

In the Spirit's attempt to get us to understand and accept the fact that we are just aliens in this world, He most recently exhorted us to: 1) gird the loins of our minds with the truth so we can be ready for action, fully prepared to fight the spiritual forces of darkness which constantly oppose us; and 2) to walk in the Spirit and let Jesus have His rightful rule in our minds, emotions, and spirit so He can be holy in and through our lives, which will result in our holy behavior as Jesus is both our obedience and our righteousness. Next, the Spirit once again makes an argument as to why we can practically live this way.

1 Peter 1:17-21

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The key to this entire passage is found in the command for us to conduct ourselves in fear during the time of our stay on this earth. "Conduct yourself" is in the *aorist passive imperative*. *Aorist*: we are to always from beginning to end of our stay on this earth live in fear; it is to be our way of life. *Passive*: it is an

attitude that is birthed from the work of the Spirit in our lives; this is not something that we can do on our own but something He does in us. As we gird the loins of our minds with truth, the Spirit will transform us into the image of the Son and we will live in the fear of the Lord. *Imperative*: it is a command. We are commanded to always fear during our stay on this earth drawing on the resources of the Spirit of God to be able to fear.

The Spirit gives us some reasons why we can fear, but before we get there let's talk about what it means to fear. I can guarantee you it does not mean that we are to be afraid—even though the subject matter of this passage could cause that reaction, i.e., God who impartially judges all our works. When you think about it, that is a pretty scary statement. But please understand. When we are afraid it comes from deep within our being: we become afraid. And if that is what the Spirit was communicating, “conduct yourselves” would be in the *middle* voice; but it is not it is *passive*—God—specifically the Holy Spirit—causes us to fear. Besides, we know that perfect love (which comes from the Father) casts out all fear (**1 John 4:18**); therefore, we can be confident that this passage is not about our being afraid during our time on this earth; rather, I believe this is addressing the Biblical concept of the “fear of the Lord.”

We have studied what it means to “fear the Lord” many times so I will just briefly review it. **Proverbs 8:13** summarizes this concept: the fear of the Lord is to hate all evil. In other words, we are to hate all that is not from God; all that is not divine (including our *Old Sinful Nature* which always pulls us in the opposite direction from the Spirit of God). Hence, since we are aliens in this world and are just passing through on assignment from God, we are not to love this world or

anything in this world for all that is in the world (the things to which our flesh, our eyes, and our pride loves to attach) is not from the Father but is from the world (**1 John 2:16**). Accordingly, the fear of the Lord depicts a life of separation: living in this world and using the things of this world but not attaching to this world. It is in effect a synonym for living as an alien—loving what is of God and despising all else. As we have discussed, it is choosing to find our validation, worth, purpose, identity and so on in our role as the Lord’s ambassadors and not from anything this world can offer.

Not surprisingly, in **Job 28:28** the fear of the Lord is also called wisdom and in **Proverbs 1:7; 2:5** it is called the beginning of the knowledge of God. Thus, making the choice to disconnect from this world is wisdom. The world wants you connected to it and wants you dependent upon it. And most are seduced by its promises of love, care, and provision; but it takes a truly wise man or woman to see through this lie. And, when you finally decide, without reservation, that you will not live for this world, then you will begin your journey deep into the knowledge of God.

Choosing to live as an alien is your passport to the deepest form of intimacy with the living God. You will get to know Him and, perhaps like Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2:16**, you will share His mind—the mind of Christ. That means you will think like He thinks, you will understand like He understands, and His wisdom will be your wisdom; accordingly, you will know how to find the right course of action for your life in every situation and this knowledge will be pleasant to your soul (**Proverbs 2:9-10**). These are the very real benefits of choosing to live as an alien in this world. The implications of this are huge in terms of what we value and

what we do in our day-in-and-day-out practical life, which is why **Proverbs 23:27** commands us to live in the fear of the Lord always. The fear of the Lord is our protection and our strength.

I love the way the Spirit says that we are to conduct ourselves in fear during the time of our stay or our sojourning. In other words, the fear of the Lord is to mark and define our lives because our time in this place is limited; this is just a temporary “stay.” The Lord wants us to fully grasp the temporary and non possessory nature of our assignment. This is not our home; we don’t belong. This is merely our job and we have a very big office; thus, we need to live as if this is our truth and disconnect from our attachment to this world.

The Spirit gives us some powerful reasons why we can live in the fear of the Lord:

1. We address the one who impartially judges as Father;
2. The means of our redemption was so intense and severe that we cannot ever take it lightly; it was supernatural and beyond the base elements of this world; and
3. Our faith and hope are in God and not in this world.

Let’s start with the first issue, the unbiased judgment of the Father. What is salient here is that this judgment does not point down the road to a final judgment of our behavior and deeds. You see delayed judgment has never been a very powerful motivator for us to make real-time changes in our choices. We are all kind of wired for the now; and if we cannot connect immediate consequences with our choices, we tend not to be in too much of a rush to change anything. Just

because we don't get caught, we deceive ourselves into thinking that no one knows or is watching.

Accordingly, this passage deals with our now, as “judges” is a *present active participle*. Judgment of each mans' deeds is happening real time (*present*), God is actively doing it (*active*), and He is continually judging (*participle*). And His judgment is impartial. That means it does not matter who you are; He judges solely based on what you do. On its own, this is a bit scary; He is a holy God and His standard for all things is holiness and perfection. That means when it comes to the Father, we do not get any special treatment even though we belong to Him. If we address Him as Father, then He fully expects us to live as His sons and not sons of this world. As His ambassadors to this world, He rightfully has expectations on us (as He does all those who live in the world); but for us, I believe, His expectations are tied to the fact that we are His sons who have been redeemed by the blood. The others have a different father and will be accountable for their choices, but the Lord always starts His judgment with the household of God (**1 Peter 4:17**).

Sometimes we forget that God, our Father, is presently and actively engaged in every single detail of our lives. Too often we live as if there is this big separation between Him and us. But that is simply not the case. According to **Psalm 139**, He sees everything and not one thing escapes His eye. He knows when we sit up and when we lie down. He understands our thoughts and He knows not just everything we do, but everything we are going to do. He even knows what we are going to say before we say it. Furthermore, we can never escape from His Spirit, which is why He sees all, knows all, and nothing escapes Him—absolutely nothing.

And being His appointed ambassadors, He is especially interested in our lives because He has given to each of us special instructions about our job and special gifting to perform our job. Thus, when you think about all that you think and do (or have done) in the darkness, in those times and places where you were sure no one was around, well, I am afraid to tell you He was watching and He was there. When you think of all the things you have thought that you would never want anyone to know, well, I am afraid to tell you He knows. As if that is not uncomfortable enough, don't forget, He is impartial in His judgments and He is always judging. We all want special treatment, but that is not how the Father works.

This is one of those passages in **1 Peter** that used to grip me with fear. I was actually afraid of the Father and always expected Him to thump me every time I did something wrong. However, I have learned that whenever I am afraid of God it means that I clearly do not understand what the Spirit is communicating. With that said, God has not revealed to us what this real-time judgment looks like and how it is practically experienced. And I know it can be confusing, especially given the fact that so much awfulness takes place in this world that seems to go unrequited. Evil people seem to be free to do evil without any real consequence. We even give ourselves a little temporary comfort by focusing on the fact that at the end of time they will get their comeuppance as there will be a righteous recompense for all that evil. Nevertheless, despite our inability to understand this truth, the Father is judging and it is happening in our now; and this information is intended to altar how we live and the choices we make.

The good news however is that this idea of the Father judging our works does not stand alone in the scriptures. If it did, we would all have reason to be very, very afraid; which, as we discussed, is fundamentally different than conducting ourselves in fear. When reading any passage that tends to strike fear in our hearts, it is critical to remember we have not received a Spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but we have received a Spirit of adoption by which we cry out Abba Father or “daddy” (**Romans 8:15**). Therefore, we can be confident this passage is not about our being afraid of God; accordingly, there must be more to this truth of the Father judging than meets the eye. And this is where the nature of your relationship with Jesus makes a world of difference.

First of all, according to **Romans 8:34**, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father always making intercession for those who have placed their faith in Him; and being in the *present active indicative*, this is a statement of fact. Jesus is always in our now interposing Himself and what He did for us in front of the Father. He literally comes between our “works” and the Father’s judgment. And since “intercession” is in the *indicative*, we can bet our lives on this truth. Second, in **Romans 8:33** we are told that God is the one who justifies or makes us right with Him; or in the Greek “renders us as innocent.” And since “justifies” is in the *present active participle*; we can be confident that even though our behavior might not deserve it, even though we fail so often to live as Sons of God, He always makes us innocent in our now and He continues to make us innocent in our now. Every moment of our existence, we are innocent because He has deemed it so. Our “works,” which so often fall short of how a son of God should live (and I am not just talking about our obvious sinful “works,” but also—and

probably more importantly—all our religious works), are covered by Jesus with His precious blood. As such, the Father declares us innocent. The implication is that the Father's judgment is always averted because of the blood and Jesus' active interference with the Father's judgment.

So this truth which the Spirit communicates about the Father who always judges is not about trying to scare us to death, but about trying to love us to life. Once again, the Spirit is yearning for us to understand the depth of the grace and mercy we have in Christ. That is why the Spirit immediately turns our attention to the means of our redemption—the precious blood of Jesus. We were not redeemed with anything of this world. All that is in this world is worthless when it comes to redeeming us from the worthlessness of our futile inheritance. Silver and gold could not purchase our freedom from sin and death as spiritual slavery can only be redeemed with spiritual currency. Our redemption could only be accomplished with blood; and not just any blood, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless—the blood of Christ. This is the blood that is even now presently and actively being poured over our deeds and presented before the Father who judges impartially.

It is still hard to wrap my mind around the fact that God came in the flesh and suffered tremendously and was brutally slaughtered for me. There really is nothing in my world experience to which I can connect this phenomenon. I know it is true, but it is so outside of my reality that far too often I do not fully appreciate what He did for me. To help make this connection, the Spirit brings up the unblemished lamb that would be slaughtered on behalf of the Jewish people to cover their sin, since that is the closest representation we have. Even at that, in

our day-and-age we cannot imagine the blood and slaughter that would occur in the temple. But then again, even that was just an image—a physical picture of a spiritual truth that would be literally fulfilled in Jesus. I know the story, but again it is hard for me to tangibly connect with the contrast between the Father’s perfection, our complete utter failure, and Jesus continually interposing His life for ours just so we can be those who cry out to God the Father, “daddy.” I understand conceptually what Jesus did for me; but I believe the actual reality (both in terms of Jesus’ physical suffering and the spiritual implication) is far greater than anything I can put into words. That is probably why the Spirit just said we were redeemed with what is most precious: Jesus’ blood.

Once again in this opening chapter, the Spirit reminds us of how great and incredible this grace that is given to us really is—it is beyond comprehension. The Spirit wants us to let this truth transform our mind which will transform our choices which will result in holy behavior that comes from His life in ours. Consider this: Jesus literally gave up His life for your selfishness, for your pride, for your self-protection, for your arrogance, for your lusts, for your attachments to this world, for your fear and all that flows from it, for your hate, for your anger, for your bitterness, for your control, and for all that you choose when you refuse to hate evil and thereby choose not to trust yourself to Him.

It is really quite amazing; Jesus’ blood is even now being poured over all you do. Yes, each and every time you choose to give yourself to fear instead of faith, in His intercession for you, Jesus covers all that you do with His blood and that is what comes before the Father who impartially judges. Thus, when the Father sees the blood, you are declared innocent; each and every time. This blows me away. I

stand before the Father innocent because of what Jesus did. I know I am not innocent. I know I deserve awful things for the awful things I think and do, I know I deserve to be judged, but I am innocent. Jesus has made this so. That is how precious His blood truly is.

Do you yet understand the Spirit's logic or argumentation in this passage? The idea is that if you can get even a little grasp on how much you are and have been given, on how deep and massive the grace of Jesus is on your life, then you will be motivated by love to give yourself to it and willfully choose, with joy, to live as an alien on this earth and always conduct yourself with the fear of the Lord. This is a cry for relationship. This is a cry for a response. This is a cry for you to take hold of who you truly are and live out the responsibility you have been given as an ambassador of the Father.

In contrast to the precious blood which has redeemed our lives, the Spirit brings up the fact that all that we inherited from our forefathers—our entire way of life—is futile, empty, vain, and entirely worthless. In other words, it is nothing on which to hold, nothing to desire, nothing in which we are to cultivate or invest, and nothing to which we are to be conformed. Think about what this means. Your family values which are so precious to you, your cultural values, your spiritualism, your religion, your environmental consciousness, your charity, your public service, your loyalty and friendship, and so on, all of which are aimed at making you a good person on this earth, are futile, empty, vain, and entirely worthless. They can do nothing for you and gain you no extra credit when it comes to the righteous and unbiased judgment of the Father. Likewise, your wealth, power, influence, control, wisdom, judgment, intelligence, zeal, education, work ethic,

experience, and so on, all aimed at making you a productive person on this earth, are futile, empty, vain, and entirely worthless. None of it can help you gain any favor or position with the Father. A person's deeds are judged according to what they do regardless of how this world may esteem that person. If your deeds do not derive from the divine—from Christ living in you—they are by definition evil and worthless, every one of them, without exception!

We must not run over this concept or quietly role our eyes as if you heard it all before. The Spirit wants us to agree with Him that we have been redeemed from that life and have been adopted into a new family which according to **Matthew 12:50** is comprised not of those who call themselves Christians, not of those who say they believe, but of those who do the will of the Father. According to **Matthew 7:20-21** and **Luke 8:21**, it is not those who say “Lord, Lord” who are part of this family; but those who actually do the will of the Father—they hear the Word of God and then do it (for example, they make the choice to live as an alien). Moreover, Jesus says that you are His friend if you do what He commands you (**John 15:14**). I hate to say it, but that narrows things dramatically. I think in our cultural religious ways, we have always danced around these separatist statements, but it is something we can do no longer. We have been adopted into a new family with new values, perspectives, directions, influences, ethics, goals, judgments, and relationships. All of it is new and different from everything the futile way of life inherited from our forefathers has tried to give us (and remember, that includes our religious inheritance). There is no crossover; these two ways of life stand separate and distinct. The only issue is whether or not you are willing to live this way.

This is a hard message and I know that in the past I have not made friends in teaching this message. In fact, many of those who look to you to fulfill and carry out the patterns and traditions that accompany the futile life you inherited from your forefathers have been angered and put off by this message of separation and distinction. Please don't hate the messenger. But the facts are: if you are actually a child of God—proven not by the fact that you go to church, Bible studies, and consider yourself a Christian, but by the fact that you live to do the will of the Father doing what Jesus commands—then you are separate and distinct for the precious blood of Jesus covers you. It is a fact and something that you need to get used to, accept, adopt, embrace, and own. It is to be your way of life from beginning to end. You are to live your life always in the fear of the Lord—as an alien during your stay or sojourn in this world. You are not to try and find a nice comfortable middle where you can dabble in both realities; it does not work. The Spirit wants you and He demands that you listen to Him and follow the ways of your Father. Similarly, the world wants you and demands that you listen to it and follow the ways of its Father. But you need to make a choice; and, in reality, this choice will prove out the first matter: whether or not you are actually a Son of God covered by the precious blood of Jesus.

In the next part of this passage, the Spirit addresses another reason why we must choose to live as an alien during our travels through this world.

1 Peter 1:20-21

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who

raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

This is an interesting passage. Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Being God, clearly Jesus always existed. **John 1:1-2, 14** says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." In **Revelation 1:8**, Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." And **Revelation 22:13** He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." So there is no question that as God Jesus has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So why do you think the Spirit informs us that He was foreknown before the foundation of the world? This is so critical to our understanding this life and our identity as ones who do not belong to this world.

The Spirit wants you to understand that Jesus coming to earth to die for you and shed His precious blood in order that you might believe in God, and be one who cries out Abba Father, was not "plan-B." It was "plan-A" all along. Adam's failure was not a surprise and God did not have to scramble around for a solution to the so called "problem" of sin. Jesus, God in the flesh, was always the plan. As the Father's Son, He was prepared for this purpose, as it was all foreknown from before time—before this world was made. Jesus always knew what the Father would require from Him and He knew what reward His sacrifice would bring Him.

You see, even before the world was made, God always had his mind on you. He always set His eyes on you. He always thought about you (in the same way, even now He always thinks about you). He always wanted you to know Him and hear you call Him Daddy and He always wanted you to experience Him as your Daddy. And He always wanted you—yes you—to be His Son’s lover. You were made to love God and be loved by God and find everything you could ever need and want in the Son. That was the plan all along. You were the plan all along: you and Jesus resulting in you and the Father.

The plan was always set; it was just a matter of time for it to practically play out. Time passed and Jesus made Himself known: God in the flesh as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. And He made Himself manifest just for you. He came for you; He always had you in mind. He wanted you. He chose you. He sought you out. He moved time and space, so to speak to, to find you; and as a result, you do believe. Do you understand what this means? When it comes to this world, you are a freak—you are an alien who does not belong. After all, you don’t see Him but you love Him. You have never met Him in the flesh, but still you believe. And as a result, you get to be one to experience the “salvation of your soul,” which can be described as: the cleansing of your soul, the systematic destruction of your *Old Sinful Nature*, the crushing of your flesh, the dismantling of your wrong belief and unbelief, the awakening of the Spirit of God within you, the mastery of the Spirit over the flesh, the experience of Jesus in and through your life, the building of your faith, the discarding of everything that is not of God, a.k.a. growing in the fear of the Lord.

Through this amazing passage, the Spirit once again points out how incredibly important you are to God. He already told you that all the Old Testament saints served you and they could not be made perfect without you for God had something better in store for you. He said the angels serve you and are assigned to your care. These majestic beings would love to understand and experience this grace that has been given to you, but it has not been afforded to them; it has been granted exclusively to you. And then consider that God raised Jesus from the dead (technically, according to **Romans 8:11** and **Galatians 1:1**, Jesus was raised from the dead by the command of the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit, it was a collective effort). And God gave Him glory by raising Him up to His throne at the right hand of the Father (**Ephesians 1:20**). And all of this was for you who believe in God.

And as a result, your faith and hope are in God. That is something in which you should be rejoicing and take great confidence. The Spirit is talking to you. Your faith and hope are presently and actively in God because of what Jesus has done for you, because what the Father has done for you, and because of what the Spirit has done for you. What a glorious statement. Let this sink into your being; let this truth transform your mind. In fact, you need to gird up the loins of your mind with this truth. It was all about you, all for you, and you, like Jesus, were “Plan-A.”

Wow! The Spirit has really been pleading with us to grasp these truths and for them to be our truths transforming how we live. We are freaks, we are aliens, and we need to live like one in every area of our lives—without exception! The war is coming; Jesus has warned us about this. The great shaking will soon arrive. Therefore, we need to get serious about our calling. The separation is now being

made between those who live for the will of the Father and those who merely say “Lord, Lord.” Be sure to find yourself in Him as part of this great and glorious family; be one who always lives in the fear of the Lord.

I think we will stop here and pick up again in **1:22**.

Let's Pray