

# THE ROOT OF SALVATION

Life on earth is governed by laws and principles but this simple reality is eluding most of us today. When it comes to the knowledge of the truth, even those who profess to believe in God are alien to what the Lord our God has said in the Holy Scriptures. We have not sought the Lord our God with all our hearts to give us understanding of the content of His word. We have allowed ourselves to be led astray by not taking the responsibility to search the Scriptures to find out if what we are being taught is truth, yet we have ignorantly trusted in our teachers, who themselves have been deceived since they have not gone to the Lord, who is the source of the truth, nevertheless, they have ignorantly followed man's understanding and traditions.

There is a greater purpose for our lives and everything we need to know has already been given to us. We have been instructed in considerable details about what happened before us, what we should be doing now, and what will come hereafter. Ironically, we are the last generation of the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil age. We should know assuredly that; the Lord our God has given us a comprehensive account in great detail regarding what will befall our generation of people. What the Lord has proposed will affect every living soul on earth, including the Lord's people, the Body of Christ, at the appointed time. Although it carries, it will come to pass as it has been written regardless of our beliefs.

At some point in our lives, we are given the opportunity to know the one and only true living God. The truth is everyone alive on earth knows we were created. This is because our Creator, who we call God, has put in all of us to acknowledge His existence, even though He has chosen to remain invisible to us during this age.

## **Romans 1:18-23** New King James Version

*<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

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As mentioned in this passage of Scripture, it all comes down to the choices we make. The Lord our God has not left Himself short, to remain unknown, but has shown to us His invisible attributes, even his eternal power and God head, but many have chosen not to glorify Him as God. Instead, they have chosen to worship wood and stone, the works of their hands. We all have a god, the things we choose to worship, the idols of our heart. These gods could be anything ranging from cars, houses, children, wives or husbands, a church, a pastor, phones, computers, celebrities, movies, sports, just to name a few. Ironically, this is the point from which many of us started life, serving wood and stone before we came to the knowledge of the truth. We were born into a world system which deprives us of the truth; vital knowledge of the only true and living God.

### **Romans 8:5-8** New King James Version

*<sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

To be carnally minded means to be void of the Spirit of God, which therefore implies we can never, yes, never be subject to God's laws and commandments. We can certainly follow some traditions, but it can never be by or in faith. This is the simple reason why the world has descended into such decadence. When did this fall into social and cultural immorality begin? The answer is found in the book of Genesis when Adam decided to follow his wife Eve, who was deceived by the serpent to disregard what the Lord our God had commanded them.

### **Genesis 2:15-17** New King James Version

*<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Let's be clear on this fact. We would all have chosen the same path as Adam. God gave Adam the choice to eat from all the tree of the garden of Eden, including the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and most importantly he could have eaten from the tree of life. It must be

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absolutely clear in our minds that both of these trees have a significant spiritual predestined conclusion affixed to them by God the Father, if Adam was to eat from either of these trees. God could easily have omitted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from the Garden of Eden. Most significantly, God could have created a people who had no choice or say in their lives, but He created man and gave him the opportunity to choose his own path in life. The consequence is what we see all around us today but even this has its purpose. For a long period, Adam and Eve obeyed God's commandment but when the tempter came along and enticed Eve, (we must remember Adam was there by Eve throughout her temptation), by installing doubt in her minds, her views of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil changed, including her mind set.

### **Genesis 3:1-7 New King James Version**

*<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

*<sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

*<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

Since the Lord our God had appointed Adam custodian over the earth, and because Satan was able to entice him to disobey God's commandment, Adam lost custody over the Earth to Satan, or rather, God gave custody of the earth to Satan. Satan in turn swiftly established His spirit over the Earth. Consequently, everyone who was born on the earth has the spirit of disobedience to God the Father installed in them, hence, what we see in the world today. This is the spirit of death. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they lost one of the most critical components

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essential for life, the Spirit of God. This meant none of their descendants was born with the Spirit of God. Hence, the knowledge of the truth began to slowly evaporate from the earth because Satan was filling the earth with his lies.

However, God did not leave himself short. Throughout the ages, the Lord our God has had those who are willing to obey His laws and commandments until the Lord Jesus Christ came into the earth as the Lamb of God to take away all our sins, because the path to the tree of life was left open, but fiercely guarded. Unfortunately, since we are the last generations of the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil age, we have not had first, second or even third hand experience of what the Lord has done for us, but we have been blessed with the word of truth, the holy Scripture, and history. The holy Scripture is the only true reference we have, and the Lord has perfectly preserved it for us. We must also remember that the Lord has promised to teach us Himself through His Spirit.

The question remains; where do we start? How do we acquire knowledge of the truth since we are far from the period when the Lord walked the earth? The answer is simple and to the point. We start in the word of truth. Before the Lord walked the earth, He gave His word through His servants the prophets. For example, when we seriously consider what has been documented for us, we will conclude that it was the Lord who taught Abraham in the person of Melchizedek. The Lord also validated most of the books in the holy Scripture.

As for us today, we have a choice. We can either acknowledge the Lord as our God and Father, by choosing to obey His laws and commandments or not. However, those who have chosen not to retain the knowledge of God in their minds, the Lord has given them over to a reprobate mind.

### **Romans 1:20-32** New King James Version

*<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

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*<sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

*<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

These are the character traits of those of a reprobate mind. But for those who have chosen to come under God's authority, a path has been clearly outlined for them in the word of truth. That journey begins with the understanding of what the Lord said in the book of Proverbs chapter one. King Solomon, the son of David the King was the scribe the Lord used to record these passages of Scripture. Significantly, when we seriously consider the content of the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs, we will affirm it is the Lord speaking to us directly, on an individual basis through King Solomon. Here is the reason for this thought; in the book of Proverbs chapter one verse twenty-three, only the Lord can pour out His Spirit on us, something we see happen in the book of Acts chapter two. Both Kings, David and Solomon are dead, awaiting the day of resurrection, but the Lord our God is alive and waiting for us to turn from our wicked ways. For us today, to be able to understand where the journey to the Kingdom of God begins, we need to seriously consider what the Lord declared in the book of Proverbs chapter one verses two through to verse six:

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## **Proverbs 1:2-7 New King James Version**

*<sup>2</sup>To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, <sup>3</sup>To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; <sup>4</sup>To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion— <sup>5</sup>A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, <sup>6</sup>To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. <sup>7</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

What we read from verses two through to verse six is triggered in us by what has been given in verse seven. For a wise man to be able to hear and increase learning, and for a man of understanding to be able to attain to wise counsel, for anyone to be able to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgement, and equity, all of these would only come alive in us if we are afraid, terrified of the Lord. In other words, to be frightened of the Lord is the absolute beginning of our spiritual lives. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of the knowledge of God. It is good to be petrified of the Lord.

As mentioned earlier, we all start our lives from a position of disobedience to the Lord our God and Creator because we are born into a broken world which is alienated from its Creator and as a result, it has rapidly descended into decadence. When we come to the knowledge of the fact that God exists, and He is their creator of the heavens and the earth, we must react to this knowledge appropriately by coming under His authority. But this question remains to all of us, even to those who profess to know God as their Creator: who is God to you? How do you perceive who God is? We can only determine who God is by what the Lord has given us through His servants the prophets as documented in the holy Scriptures.

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## WHO IS GOD TO YOU?

Before we can proceed any further with the fear of the Lord, it is important to first address the issue of how we view the Lord our God personally in our lives. What is your view of God? Everyone on earth knows there is a God, but what we choose to believe does not always correspond to the truth. As a matter of fact, the Lord our God is our Creator. In the book of Genesis chapter one we are told in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

### **Genesis 1:1-3 New King James Version**

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

We all know as a matter of fact that we cannot create anything from nothing. All we can do is combine already existing materials to form something new. No one on earth today can call anything into existence. But in the beginning, God called for light and there was light. Moreover, on the sixth day during the period of the transformation of the earth, the Lord our God formed a structure of a man with earth, and His breath turned the structure into a complex living organism called man which can see, hear, talk.

### **Genesis 2:7 New King James Version**

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

What an extra ordinary phenomenal. The breath of the living God turned a structure made with dust, the earth into a living being, both male and female. It is awesome, just awesome. In the book of Job chapters thirty-eight through to forty-one, we are given an account of the Lord our God questioning His servant Job about His creation. The Lord gives us a glimpse of how He created the earth.

### **Job 38:1-7 New King James Version**

*<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: <sup>2</sup> "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. <sup>4</sup> "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or*

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*who stretched the line upon it? <sup>6</sup>To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, <sup>7</sup>When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

Job chapters thirty-eight through to forty-one confidently establishes the fact that God is the Creator. But what else do we know about God. How real is God to you? This is how we should perceive our God and if your views of God do not match what we have been certified in the holy Scripture, it is important to make some amendments now before it is too late:

### **Isaiah 55:8-9** New King James Version

*<sup>8</sup>“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.*

*<sup>9</sup>“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

This is a simple reality of our existence in comparison to that of our God. God’s ways and thoughts are far too superior for our limited minds to comprehend. Even more compelling is the fact that, what the Lord our God has already spoken will not return to Him void except they have accomplished their purpose:

### **Isaiah 55:10-11** New King James Version

*<sup>10</sup>“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup>So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Unfortunately for us all, God has already spoken. We have His word, the holy Scriptures. It is up to us individually to find understanding of what the Lord our God has said because pleading ignorance will not be good enough on the day we stand before the Lord our God in judgement. However, those who have wisdom and understanding should rejoice. What else should we know about the Lord our God? The gospel of John chapter one has an interesting insight of how involved our God is in our lives.

### **John 1:1-9** New King James Version

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light*

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*shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

A quick glance over these few verses of Scripture does not reveal the importance of what is concealed in the content. A closer examination reveals the fact that it is the Lord our God, the One who became the Lord Jesus Christ who provides the spirit that gives life to every soul that has ever walked the earth. In verse seven, we read of the light that gives light to every man that comes into the world. That light is the spirit which gives us life. This truth is expounded in the book of Job chapter ten verses eight through to twelve and in Psalm one hundred and thirty-nine verses fifteen and sixteen. This in earnest is who the Lord our God is to us, the giver of life. our parents might be involved in reproduction, but the spirit is planted by the Lord our God. This is the same God Who called for light in the book Genesis. Moses had the opportunity to see the glory of the Lord:

### **Exodus 34:5-7 New King James Version**

*<sup>5</sup> Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."*

The Lord our God is merciful and gracious, patient, and full of goodness and truth. If we sincerely repent of our sins, the Lord our God has no other option but to forgive us. That is His word and only our God can keep all His promises. We must also remember that it is the Lord our God who has set the boundaries of life, which are His laws and commandments. There are consequences for breaking these boundaries. We have been given a stern warning throughout the holy Scriptures of who our God is, including great details of His character. Who has ears to hear? In the book of Hebrews, we learn of the fact that the Lord our God is the Judge:

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## **Hebrews 10:30-31** New King James Version

*<sup>30</sup>For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

God will judge His people, and we must also remember that vengeance belongs to God. If these two elements of life belong to God, and the Lord has said He will start by judging His people first, consider what the Lord has instore for those who have chosen not to acknowledge His might and believe in Him? When we read these words, "it is a fearful thing to fall in the Hands of the living God, coupled with the fact that God is the Judge and He will avenge all unrighteousness," should this not empower us to literally tremble before the Lord and hasten to come under His authority? Can we now say that we have not been warned?

Moreover, we have been told that God the Father has given all authority in heaven and on Earth to the Lord Jesus Christ:

## **Matthew 28:18-20** New King James Version

*<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen*

If we fully understand the concept of power and authority from an earthly point of view coupled with the knowledge that those in power have dominion over rest, and can exercise their authority over them at their will, what about the Lord who has all power and authority over all? As it was mentioned earlier, it was the Lord who called and there was light. We must also remember that, since Satan is the reason why the earth is in such a dissipated state, because he is the present ruler over the earth, what will happen when the Lord who has all power and authority is inaugurated over the earth? We know the Lord abhors decadence. A change in power will also come with the removal everything which is considered an abomination. In the gospel of John, we learn that God the Father judges no one:

## **John 5:22-25** New King James Version

*<sup>22</sup>For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not*

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*honour the Father who sent Him. <sup>24</sup> “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. <sup>25</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.*

This passage of Scripture should change the way we view the Lord Jesus Christ. First, we learn the Lord has been given all authority in the heavens and on earth. Now, the Lord is saying all judgement has been passed to Him. This should be an eye opener to the fact that the Lord is not who our limited imagination portray. These are just a few verses of Scripture which tells us about who our God really is and how we should consider Him. There are many more verses in the holy Scripture which gives us more understanding on how we should perceive the Lord our God. Consider this fact; has not the potter power over the clay?

### **Jeremiah 18:1-10** New King James Version

<sup>1</sup> *The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: <sup>2</sup> “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” <sup>3</sup> Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. <sup>4</sup> And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: <sup>6</sup> “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the LORD. “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! <sup>7</sup> The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, <sup>8</sup> if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. <sup>9</sup> And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, <sup>10</sup> if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.*

This passage of Scripture is clear and concise. The Lord has authority over the world, the nations and over each of us. There is an even clearer message for us to grasp about how we should view our God in the book of the prophet Ezekiel:

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## **Ezekiel 18:1-4 New King James Version**

<sup>1</sup> *The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, <sup>2</sup>“What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children’s teeth are set on edge’? <sup>3</sup>“As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. <sup>4</sup>“Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.*

We all belong to God. If you have been told otherwise you are being deceived. The Lord our God is our Creator and Father regardless of how we came into the world. What He has proposed will come to pass according to His word with or without us. This should be an eye opener to the fact that the Lord is far more superior than our limited understanding and imagination.

## **Luke 12:5 New King James Version**

<sup>5</sup> *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!*

In this passage of Scripture, the Lord made it abundantly clear to us who we should fear, and He has also given us the reasons why we should fear Him. Remember the Lord has all authority and power, and all judgement has also been passed to Him. The Lord will readily give the command to destroy all those who have chosen not to come under His authority in the lake of fire. There are always consequences with what we choose to do. We must take responsibility for our actions.

## **Galatians 6:6-7 New King James Version**

<sup>6</sup> *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

We should never deceive ourselves in thinking that we can pull one over our God, or we are smarter than Him. God cannot be mocked. The Lord knows the intent of our hearts. What we sow, that we are going to reap. If we choose not to come under God’s authority, we will surely suffer the consequences of our decision.

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### **Psalm 50:22-23 New King James Version**

*<sup>22</sup> "Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, And there be none to deliver: <sup>23</sup> Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God."*

If the Lord decides to take hold of us and tear us in pieces, who can come to our rescue? The beauty is, the Lord is the one protecting us from all our enemies, if it was not so, we will all have been destroyed because the enemy seeks only to steal, to kill and to destroy. This is the description of the God we serve. The question is, how do you now view our God? How do you now perceive the Lord our God, after going through this section of this study?

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## THE MEANING OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

It is important for us to notice the fact that fear is a spiritual component of life, and there are different types of fear. First, there is a fear of danger which is good and protects us from situations that could be detrimental to our lives. There is the fear of things, a phobia which is not good because it administers anxiety, stress and prevents us from engaging in certain activities. Then there is the good fear, which draws honour, respect, reverence from deep within our hearts.

It is critical for us to understand that, if we cannot fear our earthly parents enough to obey their commands, we will find it almost impossible to obey the Lord our God in truth. Remember the physical came before the spiritual. The fear of those in authority should have been impressed on us from childhood. Parents should instruct their child on how to respect not only them, but also those in authority. Respect is deeply rooted in fear. Respect should not be implemented by punishment but by correction. However, in some cases, punishment is necessary to remove stubbornness. And as the child grows older, respect will become an integral part of their character.

If literal fear, the dread of authority is missing from our character, when we come to the knowledge of the truth, we will find it extremely difficult to redirect to start fearing God. We must literally fear God to be able to obey His laws and commandments. If fear is missing, the consequence is, we will start creating our own laws and commandments and expect the Lord our God to honour them. The fear of the Lord, like many other spiritual concepts has a multitude of the same meaning which comes with understanding. The root of the fear of the Lord is a facet of the Spirit of God.

### **Isaiah 11:1-2 New King James Version**

<sup>1</sup> *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

This passage of Scripture tells us of the seven Spirits of God, which we can also find in the book of the prophet Zechariah chapter three verse nine and chapter four verse ten. We can also find these seven Spirits of God in the book of Revelation chapter four verse five. As you

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can see, one of these seven Spirits of God is the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. This is the Spirit of God which the Lord our God sends to shadow those who the Lord is calling, to start understanding the truth about the only living God. This is the Spirit that brings the believer to repentance. This Spirit opens our understanding to the fact that there is a living and true God. Most importantly, we are brought to the understanding that we are transgressing God's laws and commandments. This is the Spirit which leads us to start literally fearing the Lord our God for who He is. In the book of Job, we are told:

### **Job 28:28 New King James Version**

*<sup>28</sup>And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.'*"

The fear of the Lord is to depart from all our evil deeds against the laws and commandments of God. This in effect is wisdom. To break it down even further, consider this passage of Scripture:

### **Psalms 34:11-16 New King James Version**

*<sup>11</sup>Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good? <sup>13</sup>Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. <sup>14</sup>Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. <sup>15</sup>The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. <sup>16</sup>The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

The eyes of the Lord we read in verse fifteen is the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord comprises of two elements; to watch the door of our mouths and to depart from evil. Not just departing, or rather to stop doing evil works, but also to start doing good according to God's laws and commandments which is righteousness. We must change what proceeds from our mouths, which means we must take control of our thoughts. Deceit and evil should not be heard in our speech. We have been advised to seek peace and pursue it.

### **Proverbs 3:7-8 New King James Version**

*<sup>7</sup>Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

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Once again, we are given the same meaning. The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. Evil is the transgression of God's laws and commandments. When we transgress any of God's laws and commandments, it is an act of evil against the Lord and wickedness against both the Lord our God and the person we have committed a trespass against.

### **Proverbs 8:12-14** New King James Version

*<sup>12</sup> "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion. <sup>13</sup> The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*

*<sup>14</sup> Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.*

We should no longer be in any doubt on the true meaning of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, and a perverse mouth. From these passages of Scripture, we can see it clearly states that the fear of the Lord is when we come to the knowledge of God and acknowledge the awesome majesty of our God and Father who created all things. This is what should lead us to repentance, which is to depart from all our evil works. We must be willing to change our minds to the effect of totally submitting to our God and creator's authority.

### **Isaiah 55:1-7** New King James Version

*<sup>1</sup> "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. <sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David. <sup>4</sup> Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. <sup>5</sup> Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you." <sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*

The fear of the Lord is to forsake the way of wickedness and the thoughts of unrighteousness. Thereafter, we are to seek the Lord while He can be found. This is a sobering statement

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because there comes a time when the Lord will not be merciful to those who diligently seek Him. Most importantly, God's mercy is free to those who seek Him, but there is a prerequisite. We must forsake the ways of this world and the thoughts of unrighteousness. These are the conditions for repentance. In the book of Romans, we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

### **Romans 12:1-3 New King James Version**

*<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. <sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

The fear of the Lord is not to conform to the ways of this world but to renew our minds to the ways, the precepts, judgements, and statutes of the Kingdom of God and to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. We must become holy which is doing the works of righteousness and be ready to do the will of God. This is pleasing to God. Most importantly, we must live by faith.

### **Hebrews 11:6 New King James Version**

*<sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

It is crystal clear that without faith it is impossible to please God. The fear of the Lord is understanding who God is, and thereafter, we must acknowledge the fact that God is above all. Most importantly, we must recognise that our God is our Father who is very close by, and He is the Creator of all things. If we do not understand the concept of honour and respect which we should have towards our physical parents, the transfer to start honouring and respecting God who is our true Father will not come easily. It must come from deep within our hearts, the womb of our thoughts, the seed of our will. It is only after we realise the truth about who God is, then will we be able to sincerely repent of our sins, which is to depart from evil.

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### **Isaiah 66:1-4 New King James Version**

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"<sup>2</sup> For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

<sup>3</sup> "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,<sup>4</sup> So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight."

This passage of Scripture epitomises the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is to be of a humble and repentant spirit, with sincere remorse towards God because of our rebellion and transgressions of his laws and commandments. We are to be petrified of Him and tremble at His word. Some will say being petrified before God is too strong because God loves us. God loves us but if we do not understand who the Lord our God is from a deeper perspective, we will not obey Him. None of us have seen God at any time because our God has chosen to remain invisible during this age. The only truth we have apart from His creation, is His word which has integrity.

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## THE BENEFITS OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Are there any benefits for us to live a life in fear of the Lord our God? Do we have to respect and tremble before the Lord our God? The answer to these questions is yes, absolutely. The fear of the Lord is the foundation, the first step of any journey to the Kingdom of God. If we do not fear God, we will have no part in Him. When we speak of the fear of the Lord, we are talking about a literal fear, a dread which makes us tremble before the Lord. Not just being respectful and show reverence towards God but a deep dread, a literal fear that comes from the depths of our heart, which will course us to fall on our faces before the Lord as we see by the examples of the prophets in the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah is an example of one who was petrified of the Lord and we are given reasons why:

### **Isaiah 6:1-7** New King James Version

<sup>1</sup> *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said:*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”*

<sup>4</sup> *And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.*

<sup>5</sup> *So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”*

<sup>6</sup> *Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.”*

The prophet Isaiah was petrified of the Lord because he knew he was a sinner and lived amongst sinners. If his sin was not purged by the seraphim, the prophet Isaiah would have been truly undone. None of us can stand before our God because of our impurities. The prophet Ezekiel had a similar experience in the presence of the Lord:

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## **Ezekiel 1:26-28 New King James Version**

*<sup>26</sup> And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. <sup>27</sup> Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the colour of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.*

The prophet Ezekiel fell on his face because he was afraid, terrified in the presence of the Lord. Just being in the presence of the Lord must have petrified him, but there was also a deep fear and respect of who the Lord is, and the knowledge of the fact that we are not worthy to be in the presence of the mighty God because he was a man. So, what are the benefits of fearing God?

In the book of Proverbs chapter one, we are given a clear understanding of the benefit of having a literal fear of the Lord which is expounded in other Scriptures:

## **Proverbs 1:1-6 New King James Version**

*<sup>1</sup> The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:*

*<sup>2</sup> To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,*

*<sup>3</sup> To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity;*

*<sup>4</sup> To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion—*

*<sup>5</sup> A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,*

*<sup>6</sup> To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.*

For us to be able to attain to what has been listed in Proverbs chapter one, verses two to six, which is, to know wisdom and instruction, to teach a young man knowledge and discretion, to give prudence to the simple, to understand a proverb and an enigma begin with what has been given in verse seven:

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## **Proverbs 1:7 New King James Version**

*<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

If you were ever in doubt about where the journey to the Kingdom of God begins, it is right here with these few words which carry a wealth of information and meaning. Eternal life begins here. Regardless of what we do or say, if there is no fear of the Lord in us, we are certainly a non-starter. The fear of the Lord is the absolute prerequisite to acquire wisdom, understanding and knowledge. This passage of Scripture clearly states that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge about the Lord. In other words, the benefit of the fear of the Lord is the fact that we will be given knowledge of the truth. There is another passage of Scripture that states:

## **Job 28:27-28 New King James Version**

*<sup>27</sup> Then He saw wisdom and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.*

*<sup>28</sup> And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.' "*

It is interesting when we understand the fact that, when we apply the principles of life, only after will we reap the benefits. When we have the fear of the Lord, we will be given wisdom and understanding. First and foremost, we fear God. This leads us to depart from evil. In other words, we will repent, turning away from transgressing God's laws and commandments. The implementation of God's laws and commandments in our lives is wisdom. The Lord will then open our understanding to His word. This is the sequence, and it begins with the fear of the Lord. The benefit is that we get to understand the truth which sets us free from the bondage of this present evil world.

## **Psalms 111:10 New King James Version**

*<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.*

If we do not fear God, we will not turn from a sinful way of life. It is the fear of the Lord that leads us to repentance, when we acknowledge the fact that we have transgressed God's laws and commandments. After repenting, we must start keeping God's laws and commandments,

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this is wisdom. As we become doers of the word, not hearers only, the Lord our God will open our understanding to the truth.

There is another benefit of the fear of the Lord. When we literally fear God and depart from evil, our health improves significantly:

### **Proverbs 3:5-8** New King James Version

*<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. <sup>7</sup>Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

Trusting the Lord with all our hearts can only be possible if we forsake our thoughts and ways by repenting and renewing of our minds. As the Lord has said, it will be health to our flesh, and strength to our bones, we will be blessed with good health. The question we must ask ourselves is, do we believe what the Lord has said?

### **Deuteronomy 5:28-29** New King James Version

*<sup>28</sup>“Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. <sup>29</sup>Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!*

Some might ask are there any benefits to fear the Lord our God and to be obedient to His laws and commandments today? We have been given the answer in this passage of Scripture. If we fear God and keep all His commandments, it will be well for us and for our children in the world today and forever, which implies it will qualify us to be in the Kingdom of God. The ultimate benefit of the fear of the Lord is the fact that, the Lord will give us His holy Spirit:

### **Acts 2:38-39** New King James Version

*<sup>38</sup>Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”*

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If we are not terrified of God, we will never repent of our sins. The ultimate benefit of fearing God is to have the same Spirit that called for light, and there was light in the book of Genesis chapter one dwelling in us. If we do not have the Spirit of God, we are not one of His. When we fear the Lord and sincerely repent of our sins, the Lord our God has promised to give us His Spirit.

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## CONCLUSION

The question is, “who is God to you,” God has a profound implication on how we relate to the Lord our God. If we consider the Lord our God to be our friend, it is only a matter of time before we become complaisant, which will lead us astray from the path the Lord has prescribed for us. Let the Lord call us His friends instead of assuming we are God’s friends. There are criteria that qualifies us to be God’s friend. A servant does not know what his master is doing, but a friend knows what the other is doing.

### **John 15:13-16** New King James Version

*<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

The other criteria is in the book of Genesis concerning Abraham who we all know God called His friend:

### **Genesis 26:1-5** New King James Version

*<sup>1</sup> There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. <sup>3</sup> Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup> And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”*

If we do whatever the Lord has commanded, it will, according to these passages of Scripture, qualify us as a friend of the Lord and the Lord will give us understanding of what He is doing. But the journey to become the friend of the Lord starts at a given point, and as the Lord has

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said, it begins with the fear of the Lord. What is the fear of the Lord? The prophet Isaiah exemplified the meaning of the fear of the Lord when he said:

### **Isaiah 6:5** New King James Version

*<sup>5</sup> So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."*

The prophet Isaiah, a man close to God was petrified when he saw the Lord our God to the extent that he thought it was the end of his life. What is our reaction towards God? Are we literally afraid of the Lord or do we treat the Lord our God like we treat our fellow human beings? We must remember that God is our creator. God is not like us. His ways and thoughts are as far as the heaven is from the earth from our ways and thoughts. If we can measure the distance between heaven and earth, it will put this statement into perspective.

As it was mentioned earlier in this study, the fear of the Lord is a facet of the Spirit of God which leads us to the knowledge of the one and only true and ever living God, and it brings us to acknowledge His power and might. It also brings us to the knowledge of the fact that we have fallen short of His glory. This is the Spirit of God that leads us to the process of repentance. But we must be of a broken and contrite spirit.

### **Isaiah 66:1-3** New King James Version

*<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? <sup>2</sup> For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. <sup>3</sup> "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,*

The fear of the Lord as we can see is to be literally afraid of God and tremble at His word. If we do not have a literal fear of God, it will be practically impossible for us to obey His commandments. We will not tremble at His word. This fear begins with the respect and reverence we have for our earthly parents. But the Lord our God is our true Father because our souls belong to Him. Without the fear of our physical parents, we will find it impossible to assign what we do not have to start fearing the Lord our God.

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The fear of the Lord is a facet of the Spirit of God that leads us to be terrified of the Lord our God, enough to cause us to tremble at His word. The ultimate benefit of the fear of the Lord is list in this passage of Scripture:

### **Proverbs 1:2-7** New King James Version

*<sup>2</sup>To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, <sup>3</sup>To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; <sup>4</sup>To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion— <sup>5</sup>A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, <sup>6</sup>To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. <sup>7</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

From this passage of Scripture, it is clear for all to see that, for us to attain to what is listed from verses two through to verse six, begins with the fear of the Lord. What does it mean to us today? To us it is the first step of our journey to the Kingdom of God which is:

To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,

To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgement, and equity;

To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion

A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.

The journey into the Kingdom of God and eternal life begins with the fear of the Lord. When we literally fear God and tremble at His word, only then will the Lord give us His holy Spirit. We cannot be passive about the fear of the Lord. It must come from deep within our hearts, something we cannot take for granted. It is through the Spirit of the Lord our God that the Lord rewards us with wisdom, understanding, and the knowledge that is capable of saving our souls.