

The case for Fearing God and not just Revering God

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Introduction

A discussion of the meaning of fear ([yare](#), ^{H3372}) was brought up last Shabbath (3/7/2009) and rather than get into a lengthy debate about my position I decided I would wait and articulate my position in a more formal way. This isn't the first time it has been brought up and it's an important topic so this article is worthy of my time.

The question I hope to answer or at least shed some light on is "Should the word that's translated fear, as in fearing God, simply be translated as revering God? I say no. It's my position that to do so is to take away the intent of the word.

Questions

After observing the first nine plagues of Egypt which were brought on by the Elohim of Israel, each of these plagues devastating in and of themselves, and then hearing about the tenth plague which was to be brought about by the Death Angel, what do you think the first born males thought? If they had anything like a brain they would have to conclude that this Elohim of the bible was a credible threat (nine out of nine so far) and it would behoove them (to say the least) to take measures to prevent the next plague which was directed squarely at them. Their survival was dependent on performing the tasks mentioned in Exodus regarding sacrificing the lamb and putting the blood on the door post so that Elohim's Death Angel will "pass over" them. So the question is was their motivation to take these actions a result of a warm and fuzzy reverence toward YHVH or can it better be described as simply raw FEAR?

When the Egyptians handed much (all?) of their wealth to Israel when they left Egypt which came about as a result of the ten plagues, did they do so because the Elohim of Israel was a Elohim worthy of fearfulness or reverence? Wasn't their fear of Israel's God looming very large?

The bible describes when Israel heard the ten commandments (i.e. words) from YHVH at Mount Sinai as being an awesome event.

Exo 19:16-19 KJV And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all **the people that was in the camp trembled.** ¹⁷ And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. ¹⁸ And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because YHVH descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. ¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

Exo 20:18-19 KJV And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and **when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.** ¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, **Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**

Heb 12:18-21 KJV For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, ¹⁹ And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: ²⁰ **(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: ²¹ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)**

Deu 18:15-19 KJV YHVH thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ¹⁶ According to all that thou desiredst of YHVH thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of YHVH my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. ¹⁷ And YHVH said unto me, They have well *spoken that*

which they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. ¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, [I will require it of him](#).

Php 2:1-12 KJV If *there be* therefore any consolation in HaMashiach, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ² Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in HaMashiach Y'shua: ⁶ Who, being in the form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be equal with Elohim: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Wherefore Elohim also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Y'shua every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Y'shua HaMashiach *is* Lord, to the glory of Elohim the Father. ¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear [G5401](#) and trembling. [G5156](#)

Verse 2:12 in the book of Philippians the word **fear** (Strong's [G5401](#) *phobos*, were we get the English word phobia), is connected with the word **trembling** (Strong's [G5156](#) *tromo* which is where we get the English word trauma) so it's reasonable to conclude in this context that the normal meaning of fear is, just that, fear and not revere. See the endnotes for a more detailed look into these two Greek words.

Revelations (just read the whole book)

The book of Revelation and other places in the "New" Testament (e.g. the Olivet Discourse, Mat 24) is here to show the awesome and fear inducing events of what's to come. It's also here for the "rapturists" (of which I do not count myself a member) to consider when the great tribulation begins and the "rapture" doesn't kick in. Are they going to be in a state of reverence or a state of fear? I also have this here because I want to show that the Fear of God isn't just an "Old" Testament thing. This article is not a detailed critique of the rapture but I will make this one point, much of Christianity I would argue has adopted this end time theology because they want to escape the fact that the God of the whole bible has a fearful side to him and they don't want to deal with it.

Observations

Fear is certainly good when you need motivation. For me if your take away the fear you take away the motivation. The fear of being shamed motivates you to do the right thing. Of course fear may not be something as draconian as death, but e.g. the fear of disappointing someone whom you respect. To me the most important

thing you have is the relationship with your Creator and Elohim. I am motivated to honor that relationship and am fearful of allowing my freewill to run amuck and cause this relationship to be diminished.

A Political Question

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

According to Wikipedia, FDR said these words (infamous in my opinion) at his inauguration on March 4, 1933. Wikipedia goes on to say that “The very next day Congress passed the [Emergency Banking Act](#) which declared a "bank holiday". The bill also gave the Secretary of the Treasury the authority through an amendment to the [Trading with the Enemy Act](#) to confiscate the gold of private citizens. Other infamous accomplishments were House Joint Resolution 192 and Social Security which laid the foundations for a welfare state and ushered in socialism into the country.

The phrase we should be living by is “The only thing we have to fear is ~~fear itself~~ **the fear of God**” With the FDR way, you get a “[New Deal](#)” which doesn’t lead to wisdom.

Pro 9:10 KJV The fear of YHVH *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

Proverbs 9:10 is saying that absent the fear of YHVH there is no wisdom. At first the quote “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” sounds good as it comes off sounding like we should be brave in troubled times, and this was about the only good thing I had to say about FDR but upon further analysis even that was wrong. With FDR’s New Deal you get no wisdom and the welfare state as opposed to the God of Israel solely being my welfare provider which is wise.

A Question of Translation

I am often critical of how Hebrew words and concepts are translated into English bibles like the King James, but this doesn’t mean that if there is a thought in the bible that you don’t like then you can simply blame it on the translation.

For the Hebrew word [yare \(H3372\)](#) I contend that it’s not a question about its translation into English and/or what the “deeper” meaning is because the numerous biblical examples listed above shows that the people believed that they were going to die. When your life is threatened a raw core emotional reaction kicks in and a far better descriptive word for that emotion is fear. Revere just doesn’t cut it as it is an abstract concept that you contemplate when you’re in intellectual mode and you have the luxury of time to think about what we all should have which is reverence towards God.

My Torah law form passion

If you remove this fear from yourself then you remove this fear from others like your enemies, and therefore you lose the ability to motivate i.e. move your enemies from your midst. If deep down through your intellectualizing, you don’t really fear God, then when you confront your enemies from a righteous perspective, you won’t be effective.

If you know me you know that I have a passion for the law form of Torah and I am constantly thinking about how to put this passion into action. The ultimate place to put this into action is in a court room where I can invoke my defense which is my “strongly held religious beliefs and convictions” (SHRB&C), and rest my case on my “Creator given unalienable rights” (CGUR). So what am I talking about? Let’s say that I am defending my labor which is a CGUR and the IRS profoundly disagrees with my claim and contends that I owe the IRS a

wheel barrow full of money. So off to court we go and both sides try to convince the judge that their position is right.

Question 1. Is fear and intimidation a factor in this court room setting? Answer, oh yeah.

Question 2. Is this fear and intimidation tactic to be utilized by one party or both parties? The IRS would like the world to be that they are the only ones who can do this. They are fine being portrayed as the “might vs. right crowd” as that is a powerful and effective tactic. But what about the guy who is standing on righteous ground of his CGUR? Why can't he use these powerful tactics of fear and intimidation?

Actually this fear and intimidation isn't against the IRS, but rather against the judge who is presiding over the matter. With regard to the IRS, you just have to have the fortitude to stand up to them and their bullying tactics and operate under the covering of faith. If the judge insists on siding with the IRS, then you need to communicate to him the error of his ways and to insert the FEAR of God in him.

My point is that when you water down the **FEAR** of God to only become the reverence of God than you take away this most powerful tactic. You can't intimidate people even righteous intimidation if your “weapon” is merely an abstract intellectual concept...”you better stopping hitting me over the head or I swear I'm going to start waxing poetically and put the rever of God in you!!!”

Marsing Maxim: When you're going to a gun fight ditch the rusty pocket knife and bring a bazooka.

Judgment Day

Thank God (literally) that we, Israel, have a covenant/contract with the Elohim of Israel which we can call on and rely on when we witness the fearful things of Elohim.

I contend that during the day of Judgment (the true “Day of the Lord”) all will experience fear like no other time in history. During this time the contrast between those that have not only studied His word but also have put the study into practice with those who were not motivated to do either will be great. All of man's faith will be tested and faith is, if you will, the SHRB&C that the Elohim of Israel will do what the Elohim of Israel said he will do via the covenant...to bless and protect.

Under tremendous emotional stress caused by raw fear, there is no time to ponder back and forth and to make well thought out and reasoned decision. If you have shown yourself approved then you will be trained to instinctively react righteously because you have made studying the book or righteous habit forming.

Intellectualizing

I fancy myself an intellectual so what I am about to say is not an argument against being intellectual which relates with rever/reverence but everything has its place.

So why is there a desire to only make fear/yare to only mean reverence? At the risk of second guessing others and questioning their motivation I think it's because they feel uncomfortable about “The Fear of Lord”. I must confess that I feel a bit uncomfortable about this too because it comes off sounding like a fire and brimstone / alarmist / in your face sermon i.e. un-intellectual. But yet there it is in Scripture as I hope the article has clearly shown. Populate culture mixed with Torahless emotion driven Christianity has made this a taboo subject for anyone who wishes to take scriptures seriously.

Damn the taboo torpedoes full speed ahead.

I presume that the motivation for ignoring the blunt raw meaning of the word fear is to “help” God not by necessarily changing this specific word but rather emphasizing one aspect of the word and de-emphasizing (or

flat out ignoring) another aspect of the word. I know the motivation is not to add to or take away from the Scripture (a very serious charge) but it does violate one of Marsing's hermeneutical maxim namely "To decouple your emotions from the message especially if the message is word of God". This maxim exposes the error of making emotional arguments rather than intellectual arguments. This is beyond the scope of the article, but see my upcoming article on "Words and Emotional Arguments¹".

We shouldn't second guess why people are interested in studying the Word. When someone wants to study the Scriptures it is presumptuous for us to assume what this person needs or in this case what this person needs to be isolated from. By insisting that the meaning for fear can only be the watered down word revere should not be or doing, rather we should let the word stand on its own. Fear is clearly associated with motivation so part of their motivation could very well be the raw emotional fear of God...it is for me.

Time Management

ToDo: finish this

¹ Words-Definitions-Political-Correctness-and-Emotional-Arguments, <http://myhebrewbible.com/Article/280>

Update September 2nd 2016 (2016/09/02)

I thought some more on this and wanted to add my new thoughts to this article.

ToDo: mesh the existing article with these new thoughts.

I've noticed numerous times in bible study with like minded friends that when the topic of "the fear of God" comes up, almost always someone will object and say 'it's not fear, it's revere' and almost always the study group will nod their heads in approval .

Why do they do that?

I contend it's because we react to the emotion of what we think of when we hear the words fear as in fear of God and we don't like those emotions. An undisciplined critical thinker following the anti-pattern of critical thought (exemplified by political correctness) reacts emotionally and says in his or her mind "that's a bad word and we should stop using it". Yet the bible (e.g. KJV) is full of examples of the fear of God².

Here's my theory on why this happens.

A comparison of the English words fear and revere.

Here are some attributes of fear.

- Fear is very reactionary.
- Fear is threatening, maybe even to your life or the life of a loved one.
- Fear occurs in a highly emotionally environment and greatly increases ones stress level.
- Fear demands immediate action and it imposes a choice that we would normally avoid like the plague.
- Fear is emotionally painful and is viewed negatively.
- Fear is very situational where the situations are not of your making.

How does that compare to reverence?

There are times when you're contemplating God and you are all of the sudden overcome with the emotion of being in awe of him and that leaves you with a strong positive emotion. There is a definitely an emotion aspect to reverence like there is with fear, but it's of a kind that is completely different and occurs in completely different situations and contexts.

So why does God allow for fearful situations to occur? Why does God insist that we "wrestle"³ with this thing called fear?

Situational differences between fear and revere

² A quick search (partial match) using eSword of the two words fear and God results in 134 verses, 26 verses in the NT and 108 in the OT. When searching only revere and God there is only two verses Psa89:7 & Heb 12:28.

³ An understanding of the name for Israel is to wrestle with God and Man see Gen 32:28.

What is the connection between fear and reverence? Reverence occurs in the classroom, the ivory towers if you will, and fear is the engine and the energy that drives those legs.

You go to school to practice how to automatically react to fearful situations in a righteous way. When push comes to shove, it's your default behavior. If you practiced well/righteously you will respond well/righteously.

We rarely discuss the intellectual idea of fear of God because it is, at its core, a very un-intellectual thing, yet occurrences of fear is our reality. When it suddenly appears like a hungry lion hiding in the bushes, it can radically change your life. Therefore, I would contend that it behooves us to practice this

It's with this raw power of fear, which is inevitable, that we need to "lean into it" and learn how to control it by giving it righteous direction.

In our intellectual environment, we need to practice mock situations of fearful events. E.g. Mock courts. I'm thinking of Jacob and how he dealt with his blessing. He did not deal with that well and created Jacob's Trouble.

A conspiracy theory mindset is an unhealthy response to fear. To Do finish this thought.

Word Study - End Notes

I will require it of him

"I will require it of him is" means I will require his life.

Gen 9:5

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require (אֲדַרְשׁוּ^{H1875} will I require;) it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

It takes on the meaning of **requiring or demanding someone's blood** in a moral or **legal sense** ([Gen 9:5](#); [2Ch 24:22](#); [Psa 10:13](#)) (WordStudy)

H3372 yare fear, revere

ירא

A primitive root; to **fear**; morally to **revere**; causatively to *frighten*: - affright, be (make) afraid, dread (-ful), (put in) fear (-ful, -fully, -ing). (be had in) reverence (-end), X see, terrible (act, -ness, thing).

G5401 phobos fear, alarm, fright (where we get phobia)

φέβομαι

From a primary φέβομαι phebomai (to be put in fear); *alarm* or *fright*: - be afraid, + exceedingly, fear, terror.

LXX related word(s)

H367 emah	H1763 dechal pa.	H2730 chared	H2844 chat
H3374 yirah	H6184 maarits	H6343 pachad	H7413 ramah

Total KJV Occurrences: 47; fear(ered)(s) : 43, terror: 3; exceedingly: 1

fear, 41 [Mat 14:26](#), [Mat 28:4](#), [Mat 28:8](#), [Luk 1:12](#), [Luk 1:65](#), [Luk 5:26](#), [Luk 7:16](#), [Luk 8:37](#), [Luk 21:26](#), [Joh 7:13](#), [Joh 19:38](#), [Joh 20:19](#), [Act 2:43](#), [Act 5:5](#), [Act 5:11](#), [Act 9:31](#), [Rom 3:17-18](#) (2), [Rom 8:15](#), [Rom 13:7](#) (2), [1Co 2:3](#), [2Co 7:1](#), [2Co 7:11](#), [2Co 7:15](#), [Eph 5:21](#), [Eph 6:5](#), [Phi 2:12](#), [1Ti 5:20](#), [Heb 2:15](#), [1Pe 2:17-18](#) (2), [1Pe 3:2](#), [1Pe 3:15](#), [1Jo 4:18](#) (3), [Jud 1:23](#), [Rev 11:11](#), [Rev 18:10](#), [Rev 18:15](#)

terror, 3 [Rom 13:3](#), [2Co 5:11](#), [1Pe 3:14](#)

exceedingly, 1 [Mar 4:41](#)

feared, 1 [Mar 4:41](#) (2)

fears, 1 [2Co 7:5](#)

G5156 *tromos* trembling

τρόμος

From [G5141](#); a “trembling”, that is, quaking with *fear*: - + tremble (-ing).

LXX related word(s)

H367 emah	H4172 mora	H4288 mechittah	H5892 ir
H6343 pachad	H7461 raad	H7461 readah	H7578 retet

Total KJV Occurrences: 5 trembling, 4 [1Co 2:3](#), [2Co 7:15](#), [Eph 6:5](#), [Phi 2:12](#); trembled, 1 [Mar 16:8](#)

H6342 *pachad* startled, fear, stand in awe, make to shake

My Notes. Pachad and its derivates (H6342, H6343 & H6344) is sometimes translated as fear and for those references in the Torah (I highlighted in **yellow** below), it is never talking about the Fear of God (FYI: I didn't check the other non-Torah references). Therefore the idea that yareh talks only about reverence for God and this word Pachad talks only about the Fear of God is incorrect.

פחַד

A primitive root; to *be startled* (by a sudden alarm); hence to *fear* in general: - be afraid, stand in awe, (be in) fear, make to shake.

LXX related word(s)

G868 aph istemi	G1168 deiliao	G1788 en trepo	G1839 ex istemi	G2125 eulabeomai
G3871 para kalupto	G4422 ptoeo	G5431 phrontizo	G1286 dia seio	G5399 phobeo

WordStudy: *pāḥad*: A verb meaning to dread, to be in dread, to be in awe. This verb occurs in poetry. Those who worship and trust God have no need to dread, but those who break the Law ([Deu 28:66](#)); sinners in Zion ([Isa 33:14](#)); and worshipers of idols ([Isa 44:11](#)) have reason to fear. It often takes a cognate accusative. For a positive use, in the eschatological perspective of [Isa 60:5](#), the term is best translated to be awed.

Total KJV Occurrences: 24

afraid, 9 [Job 23:15](#), [Psa 27:1](#), [Pro 3:24](#), [Isa 12:2](#), [Isa 19:17](#), [Isa 33:14](#), [Jer 36:16](#), [Jer 36:24](#), [Mic 7:17](#)

fear, 9 [Deu 28:66-67](#) (2), [Psa 14:5](#), [Isa 19:16](#), [Isa 44:8](#), [Isa 44:11](#), [Isa 60:5](#), [Jer 33:9](#), [Hos 3:5](#)

feared, 3 [Job 3:25](#), [Psa 78:53](#), [Isa 51:13](#)

awe, 1 [Psa 119:161](#)

feareth, 1 [Pro 28:14](#)

shake, 1 [Job 4:14](#) (2)

H6343 *pachad* fear, sudden alarm, dread, terror

פחד

From [H6342](#); a (sudden) *alarm* (properly the object feared, by implication the feeling): - dread (-ful), fear, (thing) great [fear, -ly feared], terror.

LXX related word(s)

G1611 ek stasis	G2285 thambos	G2351 thorubos	G3639 olethros
G4423 ptoesis	G5156 tromos	G5401 phobos	G870 aphobos *

WordStudy

pahad: A masculine singular noun translated dread, terror. This dread was often caused by the Lord ([1Sa 11:7](#); [Job 13:11](#); [Isa 2:10](#), [Isa 2:19](#), [Isa 2:21](#)). The dread could cause trembling ([Job 13:11](#); [Psa 119:120](#)). The noun often occurs in a cognate accusative construction (see *pāhad* [H6342]) ([Deu 28:67](#); [Job 3:25](#); [Psa 14:5](#)). A unique use of the term is found in [Gen 31:42](#), often translated the Dread or Fear of Isaac, parallel to the God of Abraham.

Total KJV Occurrences: 48

fear, 41 [Gen 31:42](#), [Gen 31:53](#), [Deu 11:25](#), [Deu 28:67](#), [1Sa 11:7](#), [1Ch 14:17](#), [2Ch 14:14](#), [2Ch 17:10](#), [2Ch 19:7](#), [2Ch 20:29](#), [Est 8:17](#), [Est 9:2-3](#) (2), [Job 4:14](#), [Job 22:9-10](#) (2), [Job 25:2](#), [Job 39:16](#), [Job 39:22](#), [Psa 31:11](#), [Psa 36:1](#), [Psa 53:5](#) (2), [Psa 64:1](#), [Psa 105:38](#), [Psa 119:120](#), [Pro 1:26-27](#) (2), [Pro 1:33](#), [Pro 3:25](#), [Son 3:8](#), [Isa 2:10](#), [Isa 2:19](#), [Isa 2:21](#), [Isa 24:17-18](#) (2), [Jer 30:5](#), [Jer 48:43-44](#) (2), [Jer 49:5](#), [Lam 3:47](#)

dread, 3 [Exo 15:16](#), [Deu 2:25](#), [Job 13:11](#)

terror, 2 [Job 31:23](#), [Psa 91:5](#)

dreadful, 1 [Job 15:21](#)

great, 1 [Psa 14:5](#)

H6344 *pachad* testicle, stone (only in Job 40:17)

פחד

pachad *pakh'-ad*

The same as [H6343](#); a *testicle* (as a cause of *shame* akin to fear): - stone.

pahad: I. A noun referring to a thigh. It is used in the plural. It is used to describe Leviathan, God's masterful creation ([Job 40:17](#)). It refers to the upper front part of a person's legs.

II. A noun referring to testicle. It is rendered as stones, meaning testicles. It describes a feature of Leviathan's body ([Job 40:17](#)).

Total KJV Occurrences: 1 stones, 1 [Job 40:17](#)