

## Fear of God

*Please note: this document is parked under the New Testament banner simply for convenience.*

### Introduction

The document at hand is a direct consequence of the one before it entitled **Fear (Not)** also posted on this homepage. The Introduction there mentions how the verses in that text prime us for the document at hand which naturally contains far more material <sup>1</sup>.

There are oodles upon oodles of references to fear, chiefly the verbs *yare'* and *phobeo*, Hebrew and Greek (Old and New Testaments) respectively. Variations on these, of course, are noted. Not all verses relative to fear are posted. The goal is to present those associated with how fear relates to God. Hopefully reading these scriptural verses along with the brief notations will present a better understanding of this important biblical reality. In that way “fear of the Lord” will be easier to put into practice.

There are many books, articles and sermons explaining or trying to explain what this fear is about as it pertains to God. However, the English word (both noun and verb) remains less than desirable and admittedly is difficult to present as well as to accept. It conjures up a whole array of thoughts, emotions and the like which are hard to dissipate. Hopefully this document makes a small contribution in alleviating these anxieties.

As noted in virtually every Introduction related to biblical texts on this homepage, the excerpts presented here are to be read in the spirit of *lectio divina*. Thus they are a kind of outline or better, a guideline, to assist a person be disposed to God's presence. Should anyone be seeking information about the excerpts themselves, they won't be found here. Instead, the purpose of listing these verses is to dispose the reader to be open and hence more docile to the working of the Holy Spirit. Nothing more is expected. To be sure, that is the highest of all expectations.

All biblical excerpts are from the **RSV** which includes the Old and New Testaments followed by the Apocrypha. References are made to frequently reoccurring words,

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<sup>1</sup>The document has three divisions: Old Testament, New Testament and Apocrypha.

that is, as to when one was referred to last. Some of the most common ones such as *yare'*, *phobos* and occasionally *shamah* (to fear and to hear) aren't listed.

## Old Testament

**Gen 20.11: Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, "There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.""**

The context is Abraham having admitted to King Abimelech that he pretended Sarah is his sister, having done this to protect her against any unwanted advances. Abraham thought that Abimelech's kingdom (*maqom* or place) lacked *yir'ah*, unaware that the Lord had appeared to him in a dream and promised to restore Sarah to her husband. In vs. 7 the Lord identifies Abraham to Abimelech as a prophet. It turned out that Abimelech did have this *yir'ah* manifested not only through his dream but especially through his repentance. Since he was king and such a position is absolute, *yir'ah* has the possibility of filling his domain or *maqom*, something that Abraham would find close to unbelievable.

**Gen 22.12: Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.**

Words addressed to Abraham by an angel or messenger (*mal'ak*) as he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac. Actually this unidentified *mal'ak* was standing by all the time waiting for the right moment to intervene. Note the small, infinitesimal gap between the *mal'ak* knowing (*yadah* implies knowledge in the intimate sense) and Abraham fearing the Lord. The small *hatah* or "now" is important insofar as it unifies *yadah* and *yare'*.

Abraham's fear of God compelled him not to withhold, *chasak* (also as to refrain) his son. His willingness is emphasized by Isaac being called not just his son but his only son, *yachyd*. This, of course, makes the scene all the more poignant.

**Gen 31.42: If the God of my father, the God Abraham and the Fear of Isaac had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.**

These words are uttered by Jacob to Laban when he had fled with the latter's two daughters (Leah and Rachel) after having put in twenty years of labor. Jacob

associates God with his father and Abraham but when it comes to Isaac *Pachad* as a formal title is used. This noun connotes dread as well as awe. A footnote in the RSV says that *pachad* could infer “kinsman,” an old epithet for the God of the first two fathers. Jacob uses all three as being “on my side” which reads literally as “to (*l*-) me.” Such protection took the form of not being empty-handed, *reyqam* (also as vain, to no purpose).

Jacob doesn't hesitate to remind Laban that God (again, as ‘my father’ and as connected with Abraham) saw his affliction and labor, the reason for his being rebuked, *kakach*, also as to argue down, to refute. Reference is to a dream Laban had when God warned him “Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad” [Gn 31.24].

**Gen 31.53: “The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.**

The context is Laban erecting a pillar of witness (*hed*) between him and Jacob so that both will remain within their respective territories and avoid future conflict. He wishes to cement this further by associating God with Nahor, brother of Abraham. As for their common father, this could hint even further back, that is, to Noah and the descendants of his son Shem. And so Laban makes Jacob aware of this lineage as a common bond between them where God passes judgment, *shaphat* also to bind by an oath. This pleased Jacob, so right away he swore by the *Pahad* of his father Isaac mentioned here for the second time.

**Gen 42.18: On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God.”**

Joseph as second after Pharaoh is speaking incognito with his brothers in order to test their sincerity, even having put them in prison for three days where they could mull over their past actions. Next he commands them to return home and come back with their youngest brother. As surety, Joseph confines Simeon in jail. Although the brothers are unaware they're dealing with the brother whom they had sold into slavery, they were heartened to some degree when Joseph said that he fears God. In other words, here is the second most powerful man in Egypt who hints at having something in common with them despite the fact that they had been delinquent in such matters.

**Ex 1.17: But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them but let the male children live.**

The Hebrew midwives were of strong character, especially after the prohibition to kill male babies and hence set an example of courage and resistance for their fellow countrymen. It was they who were essential for keeping alive their faith in God through some four hundred years in Egypt. Although the midwives aren't mentioned later, chances are they continued with their hidden though vital role in encouraging the Israelites as they journeyed through the Sinai wilderness for forty years.

**Ex 9.20: Then he who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his slaves and cattle flee into the houses.**

This and the next verse form one continuous sentence. The verse at hand has an association between *yare'* and *davar*, word (as expression, not a mere utterance). Interestingly it pertains to an Egyptian in service of Pharaoh and is reference to the plague of hail. On further reflection, this shouldn't come as a surprise. The Israelites had been in Egypt some four hundred years and during that extended time were bound to win over some Egyptians even though it isn't recounted in any biblical text.

As for the other half of this sentence comprised of vs. 21, there's the Egyptian official who failed to regard the *davar* of the Lord which is rendered literally as "did not place to his heart (*lev*).” Such a lack of placing-in-the-heart results in calamity for this official's slaves and livestock. Chances are that he belonged to those palace functionaries who supported their Pharaoh against Moses.

**Ex 9.30: But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.**

Words addressed by Moses to Pharaoh apparently while the plague of hail was still going on. Note the almost dismissive way Moses relays it, "But as for you" or the conjunctive *v-* (often as 'and' or 'but') joined to '*atah* ('you'), literally "and you." This tragedy forced the king's hand to let the Israelites leave Egypt, but Moses knew (*yadah* is used in this verse) all too well it was in word only. Nevertheless, Moses agreed to beseech the Lord to bring the plague to an end. As for Moses, he was vindicated when in a few verses later Pharaoh went back on his word.

**Ex 14.31: And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.**

The conjunctive *v-* is noted in the last section and plays a kind of behind-the-scenes roll in the text at hand. That is to say, many verses as in Exodus are prefaced with the conjunctive which serves to connect an event before as well as after in a manner difficult to express in translation. Some connections are more dramatic than others as is the case here. “And” introduces the dramatic crossing of the Red Sea rendered here literally as “the hand the great” followed by the preposition *b-*, “in the Egyptians” as though for emphasis and thoroughness.

As for the people fearing the Lord, this part of the verse also begins with the conjunctive *v-*. The same applies with their believing in him as well as Moses, two examples of *b-*. The verb is ‘*aman*’ which connotes a sense of abiding trust.

**Ex 18.21: Moreover, choose able men from all the people such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.**

The conjunctive *v-* is translated here as “moreover.” Moses’ father-in-law Jethro is speaking, having observed the stress Moses had been under which, if not alleviated, would bring ruin upon both him and the Israelites. The advice? That Moses choose men to assist him, literally “men-strength,” *chyl* intimating integrity and uprightness. So here *chyl* has a direct relationship with *yare’* and therefore God, a unity meant to be passed on to the people for their benefit.

Furthermore, such “men-strength” and their fear of God spills over into them as being both trustworthy and hating bribes. The former is the noun ‘*emeth*’ (literally, ‘men of truth’) and the latter, *batsah* also as unjust gain.

**Ex 20.20: And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin.”**

The occasion is the Lord’s manifestation on Mount Sinai through thunder and lightning. Note the two forms, verb and noun. The former is with regard to the testing at hand, *nasah* often used as in a trial. The latter is that the people have literally “fear on (*hal-*) your faces” which is as intimate as you can get. The aim? That the people do not sin, *chata’* as to miss the mark. However, things would prove different

as when Aaron fashioned a golden calf: “What did this people do to you that you have brought a great sin upon them” [32.20]?

**Lev 19.14: You shall not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.**

This and the four subsequent verses from Leviticus present *yare'* in the context of practical situations, the first showing respect for those who are deaf and blind. The conjunctive *v-* translated as “but” is the connector which bridges the two. As for *yare'*, the preposition *min-* is prefaced to God and reads literally, “you shall fear from your God.” For emphasis and implying there’s no reason for questioning this, we have the simple statement, “I am the Lord.”

**Lev 19.32: You shall rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.**

Here *yare'* with respect to the Lord is tied in with honoring an old man, the verb *hadar* also as to adorn. As with the previous verse as well as the next, the words “I am the Lord” implies that this *hadar* cannot be violated. Should it happen, a connection with the past would be lost, thereby diminishing the current generation.

**Lev 25.17: You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God.**

The connection here with *yare'* is not doing wrong in the general sense, the verb *yanah* also to suppress or to oppress. As in 19.14 the conjunctive *v-* is translated as “but,” the link between (no) *yanah* and *yare'*. Note the difference of this definitive statement with the previous two: “I am the Lord your God.”

**Lev 25.36: Take no interest from him or increase, but fear your God; that your brother may live beside you.**

A third connection where the conjunctive *v-* as “but” is used. Here it’s between refraining from being greedy with money owed and *yare'*. This command goes even further. *Yare'* is connected with one’s brother (presumably the person in debt), thereby allowing him to life literally “with (*him-*) you.”

**Lev 25.43: You shall not rule over him with harshness but shall fear your God.**

The fourth and final connection in Leviticus of the conjunctive *v-* between not lording it over the person in debt and *yare'*. *Radah* and *perek* are the opposite to *yare'*, the verb meaning to tread and the noun which also means oppression, tyranny.

**Dt 4.10: How on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, “Gather the people to me that I may let them hear my words so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth and that they may teach their children so.”**

This verses forms part of the conclusion of Moses' first address where he reminds the people of what the Lord had communicated through him for their benefit. It is part of a larger sentence beginning with vs. 9 which has the crucial verbs *shamar* used twice: “take heed” or to keep watch, to guard and “keep” with the adverb *me'od* which implies excessiveness. I.e., this double *shamar* (the second with *nephesh* or soul) is with the prohibition not to forget what happened on a specific day, namely, Moses' first encounter with the Lord at Mount Horeb in Ex 3.1. The verb in vs. 10 is *hamad*, to stand in the sense of being firmly in position. Moses represented the nation, hence the second person plural. After all, he is the one speaking here.

The Lord first bids Moses to gather the people, *qahal* often used as in a solemn assembly of the entire nation Israel. Next comes the conjunctive *v-* translated as “that” which leads to first hearing the Lord's words (*shamah* and *davar*; cf. Ex 9.20) followed immediately by learning to fear him, *lamad* also to teach with respect to *yare'*. *Lamad* is to be transmitted to the children of the current generation, ensuring that *yare'* will continue into the future.

**Dt 5.29: Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments that it might go well with them and with their children forever!**

This verse follows upon the heels of the Ten Commandments and expresses a certain doubt coupled with a desire concerning Israel. Note the eight occurrences of the preposition *l-* (basically as ‘to’) where the long, drawn-out nature of this letter gives expression to this: *levavam*, *lahem*, *leyir'eh*, *lishmor*, *lemahan*, *lahem*, *livneyhem* and *leholam* (to their hearts, to them, to fear, to keep, in order that, to them, to their sons and forever). That is to say, the Lord wants from the people a mind (*lev* or heart) literally “to them to fear me.” And so in this verse there's a close connection between *yare'* and *shamar* (cf. Dt 4.10).

**Dt 6.2: that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son by keeping all his statutes and his commandments which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.**

This verse is part of a larger sentence beginning with vs. 1. What precedes *lemahan* or “that” is Moses presenting from the Lord a commandment, statutes and ordinances (*mitsvah*, *choq* and *mishpat*). More accurately, he has in mind teaching (*lamad*) the people not where they are presently (the Sinai desert) but in the land they are to possess, *yarash* also to inherit.

Vs. 2 also mentions *choq* and *mitsvah* or statutes and commandments, the latter plural compared with singular in the preceding verse which the current and future generations (son and son's son) are to *shamar* (cf. Dt 5.29). There follows a second *lemahan* (‘that’) the days of the present generation and by implication future ones may be prolonged, *arak* also as to extend, to stretch out.

**Dt 6.13: You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and swear by his name.**

This verse speaks of the primacy of *yare'* as well as its union with *havad* and *shavah*, to serve and to swear concerning the Lord's name or *shem*. This noun occurs rather often with regard to *yare'* and refers to the divine *shem* (cf. Dt 6.13) or *YHWH* as revealed by the Lord to Moses: “I am who am” [Ex 3.14].

**Dt 6.24: And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always, that he might preserve us alive as at this day.**

Here all the statutes or *choq* (cf. Dt 6.2) are with a view toward fearing the Lord. Note how closely this *yare'* is bound up with the people's good or *tov*. The preposition *l-*, often as “to,” is rendered as “that” and aimed at keeping “us” alive as at present, this also applicable to future generations.

**Dt 8.6: So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.**

*Shamar* and *mitsvah* (cf. Dt 6.2 for both) are practiced not by being stationary, if you will, but by walking (*halak*, to go) in the Lord's ways, *derek* often as a journey which here is associated with *yare'*.

**Dt 10.12: And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you but to fear the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

*Vehatah* or “and now” signals the end of Moses recounting how he had stayed on the mountain to receive divine revelation. It can be taken as a way of passing on that experience to the people which is put as a rhetorical question spilling into the next verse. *Sha'al* is the verb to require as well as to ask and is related directly to *yare'*...not just *yare'* plain and simple but *yare'* in the heart and soul, *lev* and *nephesh* (cf. Ex 9.20 and Dt 4.10 respectively).

**Dt 10.20: You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear.**

*Yare'* is mentioned first by reason of its importance from which follows *havah* (cf. Dt 6.13) and *davaq* (to cling, glue-like) and *shavah*. The preposition *b-* (in) is prefaced to the second and third verbs.

**Dt 13.4: You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave to him.**

Six verbs in one verse: *halak*, *yare'*, *shamar*, *shamah*, *havah* and *davaq* (to go, to fear, to hear, to serve and to cling). *Davaq* is the only verb with a preposition, *b-* or literally “in him.” Each has a varying degree of intimacy which works with the rest, that unity forming the identity of the nation of Israel.

**Dt 13.11: And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.**

Reference is with regard to the worship of alien gods. The entire nation of Israel is to both *shamah* (cf. Dt 13.4) and *yare'*, the two acting as one (hear and fear). This will prevent them from doing wickedness (*rah*, evil) in their midst, *qerev* applicable to the very center. Note the importance of “never again” or *lo'-yosiphu*, literally as “not they shall increase.” It's in reference to previous occasions when Israel had engaged in such illicit worship.

**Dt 14.23: And before the Lord your God in the place which he will choose to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine and of your oil and the firstlings of your herd and flock; that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.**

Reference is to Israel's future dwelling in the land of Canaan, the choice of which isn't up to the people but to the Lord, *bachar* also as to prove, to examine. This is an appropriate verb because the Lord intends to have it as a place (*maqom*, cf. Gn 20.11) for his name to dwell, *shem* and *shakan*. In that *maqom* Israel will partake of its tithe, *mahsar* from the noun *hasar* or number ten.

The key word here is *lemahan* or "in order that" which leads to *lamad* or learning, that in turn to *yare'*.

**Dt 17.13: And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.**

The context is acting presumptuously or *zud*, also to be proud, with *shamah* (cf. Dt 13.12) and *yare'* being the remedy. The key word is *hod* with the negative, "never again."

**Dt 17.19: And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them.**

The Lord foresaw that Israel will choose itself a king to be like other nations (cf. 1Sam 8.4+), this to his great disappointment. "With him" refers to this future king and the *Torah* mentioned in the previous verse, it being a constant guide and companion. He is not simply to read it but literally "read in (*b-*) it," the verb *qara'* also as to call out, to call by name. I.e., *qara'* suggests a reading aloud for the profit of those listening. Again, *lemahan* ('that;' cf. Dt 14.23) functions as a transition leading from *qara'* to *yare'* and then on to a *shamar* (cf. Dt 13.4) or keeping (as a watchman) the *davar* (cf. Dt 4.10) of the *Torah* along with the *choq* (statutes; cf. Dt 6.24). As for the *choq*, they are to be done, *hasah*.

**Dt 19.20: And the rest shall hear and fear and shall never again commit any such evil among you.**

"The rest" is in the context of two witnesses required when a person is charged with committing an offense. Everyone is to be aware of this even if not involved directly. They are to *shamah* (cf. Dt 17.13) and *yare'* (hear and fear) and not commit (*hasah*, to do; cf. Dt 17.19) any evil or *rah* (cf. Dt 13.11) in the midst of the people, *qerev* as in Dt 13.11.

**Dt 21.21: Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel shall hear and fear.**

Reference is to a woman who had acted as a harlot. Stoning is equivalent to purging such an evil (*rah*, cf. Dt 19.20), the verb being *bahar* also as to take away, to remove. Note the use of *qerev* (cf. Dt 19.20), implying the very center or very life of the community. Here *shamah* (cf. Dt 19.20) and *yare'* pertain to the entire nation with regard to this.

**Dt 25.18: how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary and cut off at your rear all who lagged behind you; and he did not fear God.**

This verse forms part of a sentence with the preceding verse mentioning Amalek who had attacked the Israelites not long after they left Egypt (cf. Ex 17.8+). The Exodus text does not recount the people being faint and weary, let alone not fearing God. However, the Israelites defeated Amalek's forces as long as Aaron and Hur supported his outstretched arms. His lack of fearing God is mirrored in Ex 17.16: "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

**Dt 28.58: If you are not careful to do all the words of this law which are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awful name, the Lord your God.**

The "if" beginning this verse spills over to the next one which shows what will happen should the people show no care (*shamar* cf. Dt 17.19) for the *davar* of the *Torah* (cf. Dt 17.19). It is with regard to *yare'* of the divine name or *shem* (cf. Dt 14.23), this noun also applicable to memory compared with the actual presence of the Lord. Here it's described as glorious and awful, *kavad* and *yare'*.

Vs. 59 continues this extended sentence and begins with "then," the conjunctive *v-* showing the close connection between the failure regarding *shamar* and the dire consequences.

**Dt 31.12: Assemble the people, men, women and little ones and the sojourner within your towns that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God and be careful to do all the words of this law.**

This verse is within the context of Moses addressing the people shortly before his death. The verb *qahal* (cf. Dt 4.10) as to assemble is apt in the case at hand, that is, a formal gathering of the entire community which includes the sojourner, *ger* being a

non-Israelite who may have joined the people either in Egypt or in the Sinai wilderness. The sequence which by now is quite familiar runs as follows: *shamah* -> *lamad* -> *yare'* -> *shamar* -> *hasah* (hear -> learn -> fear -> be careful -> to do). All have as their aim the *davar* of the *Torah* (cf. Dt 28.58).

**Dt 31.13: and that their children who have not known it may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess.**

This verse is a continuation of the previous one, the two being one extended sentence. The *shamah*, *lamad* and *yare'* (hearing, learning and fear) are to be transmitted to the children of the current generation. That generation pertains to those who had been born and raised in the Sinai wilderness which knew those who had left Egypt. As for the new generation which has had some experience of the Sinai wanderings, shortly it will leave it for Canaan. They will enter the land and possess it, *yarash* (cf. Dt 6.12) also as to inherit or technically re-inherit it since the Israelites had left it some four hundred years earlier.

**Jos 4.23-24: 23) For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea which he dried up for us until we passed over, 24) so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty; that you may fear the Lord your God forever.**

“For you” reads literally as “from your faces” suggesting that the Lord did it for all the Israelites to see (Joshua speaking these words). There’s an obvious connection between this incident and Israel crossing the Red Sea under Moses’ leadership. *Lemahan* (cf. Dt 17.19) beginning vs. 24 (“so that”) is the crucial word, for this event was not intended for Israel (not Egypt, for that matter) alone. Rather, it is a sign for all peoples in order to know (*yadah* [cf. Ex 9.30] often implies intimate knowledge) that the Lord’s hand is mighty, *chazaq* as in Dt 31.8 and suggests being firm, even hard.

Knowledge of this divine intervention is for “you” (i.e., Israel) to fear the Lord not just now but forever. Unfortunately that won’t be true for many Israelites who will cave into worshiping divinities native to Canaan. As for such knowledge at the present, barely an Israelite was alive who had crossed the Red Sea some forty years ago. Between then and now Moses must have told everyone to put in some kind of written form their experiences so as to have it available as a kind of common history. In this way memory of the Exodus will be present not just now at the Jordan River

but for future generations. Joshua took this clue from Moses and must have asked the people to do the same once they had crossed the Jordan.

As for the intimate *yadah* noted already, it's shared and solidified among the Israelites first. Then as Chapter Five says, the kings beyond the Jordan get word of this second Exodus which caused fear. From them this *yadah* spread quickly to surrounding nations and later to "all the peoples of the earth."

**Jos 24.14: Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord.**

This verse begins with the untranslated conjunctive *v-* which shows the close connection between Joshua's address to the people shortly before he died. Note the three uses of the verb *havad* (cf. Dt 13.4), to serve. The first has it with *yare'* and is located, if you will, *b-* or "in" sincerity and faithfulness, *tamym* being an adjective meaning complete, sound and the noun *'emeth* as well as truth.

Joshua also bids the people to put away (*sur* also as to turn aside) any gods their fathers had served both beyond the River and in Egypt, this second use of *havad* associated with a negative sense as being in servitude to these divinities. Both places imply a lengthy period of time: the former in Mesopotamia and the latter involving four hundred years. Thus Israel had been exposed to foreign gods for most of its existence. The third use of *havad* is like the first, here given to emphasize the contrast between the Lord and the gods.

**1Sam 12.14: If you will fear the Lord and serve him and hearken to his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well.**

Here Samuel speaks favorably about a king compared with 8.7 where the Lord takes the people's desire for a king as a personal affront. So it seems that the Lord has come around and acquiesced to their wish. Note the condition laid out by two uses of "if." The first involves *yare'*, *havad*, *shamah* (cf. Jos 24.14 and Dt 31.13 respectively) and (not) *marah* (fear, do, hear and [not] rebel). *Yare'* and *havad* pertain directly to the Lord himself; *shamah* applies to his voice or *qol*. *Marah* applies literally to the Lord's mouth or *py*.

The second “if” is with regard to both the people (‘you’) and the Lord as one following the Lord or literally “after the Lord.”

“It will be well” is missing in the Hebrew text which has “after the Lord your God.”

**1Sam 12.18: So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.**

This verse occurs after Samuel had addressed the people in the last verse beginning with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “so.” The verb *qara’* (cf. Dt 17.19) or to call is used with the preposition *b-*, literally as “called in the Lord.” The second conjunctive (‘and’) shows the immediacy between this *qara’ b-* and the Lord’s response through thunder and rain. *Yare’* is the people’s response, this with the adverb *me’od* (cf. Dt 4.10) connoting excessiveness.

**1Sam 12.24: Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you.**

*‘Ak* translated as “only” is almost a desperate appeal by Samuel to the people at the conclusion of his address. It has the now familiar combination of *yare’* and *havad* (cf. 1Sam 12.14), this time amplified with the noun *‘emeth* (faithfulness, truth) prefaced with the preposition *b-* (‘in’). Immediately follows another use of the same preposition prefaced to *lev* (cf. Dt 10.12), heart.

The verb *rahah* or “consider” translates more commonly as to see. By seeing past deeds, hopefully their memory will project into the future and inform the people. Unfortunately for the most part it turned out otherwise.

**2Kg 4.1: Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant feared the Lord, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.**

Just by its pronunciation the verb *tsahaq* or to cry out connotes distress. This woman appeals to Elisha’s knowledge of her husband as fearing the Lord which seems to have no effect on what the creditor is about to do. However, succeeding verses have Elisha multiplying oil which will pay off this woman’s debts.

**2Kg 17.25: And at the beginning of their dwelling there they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among the which killed some of them.**

This verse introduces a frequent number of references concerning the verb *yare'* for the rest of Chapter Seventeen. Those whom the king of Assyria (Sargon) had brought to settle in the cities of Samaria lacked fear with respect to the Lord. That made him send lions to kill some of them.

**2Kg 17.28: So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel and taught them how they should fear the Lord.**

This unidentified priest was sent by King Sargon to teach the people how to fear the Lord. The verb to teach is *yarah*, similar in sound to *yare'*, and fundamentally means to cast, to shoot as well as to point out. Details of this *yarah-yare'* aren't given though this single priest was tasked with a huge burden, that is, in an environment where worship of alien gods is pervasive. This is indicated by the next verse beginning with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “but:” but “every nation still made gods of its own.”

**2Kg 17.32: They also feared the Lord and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.**

The conjunctive *v-* translated as “also” is key insofar as it refers to the larger context where worship of alien gods is pervasive as noted in the previous verse as well as here, literally as “doing for them in the house of the high places.”

**2Kg 17.33: So they feared the Lord but also served their own gods after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried.**

Despite the *yare'* of the previous verse, the people served their own gods; rather, they were duplicitous in that they had *yare'* for the Lord and were slaves (the implied meaning of *havad* here; cf. 1Sam 12.24) to their own gods. Apparently the Israelites fashioned these gods in imitation of the nations in which they had been exiled. This implies that until then, they were frustrated at not being able to reproduce images of the Lord.

**2Kg 17.34: To this day they do according to the former manner. They do not fear the Lord, and they do not follow the statutes or the ordinances or the law or the commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob whom he named Israel.**

“To this day” is a kind of insult tinged with disgust concerning the people’s worship of foreign divinities. This verse continues from the previous one as noted, “former manner” being the noun *mishpat* fundamentally as judgment and again as “ordinances.” The verb *hasah* (cf. Dt 31.12) is translated as “do (not) follow and pertains to *choq* and *mishpat* (already mentioned) of the *Torah* (cf. Dt 31.12). Here *Torah* is given special status by reason of the Lord commanding (*tsava*’) the children of Jacob whom he named Israel. This is in reference to Jacob’s change of names when he had wrestled with that unidentified man at night (cf. Gn 32.24+).

**2Kg 17.36: but you shall fear the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm; you shall bow yourselves to him and to him you shall sacrifice.**

This verse is an extended sentence beginning in vs. 35 where the verb *yare*’ is in reference to not fearing other gods and applies here to the Lord. In the preceding verse it is the Lord who is speaking and continues through vs. 39. He reminds the people of a fundamental principle of their religion, memory of the Exodus. Should that be forgotten or neglected, the cohesiveness of the people will dissolve.

**2Kg 17.39: but you shall fear the Lord your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.**

This verse has the concluding words of the Lord begun in vs. 35, “but” or *ky*’ *im-*intended to offset *yare*’ of the Lord with no-*yare*’ of other gods in the previous verse. Note that such *yare*’ of the Lord is conditional: if followed through, he will deliver the people from their enemies, *natsal* fundamentally as to snatch away which implies doing this quickly.

**2Kg 17.41: So these nations feared the Lord and also served their graven images; their children likewise and their children’s children—as their fathers did, so they do to this day.**

This verse reveals a chronic problem...a kind of dilemma with a profound split...among the nations, *goy* applicable to those other than Israel who fear the Lord while *havad* (cf. 2Kg 17.33) or serving (i.e., being subservient to) graven images. Also the *yare*’-*havad* dilemma is applicable to Israel. Thus chronic problem is brought out in this verse with great clarity as infecting future generations: children’s children and “this day.”

**2Chron 6.31: that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land which you gave to our fathers.**

This verse is part of an extended sentence beginning in vs. 28 and continuing through vs. 31, the context being Solomon's prayer with regard to the dedication of the Jerusalem temple. *Yare'* is bound up intimately with walking in the ways of the people (i.e., not God's), *halak* and *derek* (cf. Dt 13.4 and Dt 8.6 respectively). Both are conditional for living in the land of Canaan given originally to Israel's fathers, notably the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The text reads literally, "on the face of the land."

**2Chron 6.33: hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by your name.**

This verse is part of an extended sentence beginning in vs. 32 and continuing through the present one. Interestingly King Solomon includes non-Israelites when asking the Lord to hear (*shamah*) from heaven, his dwelling place or *makon*, also as a foundation or base. Compare it with the Jerusalem temple which in a ways is secondary to the divine *makon* or place of residence.

*Nakry* is the noun for foreigner, uncircumcised Gentiles who can *qara'* (cf. 1Sam 12.18) or call out to the Lord from the temple. Note two uses of *yadah* (cf. Jos 4.23-24), to have intimate knowledge:

- 1) With regard to the Lord's name coupled with fear of him, both on the same plane as the people of Israel.
- 2) Know that King Solomon had built the Jerusalem temple or house, *beyth* having a more personal touch and called by the Lord's name. Also *shem* (cf. Dt 28.58) or name is used twice here.

**2Chron 14.14: And they smote all the cities round about Gerar, for the fear of the Lord was upon them. They plundered all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.**

The context is King Asa defeating Zerah of Ethiopia. Here the noun for fear is *pachad* as in Gn 31.42 and connotes a sense of dread which fits in well with the verse.

**2Chron 17.10: And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat.**

A second used of the noun *pachad* with the preposition *hal-* or upon which, as with the verse beforehand, increases the weight of this fear and dread.

**2Chron 19.7: Now then, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the Lord our God or partiality or taking brides.**

After bidding his people not to judge for man but for God, King Jehoshaphat invokes the *pachad* of the Lord *hal-* ('upon') the people to see it through. They are to take heed (*shamar*, cf. Dt 31.12) with regard to their deeds in order to preclude any perversion of justice along with partiality and taking bribes. As for the first, of these three the noun is *holah* also as iniquity.

**2Chron 19.9: And he charged them: "Thus you shall do in the fear of the Lord, in faithfulness and with your whole heart."**

The context is King Jehoshaphat appointing Levites to give judgment for the Lord. Note the three uses of the preposition *b-* or "in:" *yir'ah* or fear, *'emunah* or faithfulness and *lev* or heart.

**2Chron 20.29: And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel.**

The context is the victory of King Jehoshaphat against Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir. *Pachad* (cf. 2Chron 19.7) used with the preposition *hal-* or "upon." This time *pachad* came when neighboring countries heard that the Lord himself had fought them, not Israel.

**2Chron 26.5: He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah who instructed him in the fear of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.**

Reference is to King Uzziah with the opening words of this verse reading literally as "he was to seek," the verb *darash* fundamentally as to beat, to trample as pertaining to God. Zechariah was responsible for having instructed Uzziah, *byn* which means to understand here with the preposition *b-*, "in the fear of the God."

The words “as long as” are rendered as “in the days” when Uzziah *darash* the Lord, resulting in him prospering or *tsalach*. Such words have an ominous air about them, signaling a good beginning that won’t turn out well.

**Neh 1.11: O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name; and give success to your servant today and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. Now I was cupbearer to the king.**

It is Nehemiah who is speaking in all three references with regard to the book at hand. In the verse he makes three requests:

1) *Qashav* is the adjective for “be attentive” often with regard to listening as is the case at hand. The object is *tephilah* or prayer, more as an entreaty where Nehemiah identifies himself as a *heved* or servant along with those who delight in *yare’* with respect to the Lord’s name, *chaphets* fundamentally as to include.

2) *Tsalach* as in 2Chron 26.5 which has a certain immediacy, “today.”

3) *Rachamym* (plural) or mercy literally “to the face of this man.”

This verse ends with Nehemiah stating his position in the royal court, that is, a butler who both poured and sampled wine for the king.

**Neh 5.9: So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?”**

*Davar* or thing refers to nobles and officials who are exacting interest from those who had been exiled and brought back to Jerusalem. Nehemiah puts the first sentence in no uncertain terms which is followed by a rhetorical questions meant to shame those he’s addressing. Note that Nehemiah uses the phrase “our God” intentionally, to make the officials feel their responsibility directly. Such walking (*halak*, cf. 2Chron 6.31) is to be done in *yir’ah*. In this way nations (*goy*, cf. 2Kg 17.41) which are hostile will withhold their taunts, *cherpah* also as reproach.

**Neh 5.15: The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people and took from them food and wine besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God.**

Nehemiah is referring to former governors over Judah appointed by the Persians. A key word here is *gan* which begins the second sentence, “even.” That is to say, while

it's not unexpected that those in authority abuse it, their misconduct is amplified by allowing those under them to do the same. Nehemiah points out that he did not follow this example due to *yira'h* of God. He is saying this not by way of boasting but to encourage those under his jurisdiction. Perhaps word of this will reach King Artaxerxes who, in turn, will show favor to the Israelites.

**Job: 1.8: And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil?”**

This verse is within the context of a divine assembly where the “sons of God”....let's say angels...are gathered together and form a kind of audience to the dialogue between the Lord and Satan.

In the previous verse the Lord asked Satan where he had been, the response: going to and ro on the earth, walking up and down on it. Such words intimate a far from friendly jaunt. Actually Satan went on the prowl for anyone to tempt and deceive. The Lord had a special affection for Job to which this verse testifies and brings him up deliberately with Satan, knowing full well that he had observed him. When asking Satan whether he had considered Job (literally as ‘have you placed on your heart’ or *lev*), he wanted to elicit a response in order to probe Job's integrity, a central theme of this book.

Before allowing Satan a response, intentionally, it seems, the Lord eggs Satan on by pointing out five qualities of Job: no one can be like him, blameless (*tam*: connotes wholeness), upright (*yashar*: also as straight), *yare'* of God and turns away from (*sur* with *min-* or ‘from;’ cf. Josh 24.14) evil or *rah* (cf. Dt 21.21).

**Job 1.9: Then Satan answered the Lord, “Does Job fear God for nought?”**

This verse is connected directly with the previous one through the conjunctive *v-* translated as “then” which shows Satan's immediate response to the Lord's questioning about Job. *Chinam* is the noun for “nought,” also as in vain. Satan doesn't stop here. In the next verse he taunts the Lord by pointing how well he is protecting Job.

**Job 2.3: And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and**

**turns away from evil? He still holds fast to his integrity although you moved me to destroy him without cause.”**

This verse is similar to 1.8, another assembly of the “sons of God” present to listen in on the Lord and Satan. Most likely the Lord wanted each member of his heavenly court to be there so they would know where Satan stands and not follow his example. If they did, the Lord would have a real problem on his hands.

The first sentence of this verse differs from 1.8 where Satan adds with some justification that the Lord compelled him to destroy him without cause: *suth* also as to incite, *balah* as to swallow down, to devour and *chinam* as without cause (cf. 1.9). Throughout all this Satan observes rightly that Job held fast (*chazaq* (cf. Josh 4.23-24 for the adjective) to his integrity or *tumah* (cf. the adjective *tam* of 1.8).

**Job 4.6: Is not your fear of God your confidence and the integrity of your ways your hope?<sup>2</sup>**

This verse and the next two form part of a lengthy interaction between Job and his friends. They are to be taken with a certain grain of salt because they form a long introduction later to Job’s response followed by the heart of the matter, God at last speaking in Chapter Thirty-Eight.

Here Eliphaz poses a rhetorical question to Job with a barely disguised sense of scorn, almost mocking him. The noun *tom* stands out by reason of *tam* and *tumah* having been mentioned as describing Job’s character.

**Job 6.14: He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.**

Job responds here to Eliphaz, this verse part of a lengthy outcry of his woes. Withholding kindness or *chesed* is equivalent to forsaking fear or *yir’ah* of the Almighty.

**Job 15.4: But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God.**

This verse forms part of another address by Eliphaz to Job after having posed two rhetorical questions in the negative sense.

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<sup>2</sup>Please note that many words in the Book of Job are quite different in spelling and for this reason are omitted because the references at hand are few.

**Job 25.2: Dominion and fear are with God; he makes peace in his high heaven.**

The noun *pachad* (cf. 2Chron 20.29) for fear is used here along with *mashal*, also as cause to rule. *Shalom* is the noun for peace which implies wholeness or being complete.

**Job 28.28: And he said to man, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”**

*This verse forms part of another lengthy discourse by Job. It may be outlined as yir’ah = chakmah and sur/rah = bynah.*

**Ps 2.11-12:11) Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling 12) kiss his feet lest he be angry and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

Two commands in two verses. The first is with regard to the verb *havad* (to serve, to be a slave) and has two objects: *yir’ah* and *rehadah*, the latter with the verb *gyl* or to rejoice which isn’t in the RSV text and literally means to go in a circle. Both nouns are prefaced with the preposition *b-*, in.

The Hebrew text of the second command in vs. 12 has instead of “kiss his feet” “kiss the son,” the verb being *nashaq*, also as to join, to arrange, to put in order. This seems to be a form of obeisance as to a ruler that he doesn’t become roused with anger, ‘*anaph* fundamentally to breathe through the nostrils. Negligence of this can result in death (‘*avad*) which is associated with *derek* (cf. 2Chron 6.31), way or most likely a way of comporting oneself.

Right after this injunction vs. 12 adds almost as a precaution that the wrath of both Lord and the son will be kindled at once, the verb being *hahar*, to feed upon, to consume.

An exclamation closes this verse saying that all who take refuge in (*chasah*, to flee, to trust) the Lord (and his son) will be blessed, ‘*ashar* fundamentally as to be straight, to guide.

**Ps 5.7: But I through the abundance of your steadfast love will enter your house, I will worship toward your holy temple in fear of you.**

The psalmist expresses two intents:

1) Enter the Lord's house, *beyth* (cf. 2Chron 6.33) which is possible only through (literally 'in,' *b-*) divine abundance (*rav*) of his *chesed*, this being akin to the New Testament *agape* (cf. Job 6.14). Step #2 comes after entering this *beyth* which is made possible not only just through *chesed* but its abundance.

2) Worship or *shachah* connotes bending or laying prostrate which here has a specific direction, to (*el-*) the Lord's holy temple. *Heykal* is a specific part of *beyth*, a nave or central part of a church. Such worship is done in fear and can be taken as the psalmist prostrates himself at the entrance to the nave.

**Ps 15.4: in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but honors those who fear the Lord; who swears to his own hurt and does not change.**

This verse forms part of a lengthy sentence beginning in vs. 2 and continues through vs. 5. It's part of a response to the rhetorical question posed at the beginning of this psalm, "Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?" The eyes belong to a person described in vss. 2-3 which throw a despising glance at a reprobate, *bazah* and the participle *ma'as*, the latter a more intense form of the former, to reject outrightly. The conjunctive *v-* counters *bazah/ma'as* and is translated as "but" which leads to honoring (*kavad*, cf. Dt 28.58) those who fear the Lord.

The second part of this verse pertains to the same person (i.e., the reprobate, *ma'as*) who swears to his own harm, *shavah* and *rah* (cf. Dt 10.20 and Job 1.8 respectively). What makes this person *ma'as* is that he does not change his behavior, *mur* also as to exchange.

**Ps 19.9: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.**

This verse forms part of a lengthy sentence beginning in vs. 7 and follows praise of the Lord's law, testimony precepts and commandment in the previous two verses with their characteristics of reviving, sure, right and pure. They set the stage, if you will, for fear (*yir'ah*) of the Lord as both clean and enduring, the adjective *tahar* and the participle *hamad* (cf. Dt 4.10). The first connotes brightness and the second permanence. *Hamad* is emphasized by "forever," *hed* with the preposition *l-* ('to') prefaced to it, *hed* as perpetuity of time or eternity.

As for ordinances or *misphat* (also as judgment), they are both true and righteous, the noun *'emeth* (cf. 1Sam 12.24) and the verb *tsadaq* which is suggestive of being right or straight. To both is added the adverb *yachdav* which is indicative of unity or oneness.

**Ps 22.23: You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you sons of Jacob, glorify him and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!**

This verse has the command to praise the Lord with regard to everyone who fears him, *halal* fundamentally as to make bright, shining. It's followed by two groups which essentially are the same, Jacob and Israel. The former are to glorify (*kavad*, cf. Ps 15.4) the Lord and the latter to stand in awe of him, *gur* which also means to be a sojourner, the idea being that one turns aside from fear.

As for Jacob, it's the name from which the twelve tribes are descended; as for Israel, that's the name given by God to Jacob after his wrestling match in Gn 32.28 with the mysterious unidentified man.

**Ps 22.25: From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.**

The Lord, the psalmist and the congregation are inextricably linked together. The third is a *qahal* (cf. Dt 31.12) called great or *rav* (cf. Ps 5.7). Then the psalmist makes a distinction, if you will, between this great congregation and those who fear the Lord. We could locate them within this *qahal* as its center before whom the psalmist will pay his vows, *shalam* (from which *shalom* is derived) or to be whole, sound, to complete.

**Ps 25.12: Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.**

The psalmist is giving voice to a rhetorical question intended for all to pay attention. The Hebrew reads literally as "Who is this the man who fears the Lord?" Note an apparent contradiction between the person fearing the Lord who's instructed (*yarah*, cf. 2Kg 17.28) by the psalmist and this instruction taking place of his own choice, the *derek* (as way of life, cf. Ps 2.11-12) he chooses.

**Ps 25.14: The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.**

Vs. 13 separates the previous entry from the current one, that is, the person who fears the Lord will abide in prosperity and his children shall possess the land.

*Sod* is the noun for friendship which means a sitting together where familiar conversation takes place and here is intended for those fearing the Lord. During this *sod* the Lord reveals his covenant, *yadah* (cf. 2Chron 6.33) implying intimate knowledge and reminiscent of his dealing with Moses.

**Ps 31.19: O how abundant is your goodness which you have laid up for those who fear you and wrought for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the sons of men!**

This verse is more along the lines of a joyous exclamation addressed to the Lord for his abundant goodness, *rav* (cf. Ps 22.25) modifying *tuv*. This *rav* or abundance is paralleled by the verb *tsaphan*, to store up as well as to hide. I.e., it is done in secret and only for those who fear the Lord.

The hidden character of *tsaphan* is paralleled by *chasah*, to take refuge in the sense of fleeing for protection and is applicable to those who fear the Lord. The abundant goodness at hand is wrought for such persons, *pahal* also as to produce, to fabricate which takes place within this *chasah*. This emphasis on hiddenness is countered by *tsaphan*, *pahal* and *chasah* being done in plain sight, that is, literally before (*neged*) the sons of men.

**Ps 33.8: Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!**

This verse is divided into two sections, earth and inhabitants:

1) *'Erets* or earth can apply to the entire world as well as the land of Israel. Regardless, emphasis is upon fearing the Lord which reads literally as “they shall fear from (*min-*) the Lord.” *'Erets* isn't necessarily impersonal but ties in with all persons and creatures within it.

2) *Tevel* or the inhabited earth, this re-enforced by the verb *yashav* or those who live there or in community. Instead of *yare'* as with *'erets*, these people are to stand in awe of the Lord, *gur* as in Ps 22.23.

**Ps 33.18-19: 18) Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love 19) that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.**

This verse begins with the expression *hineh* or behold in order to get people's attention. Note the preposition *l-*, literally as "to" prefaced to four words. However, all are preceded by the preposition 'el- prefaced to the verb *yare*'. It also means "to" which is more a tending toward. 'El- is used with the singular eye of the Lord, this singular indicative of close attention, of focus which spills into the four words prefaced with *l-*. The former is used in a more figurative sense compared with the latter, a proper and physical sense, a tending-towards.

As for *l-*, the four words are:

- 1) *yachal* or to hope, also to expect, to wait for
- 2) *chesed* (cf. Ps 5.7)
- 3) *natsal* (cf. 2Kg 7.39)
- 4) *chayah*: to keep alive

**Ps 34.7: The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.**

*Mal'ak* (cf. Gn 22.12) or angel fundamentally means a messenger who goes unidentified implying that his task is more important than his identity. Furthermore, he would be indifferent as to having a name or not. The *mal'ak* surrounds those fearing the Lord, *chanah* having both a somewhat temporary character about it. That is to say, those around whom he is situated will be moving on. *Savyv* or around clearly means the entire encampment, not just part of it. Once in this position, the *mal'ak* changes his messenger nature, if you will, to one who delivers, *natsal* (cf. Ps 33.18-19).

**Ps 34.9: O fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no want!**

The verse in between the last one and the one at hand needs mention by reason of its connection with both, it having to do with tasting and seeing that the Lord is good.

Those whom the psalmist bids to fear the Lord are called saints or those who are *qadosh* or holy, more fundamentally as those who have been set apart. In this position they are not in need of anything, *chasar* also as to be devoid of.

**Ps 34.11: Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**

The verse in between this one and the previous one needs mention by reason of lions going hungry compared with those who are satisfied with seeking the Lord.

The verse calls sons those whom he's addressing, assuming the role of a father figure who has in mind the best interests of those in his care. *Shamah* (cf. 2Chron 6.33) is the verb to listen in the sense of being attentive from which will flow *lamad* (cf. Dt 31.13) or teaching *yir'ah* (cf. Ps 19.9) in the sense of master-to-disciple, an image of son-to-father.

**Ps 36.1: Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.**

*Na'am* is the verb to speak, also as to utter, to mutter. Here *peshah* or transgression has adopted this low-voiced tone, *peshah* connoting rebellion. It is emphasized by *qerev* or the very center of the heart, *lev* (cf. Dt 21.21 and Job 1.8 respectively). From this interior there's a movement outward which effects no fear which otherwise would give clarity of vision.

**Ps 40.3: He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.**

It is the Lord who does this putting, *natan* better as to give in the sense of to impart. Here *shyr* equals *tehilah*, the latter also as a hymn. This combination coming from the psalmist's mouth will cause many to see, to fear and put their trust in the Lord: *rahah* (cf. 1Sam 12.24), *yare'* and *batach*. Note the similarity between the two forms of the first two, *yir'u* and *yiyr'au*.

**Ps 55.19: God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old; because they keep no law and do not fear God. [Selah]**

“Them” refers to those arrayed against the psalmist and are mentioned in the previous verse. First the Lord will *shamah* (cf. Ps 34.9) followed by *hanah*, the latter having a wide variety of meanings such as to answer, to sing, to be afflicted. Between *shamah* and *hanah* is an interval, albeit short, where the Lord assesses those engaged in the oppressing and how to render appropriate punishment. Then follows a

statement as to the Lord with respect to all this, that he is enthroned forever, *yashav* being the verb as in Ps 33.8.

The second part of this verse has the noun *chalyphah* or change along with *yare'* of God. That is to say, this noun applies to those whom the Lord gives ear and soon humbles, or persons incapable of changing their ways.

In the Hebrew text the liturgical *selah* or pause is inserted, one of three references posted in this document. From the standpoint of *lectio divina*, it can be taken as a signal to stop and reflect on what has been said before moving on to the next psalm.

**Ps 60.4: You have set up a banner for those who fear you, to rally to it from the bow. [Selah]**

The verb *natan* (to give; cf. Ps 40.3) is used with regard to a banner or *nes*, this often being set up on a high place for others to see as in the case of an invasion. In this instance *nes* may be taken as a kind of warning with regard to those fearing the Lord. Upon seeing it they are to rally, *nus* also as to flee, to hasten, similar in sound to *nes*. I.e., it can be taken as making a withdrawal to a place of defense. In this instance the pause represented by *selah* has greater meaning insofar as it can intimate a regrouping.

**Ps 61.5: For you, O God, have heard my vows, you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.**

The previous verse helps put this verse in context or where the psalmist asks the Lord to dwell in his tent and under the shelter of his wings. In that place, if you will, he exclaims that God has paid attention (*shamah*, cf. Ps 55.19) to his vows or *neder* not being specified but most likely involves a commitment. As a result, God has bestowed upon him the heritage of those who fear his name, *yerushah* also as possession. Such a possession is bound up with *yare'* of the divine name or *shem* (cf. 2Chron 6.33).

**Ps 66.16: Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.**

The psalmist utters these words in the context of the previous verse where he will make animal offerings to the Lord. Hopefully those fearing the Lord will come and

listen. That is to say, he will tell all that the Lord had done for him (*nephesh* as soul, cf. Dt 10.12). *Saphar* is the verb to tell also as to narrate as well as to inscribe.

**Ps 67.7: God has blessed us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!**

The first person plural can refer to the nation of Israel expressing gratitude for God having blessed them, *barak* fundamentally as to kneel. This spills over to a spontaneous exclamation for the rest of the world (*'erets*, cf. Ps 33.8) to fear him, more specifically its very ends or *'ephets* or furthest known inhabited areas, that is radiating from Israel. Note the similar sound or *'erets* and *'ephets*.

**Ps 76.8-9: 8) From the heavens you uttered judgment; the earth feared and was still 9) when God arose to establish judgment to save all the oppressed of the earth. [Selah]**

*Shamym* is used two times consecutively, “heaven of heavens” to express the furthest point above from below or the earth, *'erets* (cf. Ps 67.7). From *shamym* God causes judgment to be heard, the verb *shamah* (cf. Ps 61.5) and the noun *dyn* which means that those on earth must be attuned to receive it.

As for *'erets*, it feared the Lord, *yare'* producing stillness. *Shaqat* is suggestive of being undisturbed and inactive, this fitting in well with the pause indicated by *selah*.

**Ps 76.11-12: 11) Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them; let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared 12) who cuts off the spirit of princes, who is terrible to the kings of the earth.**

The intervening vs. 10 connects the previous two verses and the ones at hand where human wrath will serve to praise the Lord.

The two verbs *nadar* and *shalam* (cf. Ps 22.25) work hand-in-hand; one can't be performed without the other. As for the vows or promises at hand, nothing is said except bringing them to conclusion as well as perfection which that verb signifies. A liturgical setting is implied by reason of gifts by those who are around the Lord, *savyv* (cf. Ps 34.7).

This joyous occasion is made sober by the following two which can be taken as an indirect warning to those making the vows:

1) The Lord cuts off the spirits of princes, *batsar* also as to make inaccessible with regard not so much to princes but their spirit or *ruach* (also as breath) which can linger around and cause havoc as when they were present physically.

2) The Lord is terrible or fearful (*yare'*) to earth's kings.

**Ps 85.9: Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him that glory may dwell in our land.**

A close connection between '*ak* or surely (cf. 1Sam 12.24) and the preposition *l-* (to) which translates here as "that:" '*ak* suggests confidence in that divine salvation or *yeshah* (the verbal root for the proper name Jesus) is close by, *qarov* indicative of approaching, of drawing near.

As a result of the confident expectation of '*ak* with regard to those who fear the Lord, his glory or *kavod* (the transition represented by *l-*) will dwell in a land or '*erets* (cf. Ps 76.8-9) which is Israel.

**Ps 86.11: Teach me your way, O Lord that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.**

The psalmist makes two requests:

1) Teach and unite or *lamad* (cf. Ps 34.11) to which belongs his *derek* (cf. Ps 25.12) or way of doing things which the psalmist wish to learn. In this way he can walk (*halak* (cf. Neh 5.9) in the Lord's truth, '*emeth* (cf. Ps 19.9) being the essence of his *derek*.

2) *Yachad* or to make the psalmist's heart (*lev*, cf. Ps 36.1) as one that it may fear the Lord's name or *shem* (cf. 61.5). Note the preposition *l-* (to) along with the letter *l* of *lev*, intimating this desire for *yachad* to happen immediately.

**Ps 89.6-7: 6) For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, 7) a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and terrible above all that are round about him?**

Two rhetorical questions said in wonderment where the personal pronoun *my* or "who" is used (once in the Hebrew):

1) *Harak* is the verb to compare which fundamentally means to set in order, to arrange. Presupposed are alien divinities inhabiting the same realm as the Lord, *shachaq* or skies also as fine dust or a cloud.

2) *Damah* or to be like, to resemble with regard to literally “sons of gods.”

With regard to #2, God is associated not with alien divinities but with a council or holy ones, a *sod* most likely comprised of angels which as noted in Ps 25.14 intimates familiarity. The adjectives great and terrible are added to set the Lord apart, *rav* (cf. Ps 31.19) and *yare’*.

**Ps 90.11: Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you?**

A rhetorical question addressed with regard to fear (*yir’ah*, cf. Ps 34.11) as a criterion (*ky-*, according to). The verb *yadah* or to have intimate knowledge (cf. Ps 25.14) is with respect to divine power or *hoz* as it concerns God’s anger and wrath, *’aph* and *hevrah*. The latter is an outpouring of the former which also means nose through which comes heavy breathing.

**Ps 96.4: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.**

In addition to being great (*gadol*), the Lord is to be praised or *halal* (cf. Ps 22.23) in a manner which borders upon excessiveness, the adverb *me’od* (cf. 1Sam 12.18) indicative of this. Fear of the Lord is compared with gods who are false divinities, the preposition *hal-* (also as upon).

**Ps 102.15: The nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth your glory.**

Fear of the divine name (*shem*, cf. Ps 86.11) is associated with nations or *goy* (cf. Neh 5.9) while kings who presumably are over these nations will fear God’s glory or *kavod* (cf. Ps 85.9). Kings as head of their peoples will have better awareness of this *kavod* since they partake of an earthly *kavod*.

**Ps 103.11-12: 11) For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12) as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

Two standards of measuring with regard to the Lord:

1) Height: the adjective *gavoah* which also can mean arrogant. The heavens are upon (*hal-*) the earth, the verb *gavar* (to strengthen, to prevail) being used, similar in sound to *gavoah*. Just as the heavens are *hal-* the earth, so divine *chesed* (cf. Ps 33.18-19) is *hal-* those fearing the Lord.

2) Extension: east to west being the distance of our transgressions from God; *peshah* as in Ps 36.1. Note the two uses of the verb *rachaq*, to be far and to remove.

**Ps 103.13: As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him.**

The verb *racham* means to behold with tender affection, to be compassionate, where a comparison is made between that of a father and the Lord. The preposition *hal-* or upon is used with regard to children and the verb *yare'*.

**Ps 103.17-18: 17) But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him and his righteousness to children's children 18) to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.**

*Holam* or a long period of time is used twice with two prepositions prefaced to it, *min-* or from and *had-* or while, so long as. The purpose is to express infinity with regard to divine *chesed* (cf. Ps 103.11-12) which is *hal-* those fearing him.

As for divine righteousness or *tsedaqah* (suggestive of straightness), it is guided, if you will by three examples of the preposition *l-* (to):

1) Future generations or “children’s children” which reflects “from everlasting to everlasting.”

2) Those who keep or *shamar* (cf. 2Chron 19.7) the covenant or *beryth*.

3) Those who remember or *zakar* (to be mindful, to bring to mind) to carry out (*hasah*, also prefaced with *l-*; cf. 2Kg 17.34) divine commandments.

**Ps 111.5: He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.**

This verse has two short statements to be taken as one. *Tereph* or food suggests something as a leaf that has been plucked. Three words found in the last verse: *zakar*, *beryth* and *holam*.

**Ps 111.10: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it. His praise endures forever!**

*Re'shyth* and *chakmah* (cf. Job 28.28) with regard to *yir'ah*, echoing Prov 1.7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Note the difference between the two verses, *chakmah* and *dahath*.

*Sekel* or understanding implies prudence, giving attention being the result (*hasah*, to do; cf. Ps 103.17-18) of the combination of *yir'ah* and *chakmah*.

This verse contains a short exclamation with regard to divine praise or *tehilah* (cf. Ps 40.3), that it stands forever, *hamad* (cf. Ps 19.9).

**Ps 112.1: Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!**

This verse comprises two sentences, the first a kind of joyous outburst with regard to praise, *halal* (cf. Ps 96.4).

*Ashry* or blessed is more along the lines of happiness; from a verbal root meaning to be straight, to guide. It has two applications: the person fearing the Lord and who delights in his commandments, *chaphets* with the adverb *me'od* which connotes excessiveness (cf. Neh 1.11 and Ps 96.4 respectively). *Mitsvah* is the noun for commandment; compare with *piqudym* of Ps 119.63.

**Ps 115.11: You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.**

Two short sentences or outbursts of joyous enthusiasm. The first is an exhortation to trust (*batach*, cf. Ps 40.3) literally in (*b-*) the Lord. In the second the psalmist holds out the Lord as help and shield as reason for such trust, *hezer* and *magen* suggestive of combat.

**Ps 115.12-13: 12) The Lord has been mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron; 13) he will bless those who fear the Lord both small and great.**

*Zakar* as mindful (cf. Ps 111.5). This results in four future blessings, *barak* (cf. Ps 67.7): us or the entire nation of Israel, house of Israel, house of Aaron and those fearing the Lord regardless of social status.

**Ps 118.4: Let those who fear the Lord say, "His steadfast love endures forever."**

This is the third verse where the Psalmist uses the word “let” or *na’*, expressive of an exclamation or interjection. It applies here to divine *chesed* which endures forever, *holam* (cf. Ps 115.5) prefaced with the preposition *l-*.

**Ps 119.38: Confirm to your servant your promise which is for those who fear you.**

*Qum* is the verb to confirm, fundamentally as to arise which is applied to the Lord’s servant or *heved* (cf. Neh 1.11) and is applicable to a divine promise or more accurately word, *‘imrah* as it pertains to those fearing him. The sense of every rising as suggested by *qum* can mean that this *‘imrah* always is in the process of rising.

**Ps 119.63: I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts.**

*Chever* or companion also applies to an association or society, from a verbal root meaning to unite. It applies to both those fearing the Lord and keeping his precepts, *shamar* (cf. Ps 103.17-18) with *piqudym* which always is in the plural and also applies to commandments; compare with *mitsvah* of Ps 112.1.

**Ps 119.74: Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice because I have hoped in your word.**

Note the similarity between *yare’* and *rahaḥ* (cf. Ps 40.3), to see and to fear: *yer’eyka* and *yir’uny*. Joined with them is the verb *samach* or to rejoice, also as to be cheerful or merry. The reason: the psalmist had hoped (*yachal*, cf. Ps 33.18-19) literally to or *l-* the *davar* of the Lord.

**Ps 119.79: Let those who fear you turn to me that they may know your testimonies.**

Here the psalmist has the role of a teacher, that is, those fearing the Lord are to turn to him (*shuv*) in order to (the conjunctive *v-*) know the Lord’s testimonies, *yadah* and *hed* (cf. Ps 90.11 and Ps 19.9 respectively). Such turning is a recognition that the psalmist has something to say.

**Ps 119.120: My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments.**

*Samar* is the verb to tremble, more as to bristle and is a way to emphasize *pachad* (cf. Job 25.2) of the Lord. *Yare'* is used with divine *mishpat* (cf. 2Kg 17.34) or judgments. The psalmist refers to himself as “flesh” or his physical body which has this twofold reaction.

**Ps 128.1: Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways!**

The psalmist refers to everyone here, that is, *yare'* and *'ashry* (cf. Ps 112.1). Such fear requires walking in the Lord's ways, *halak* and *derek* (both as in Ps 86.11).

**Ps 128.4: Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.**

*Hineh* (cf. Ps 33.18-19) or “lo,” a way to get attention. Here it pertains to a person as blessed who fears the Lord, *barak* (cf. Ps 115.12-13) and *yare'*.

**Ps 130.4: But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared.**

*Selychah* or forgiveness has the idea of making light, or lifting up (a burden) which is with or *him-* the Lord, that is, accompanies him. *Lemahan* (cf. Jos 4.23-24) or “that” is the key word here: such making light is to effect *yare'* of the Lord.

**Ps 135.20: O house of Levi, bless the Lord! You that fear the Lord, bless the Lord!**

Two sentences with joyous outbursts. House of Levi is singled out by reason of its members being priests. Both they and those fearing the Lord are to bless (*barak*, cf. Ps 128.4) the Lord.

**Ps 145.19: He fulfils the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.**

*Ratson* and the verb *hasah* (to do, to make; cf. Ps 111.10) are used as one, the noun also as delight, satisfaction. Both function more or less the same as the Lord hearing the cry of those fearing him, *shamah* (cf. Ps 76.8-9) and *shavhah* which come from a verbal root meaning to be freed from danger and distress. Thus it's allied with *yashah* (to save), the verbal root for Jesus.

**Ps 147.10-11: 10) His delight is not in the strength of the horse nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, 11) but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.**

Note two similar verbs: *chaphets* (cf. Ps 112.1) for delight and *ratsah*, the latter being the verbal root for *ratson* in the previous verse. The latter is applied to those fearing the Lord as well as having hope in his steadfast love, *yachal* and *chesed* (cf. Ps 119.74 and Ps 118.4 respectively). The *yachal* has the preposition *l-* prefaced to *chesed*, “to steadfast love.” The beginning of vs. 4 lacks “but” as it would with the conjunctive *v-*.

**Prov 1.7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

*Yir’ah* as pertaining to the Lord is identified with *re’shyth* as it applies to *dahath*; i.e., fear -> beginning -> knowledge. The Hebrew text lacks the sense of the genitive (‘of’), so the words are strung together more or less as one unit. *Re’shyth* as beginning implies a source, this same word used in Gn 1.1, “In the beginning.” *Dahath* (cf. Ps 111.10) implies intimate knowledge, this destined to expand by reason of its association with *re’shyth*, it’s starting point.

Contrasted with this are fools or the adjective *‘uvyl* which implies impiety, the exact opposite of *yir’ah*. Such persons despise (*boz*, also as to have contempt) both wisdom or *chakmah* (cf. Ps 111.10) and instruction, *musar* which is more along the lines of chastisement.

**Prov 1.29: Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,**

This verse continues as one sentence through vs. 31.

*Tachat* or “because” serves to effect the following two, “they” referring to those mentioned in the previous verses starting with vs. 22:

- 1) Hating knowledge, *sane’* and *dahath* (cf. Prov 1.7).
- 2) Did not choose *yir’ah* of the Lord, *bachar* (cf. Dt 14.23) being the verb.

Vss. 30-31 show what flows from *tachat*: refuse divine counsel, despise divine reproof which results in being sated with their own devices.

**Prov 2.5: then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.**

This verse is part of an extended sentence beginning in vs. 1.

‘Az or “then” depends upon three “ifs” in the previous verses as noted here:

- 1) Receive my (i.e., the Lord’s) words, treasure my commandments, make ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart for understanding.
- 2) Cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding.
- 3) Seek understanding as silver and hidden treasures.

*Byn* or to understand (cf. 2Chron 26.5) regarding *yir’ah* has two parts. It connotes discernment and making a distinction, the preposition “between” being derived from it:

- 1) With regard to *yir’ah*.
- 2) Finding not so much God directly but knowledge (*dahath*; cf. Prov 1.29) of him, the verb being *matsa’* which intimates coming upon something.