

**Monday, 2 July 2018** 2 Kings 6:15-17

*When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

A huge part of the Fear of God is trusting in Him in ALL things. As Dallas Willard was fond of saying, "How can you trust the LORD for your eternal salvation if you are unwilling to trust Him for your lunchtime sandwich?" Why is it that I refuse to believe that I am surrounded by a myriad of horses and chariots of fire? How many deadbolts, combination locks and key-sets on my front door does it take to provide the safety of a single myriad? I am called to trust Him in ALL things. Why do I insist on rewriting Romans 8:28; there is an ALL things, not some things.

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**Tuesday, 3 July 2018** 2 Kings 17:6-12

*In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced. And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, and they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this."*

This and the following passages are very straightforward, unadorned examples of syncretism (the blending of the elements of other religions) in the eyes of the LORD, God, the Almighty. The Word of God is very explicit; He will not share the Fear of the LORD with any other being, with any other mode of worship other than what He has specified, or any created object or being. (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), Exodus 34:14 Can't you see the Israelites watching the customs of the neighboring nations and thinking that looks like fun? Let's do a little orgy with our feast or let's show Moloch how much we honor him by pitching our most prized possessions, our children, into his fiery maw.

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**Wednesday, 4 July 2018** 2 Kings 17:13-18

*Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets." But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings*

*that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.*

I count eight specific points where the Israelites deliberately and knowingly aroused the jealous wrath of the LORD, God, the Almighty. Several hundreds of years and He withheld His anger. Don't ever doubt that He is not a patient God; this is Godly patience.

Now we, the church in the Global North, need to examine ourselves in the piercing light of the Word of God. Some, just a few of the questions we need to ask ourselves.

- Is our life, in total, aligned with the Word of God?
- Do we display a love of God with all our hearts, souls, mind and strength?
- Do we love our neighbors as ourselves?
- Is our worship God-centered or is it man-centered?
- Do we regard the Word of God as a buffet line to pick and choose those commandments we like and reject those we don't?
- Do we recognize that all men are created in the image of God? And base all our interactions with others on that basis?

*The Fear of the LORD is a life lived in belief-trust-commitment-obedience-faith. Must be, has to be, there is no other way.*

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**Thursday, 5 July 2018** 2 Kings 17:20-23

*And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight. When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin. The people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.*

*If you do not know that we serve a patient God, go back and reread Genesis 15:1 through Malachi 4:6, and Matthew 1:1 through Revelation 22:20. Keep reading and rereading until an appreciation and sense of the patience of the LORD, God, the Almighty begins to soak in and be revealed to you. Now, you are starting to move from dread of the LORD into the Fear of the LORD, God, the Almighty. Is there an overwhelming sense of the patience that lasts for centuries, abiding in the face of rejection after rejection? Do you begin to wonder how much longer He will withhold His hand and finally declare, "Enough is enough"? Are you longing to be one who will hear the loud trumpets and rise with shouts of joy to meet Him in the air?*

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**Friday, 6 July 2018** 2 Kings 17:24-29

*And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of*

Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there, and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land." So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel and taught them how they should fear the LORD. But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived.

One of the fascinating points presented in this passage is the determination of the LORD, God the Almighty, to preserve a portion of His creation. He moved the ten tribes from the promised land and brought in a ragtag collection of Gentiles. He caused the king of Assyria to bring in an instructor to lead them into the Fear of the LORD, God, the Almighty. But we read in v. 33 that while they did fear the LORD, it was not wholehearted for they continued to worship others gods. Isn't this a picture of the Western Church today with a semblance of worship on Sunday morning, often self-centered worship but without a commitment to love the LORD, our God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength—and our neighbors as ourselves?

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**Saturday, 7 July 2018** 2 Kings 17:18-19

*Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only. Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced.*

The LORD, God, the Almighty did preserve a remnant for Himself, the tribe of Judah. It had to be for the Messiah, the Savior, the Redeemer of all creation was to come from the house of David. "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' Jeremiah 23:5-6

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**Lord's Day, 8 July 2018** Psalm 119:37

*Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in Your ways.*

Lord, how easy it is for me to get caught up in worthless things, not just stuff but pursuits, thoughts, activities, talking; all coming together as worthless living. Not necessarily dishonoring to Your name, but unproductive without purpose or benefit. I need to be sensitive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit, and I need the intervention of the Holy Spirit to have that sensitivity. Lord, I want to cry -- Make me obey!, but I know You will not do this. Lord, I need to love Your ways above all other ways, above all other pursuits, above all else. Fill my heart with a longing for You.

# VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



July 2-8, 2018

**Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Timothy 1:3-7**

*I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

We thank our Lord, as we constantly lift each other in prayer. We are thankful that we can join together as the [congregation] to carry on the Gospel as proclaimed by our forefathers and according to Your Word.

*Thank You that we are constantly reminded by the faith of men like Patrick, Columbanus, Brendan and so many others whose commitment to You transcended their fears. May we also not be consumed by a spirit of timidity, but by that spirit of power, love and self-discipline that is the hallmark of lives lived in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now. Amen*

**To fear or not to fear, that is the question.**

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

Voices Together is published daily on the website of the Fellowship of Ailbe, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org); along with material by other writers to encourage and assist in our walks as disciples of Jesus Christ. These messages can also be received as daily emails or in a monthly printed version by sending a request to:

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