "The Shepherd of Hermes," its date of composition is placed in the middle of the second century. Tradition has it that this literary work was revealed to a man named Hermas by "the angel/Shepherd". According to Professor Joseph Verheyden:

Many have said that the SH [Shepherd of Hermas] is above all, if not exclusively, about repentance, more specifically, about the possibility of repentance as a Christian. SH speaks repeatedly and at length about how to be, to stay, and especially to become again a member of the Church. The Greek word *metanoia* is a key notion of its paraenesis, and much energy is given to describe in full detail the criteria one has to meet to be judged a worthy member of the community... "...Clearly SH is not interested in spelling out formal procedures of confessing sins and being accepted by the community leaders and members, but it is equally obvious that it is not just a matter of personal appreciation but of meeting 'objective' criteria."¹²¹

Although the Shepherd of Hermas disappeared from the Christian theological landscape, Verheyden states, "The church is a project still under construction. It is a dynamic process of ongoing inspection and improvement. For now the Church may be a corpus mixtum, but ultimately the goal is, and should be, to reach perfection."¹²²

¹²⁰Joseph Verheyden, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Expository Times 117, no. 10 July 2006, <http://www.academicsearchpremier/ebSCOhost> (accessed March 5, 2013).

¹²¹Ibid.

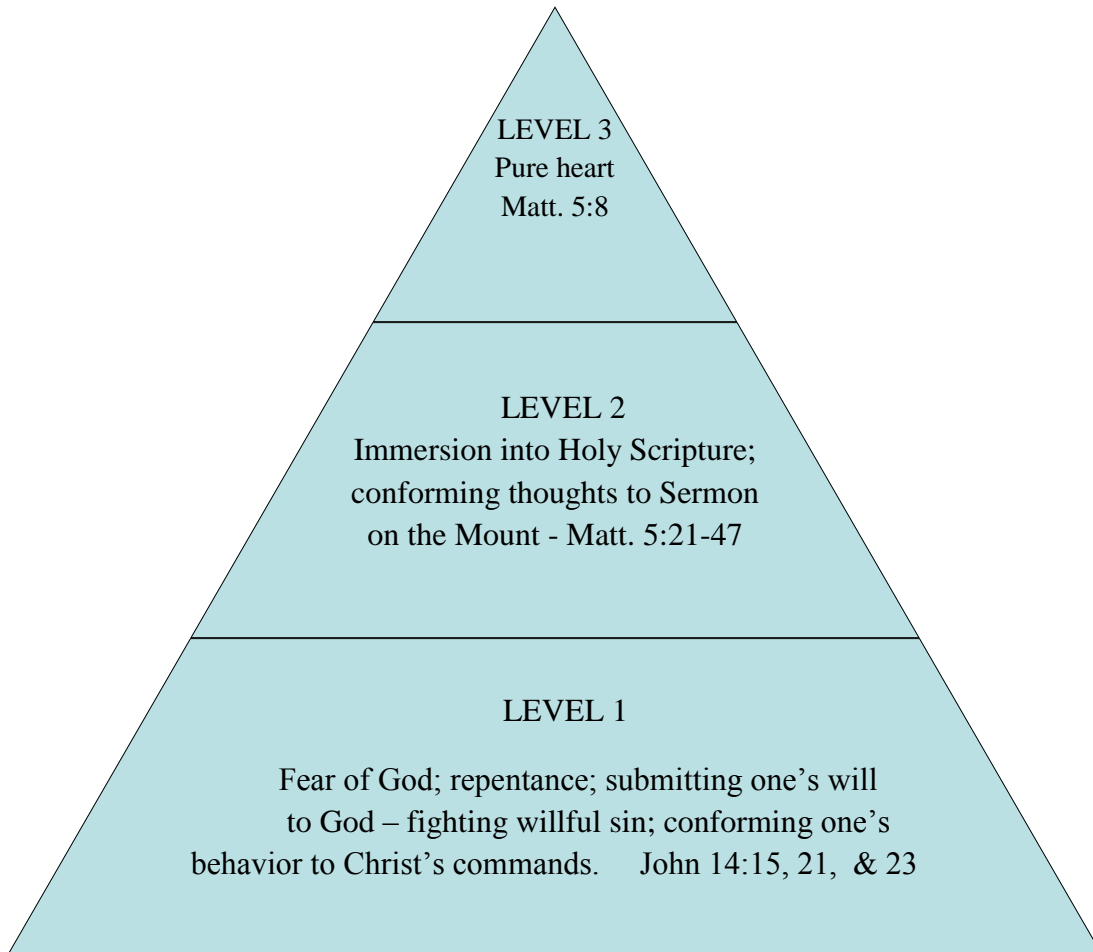
¹²²Ibid.

Spiritual Perfection – The Ultimate Dynamic of Godly Fear

Jesus stated in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The word used for perfect in the verse is derived from the Greek word *teleios*¹²³, and means to become mature. It must then be probed as what exactly what Jesus meant by this saying. This statement was made by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount. Throughout His sermon, Christ modified the concept of holiness by transcending from the physical realm to the spiritual realm. There could no longer be a “look but don’t touch mentality.” The act of adultery would no longer be defined as, and limited to the performing a physical act; Jesus restricted the seventh commandment so that now even the mental process of lusting would be considered adultery. Christ knew that man was capable of physical restraint, however such mental restraint would require a higher level of discipline which would have to be divinely imparted into man, which apparently Christ knew was going to be accomplished in man by means of Holy Spirit. Therefore, once man repented in both mind and action, Christ would then impart, through the born again process, a will and desire into man for the purpose of conquering mental sin, which would then lead to a third level of conquering sin of the heart, and ultimately the level which Christ refers to as perfection, and undoubtedly refers to that level where committing sin is no longer an intentional act of the will. However, the entire process begins when the fear of God becomes the driving force in one’s faith. Just as Solomon stated, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!

¹²³*The Strongest Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 21st Century ed., s.v. “perfect.”*

ACHIEVING ONENESS WITH THE
FATHER AND THE SON BY THE SPIRIT!!!
JOHN 17:21-23



Certain types of fear have been discussed in the thesis which can now be associated one achieving a state of oneness with God of which Jesus speaks. It could be stated that a holy, reverential fear of God facilitates maturity and growth in Christ. This growth then propels the person up into the next level on the chart. One would begin with judgmental fear, or servile fear (Level 1 of the preceding chart). Sustained judgmental fear turns into relational fear (Level 2 of the chart); an emotional element is added to the relationship, and one's love for God motivates a closer relationship with Him. Sustained relational fear ultimately leads to a pure heart (Level 3 of the chart) which could be associated with a state considered as holy fear in Catholic theology. At this highest level of fear one's relationship with God has become an all-consuming consciousness of awe at being continually in the presence of God.

In conclusion, two strategies are being forwarded to aid the believer in adopting godly fear which stimulates growth, and ultimately leads to a spiritual oneness with God, or the perfection of which Christ speaks. The must first be a concentrated effort by pastors and preachers to reinforce the conditional elements as set forth by Christ throughout the gospels. Pastors and preachers are strongly urged to devote at least one in seven sermons to the topic of the fear of God. Appendix A of this thesis contains a concise codification of the behavioral requirements as set forth by Christ. There is no legalism; these are purely the words of Jesus. The second strategy is that pastors and preachers must retake the mantle of being watchmen as described in the tenth chapter of John and the third chapter of Ezekiel, and re-position themselves as spiritual coaches of their flocks. No athlete has ever won a race without having a hands-on coach to both train and inspire him. The preacher must become that hands-on coach; and the race, unquestionably, begins with instilling a healthy, godly fear into the heart of the believer!

APPENDIX A

Codification of Christ's Commands and Admonitions— These commandments are purely the words of Jesus Christ and are authoritarian in nature, non-modifiable in language, and universal in application to all believers. These are all foundational tenets of the Christian faith which could be used by pastors to include in sermons on the fear of God.

1. YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
John 3:5 –

2. YOU MUST WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH!

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” John 4:24

3. HOLY COMMUNION IS A MUST!

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:53-54; Luke 22:19

4. GOD'S LOVE IS CONDITIONAL BASED UPON ONE'S BEHAVIOR

“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him...If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.” John 14:21 &23 – Conditionally, the Father and the Son will come to live inside of you *if* you keep the commandments of Christ.

5. THE BELIEVER MUST KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS FOR ENTRY INTO THE KINGDOM

”If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments...Jesus said, thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” – Matt. 19:17-19

7. THE BELIEVER IS SUPPOSED TO TITHE

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these out ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Matt. 23:23

8. YOU MUST BEAR FRUIT OR RISK REMOVAL FROM THE BODY; ALSO YOU MUST WORK FOR THE KINGDOM IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO HEAVEN.

“Every branch in ME that beareth not fruit HE taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” - John 15:2 – Also see Matt. 3:8-10; 25:14-30; Luke 13:6-9.

9. BACKSLIDING IS NOT PERMITTED

“If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” John 15:6; also see Heb. 6:1-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Jude 5-7, 12-13.

10. REPENTANCE OF BEHAVIOR IS MANDATORY

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt 4:17

11. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY INTO HEAVEN

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:20

12. GOD WILL NOT FORGIVE YOU IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE OTHERS (And it is certain that no one who is not forgiven by God will enter into the kingdom)

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matt. 6:15

13. NOT ALL PROFESSING BELIEVERS WILL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 7:21

14. ONE IS WARNED TO FEAR GOD

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matt. 10:28

15. CHRIST WILL GO THROUGH A SEPARATING PROCESS WITHIN THE CHURCH TO DIVIDE THOSE WHO WILL GO TO HEAVEN FROM THOSE WHO WILL GO TO HELL. (Matt. 13:24-30; 47-50; 25:31-46)

16. IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR A RICH PERSON TO ENTER INTO HEAVEN (Matt. 19:23-24; James 5:1-6)

17. THOSE WHO HAVE DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS RISK HAVING THEIR NAMES BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE - Exod. 32:31-35; Rev. 3:4-5.

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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 27, 2013

Leon Davis

IRB Exemption 1649.092713: The Dynamics of Having a Fear of God in the Walk of the Believer

Dear Leon,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

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Sincerely,