

FEAR OF GOD

In the Bible, the difference between true believers and unbelievers is that true believers have a FEAR of God.

Romans 3:18 (NKJV)

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Fear of God in the Bible consistently has the idea of proper REVERENCE for God. Peter in addressing the Gentiles in Acts 10 said this.

Acts 10:34–35 (NKJV)

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

God is TOTALLY consistent. He shows “no partiality” (Acts 10:34). This is not just a NT teaching but was also found in the OT (cf. Deut. 10:17; Job. 34:19; 2 Chron. 16:9, 19:7; also Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Ja. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:17).

Note the *WHOEVER* here. In every nation, whoever fears God and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The language of verse 35 – “whoever fears Him and works righteousness” is descriptive of saving faith and the fruit it brings forth.

True fear of God is involved in saving faith which then demonstrates itself in works of righteousness. The working of righteousness is the fruit of saving faith – not the means of salvation.

It is those who have the kind of faith described as “fear” that are accepted by God. Literally, they are welcomed by Him (cf. 2 Chron. 16:9; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:10).

Peter is saying that he now understands that anyone, anywhere, who responds to the true God in this way – that is, with a reverential fear that defines the nature of true saving faith, which in turn bears the fruits of righteousness is accepted by Him. There is no partiality.

In contrast to true believers who fear God are depraved unbelievers who have “no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). Jesus said, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt. 10:28). In the midst

of the Tribulation judgments we have this worshipful statement from heaven.

Revelation 11:18 (NKJV)

18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

Note the description of the saved here in this verse – they are “those who fear Your name.” It is the defining reality of those who truly know God!

The Bible draws a clear line of distinction between God’s people who fear Him and the world of unbelief that does not. A true saving faith holds God in reverence! It FEARS God!

Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.