

# Columbus Street church of Christ

## Sunday Bulletin

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# Fearing God Motivates (Part 4)

*“O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”*  
(Nehemiah 1:11)

In our last article we spoke of the great benefits of walking in reverence and awe of God. How spiritually valuable it is to reject anything that might displease God. Now we will consider how these principles were a part of the Jews in the days of Nehemiah at the time the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. How wonderful are the words of Nehemiah as he described the people as a people who “. . . *desire to fear Your name;*”. Nehemiah was no hypocrite for it was the fear of God that kept him on the straight and narrow at a time when it was common practice of former governors, even their servants who were before him to lay burdens on the people. Nehemiah would not, rather he said, “. . . *but I did not do so, because of the fear of God*” (Neh. 5:15). In this issue we will consider some good ways that fear can motivate people to do what is right in the sight of the Almighty God. If we are perceptive, we will see how the fear of God can cause us to do likewise.

**Being Concerned for Everything That is God’s:** To begin with we see at verse 4 that Nehemiah was distraught upon hearing the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and its gates were burned with fire. A reverent concern about the things of God moved him so that when he heard the words, he “. . . *sat down and wept, and mourned for*

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

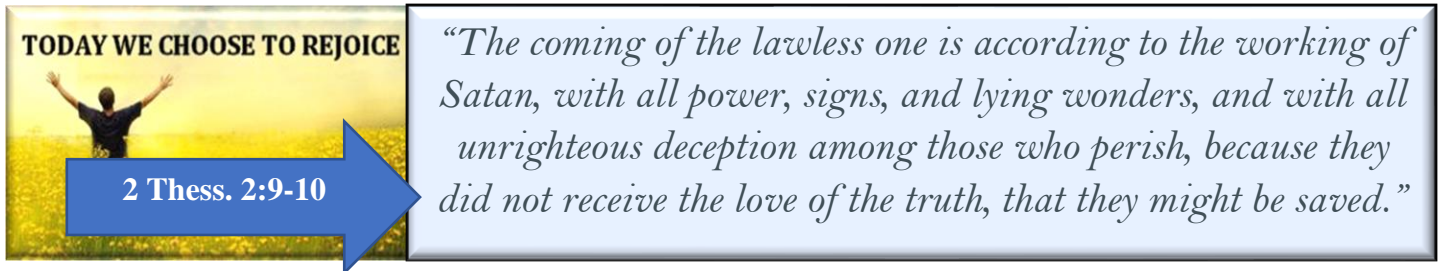
Proverbs 11:14

*many days. . .*” and he was “. . . *fasting and praying before the God of heaven*” (vs1:3, 4). It bothered Nehemiah so much that he cried and could not eat. How do you react when spiritual things are not right such as the church, the soul of a brother or sister in danger? Are you aware of what is being taught, enough to stand up for the truth? Apostasy is only one preacher, one message, and to not fear “changes to the message” is called apathy. This occurs only when problems, false teaching go unchallenged “*Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other*” (1 Cor. 4:6), and “*Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*” (1 Cor. 5:6). Allowing sin of any kind into the church is like breaking down the walls and burning the gates.

**When We Understand God's Power and Righteousness:** At verse 5 of chapter 1 Nehemiah use correctly a description of his God. He called the LORD “*great and awesome*”. Also, when the wall needed to be defended against their enemies Nehemiah exhorted the people saying, “*Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses*” (Neh. 4:14). The Hebrew word for “*awesome*” is a verb and means to fear. In the garden hiding from God Adam said “*I was afraid. . .*” (Gen. 3:10). When the king of Egypt told the midwives to kill all the male children born, scripture records “*But the midwives feared God. . .*” (Exo. 1:17) and did not do as the king commanded them. We must take this to heart. Remember Solomon's conclusion, “*Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.*” (Eccl. 12:13). The fact that God is awesome and to be feared should motivate us to obey that we will have a home in Heaven with Him.

**Let the Fear of God Overpower Your Fear of Anything:** Often we fear man, we fear just out of fear itself. Nehemiah did fear king Artaxerxes, but when it came right down to it, he feared God more. It was that greater fear that allowed Nehemiah to face his fear of the king and petition the king to let him go and survey the damage to the wall and gates. When the king asked Nehemiah why his face was so sad Nehemiah said I, “*became <sup>[b]</sup>dreadfully afraid. . .*” (Neh. 2:2b), then he continued to explain why. (Read Nehemiah 2:1-10). Jesus said, “. . . *My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into*

hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!” (Luke 12:4-5). Notable is what Nehemiah did not allow his fear of the king to do. He did not wait for someone else to step up. And once he saw for himself the devastation, he called the people saying “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies <sup>[a]</sup>waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a



reproach. . .” and the people said, “Let us rise up and build.” Then they set[b] their hands to this good work” (Neh. 2:17, 18). “We, us” not you. He included himself in the plan. In the church, when we see a need, are we like Nehemiah, is it “we, us” or is it “they, you”? If we are understanding this then the fear of God will motivate both our feet and our hands to do whatever pleases God and benefits the church.

**Treating One Another as We Should:** The fear of God motivated Nehemiah to stand up against the nobles and rulers who were exacting usury from their own brethren (charging unreasonable interest) from them. Nehemiah rebuked them saying, “What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God?” (Neh. 5:9). Fear was the very motive cited by Nehemiah for his own conduct being different from the former governors who laid burdens on the people taking bread and wine and money. But Nehemiah said, “. . . but I did not do so, because of the fear of God” (Neh. 5:15). Fear should humble us to the point in which we will treat others with honesty, love and respect knowing that God wants their soul as much as He does ours.

**Fear of God Creates Respect for the Word of God:** When Ezra read the law before the people why did they stand from morning until midday with attentive ears to the Book of the Law (Neh. 8:1-8)? It was because of their respect for God (fear) that they stood all that time. Respect for God is why they took one-fourth of the day to listen to the Book of the Law and spent the second-fourth of the day confessing and worshipping the Lord their God (Neh. 9:3). In the church after 40 minutes or so, do we begin to fidget? Does our mind begin to drift? Fear (respect) caused them to hear and understand, to see from the Law what they lacked and changed their lives accordingly (Neh. 8:13-18). When we hear a message from the preacher that convicts—what do we do? Do we make every effort to change, or do we just say—I heard that preached once before? That is the purpose of the preaching of God’s word

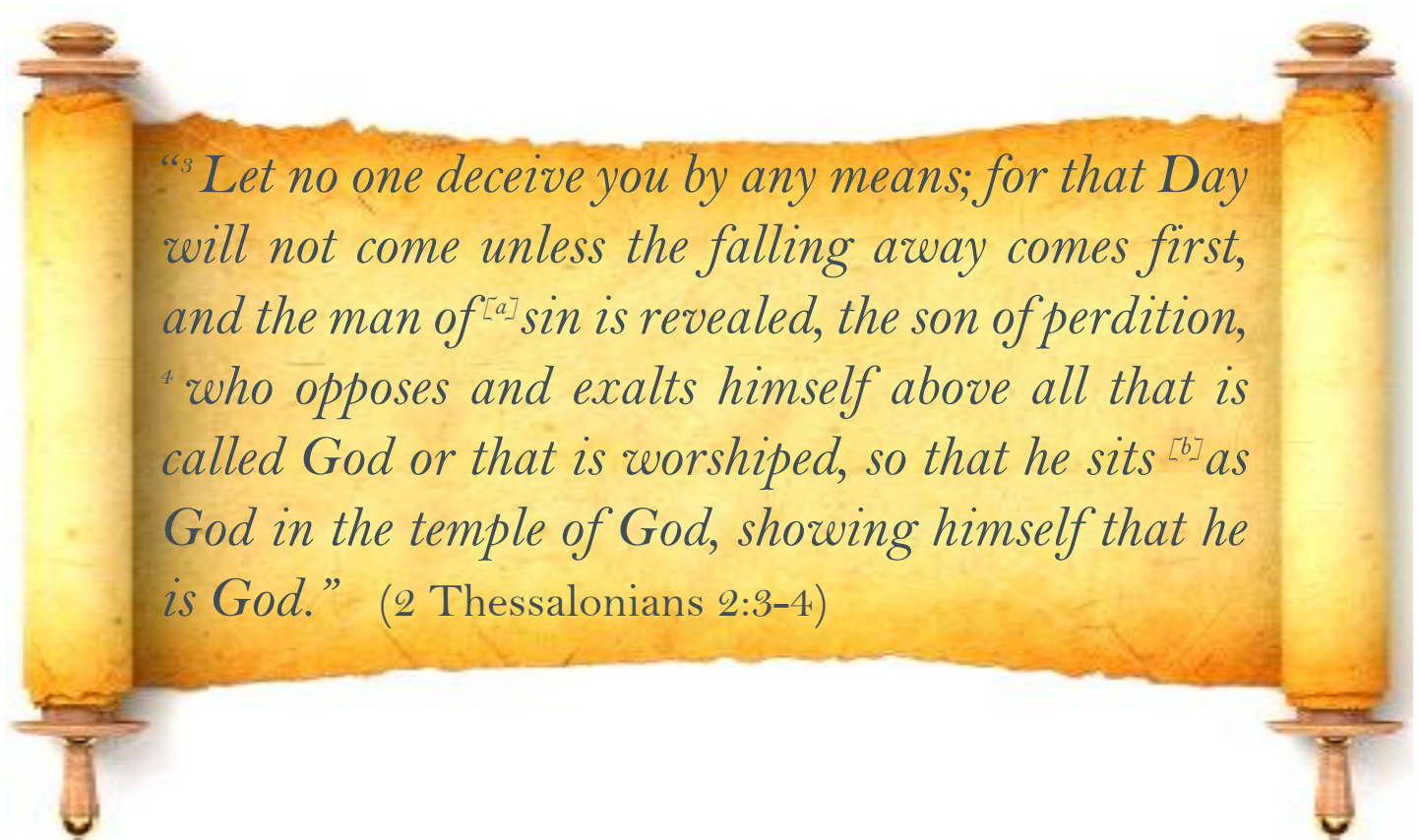
(Neh. 9:26, 29). Those who fear God will make any changes necessary (no matter how painful) to fit their lives to the plan of God.

Yes, they made great changes after reading the law. Chapter 9 tells us they confessed their sins (Neh. 9) and began to observe the law as Moses commanded concerning the Feast of the Tabernacles. Yes, they changed!

How about you? God said, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). You heard that! Now is the time to change. Obey the gospel and be baptized for the remission of your sins.

In Love

David Scarpino



*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”*

(Psalm 111:10)

## Welcome One and All!

**Our faithful Creator** is worthy to be praised in this assembly. All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as only Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* (Isaiah 6:3)

### What Jesus Said I Must Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the gospel ----- John 6:45
2. Believe the gospel----- John 8:24
3. Repent of sins----- Luke 13:3
4. Confess Christ ----- Matthew 10:32
5. Be baptized----- Mark 16:16
6. Remain faithful until deathMatthew 10:22