Serve the Lord with Fear

Scripture References (ESV)
Psalm 2:10-12 | 1 Chronicles 13:5-14 | Numbers 1:50 | Exodus 25:14-15

Today's Central Theme
The theme is reverent fear of the Lord: God is holy and sovereign, so serving him means obeying him on his terms, with awe and humility, not on our own terms.

Psalm 2:10-12
10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.
11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Wisdom Begins with Reverence

This is a straightforward passage from a leader who has experienced God's full sovereignty. We will make sense of its poetic imagery; however, its message is clear: no matter how much power we think we have, **Yahweh is the greatest power, and we must submit to HIM.**

- Verse 10
  - When the psalmist says, "Be wise and be warned…," he calls on leaders to operate with the wisdom of God as revealed in Scripture, while maintaining a deep awareness of the call to righteousness and holiness, which should not be challenged.
- Verse 11
  - To serve the Lord with fear is to live a life of service to the Lord in reverence and submission.
  - Rejoice with trembling is a call to enjoy and bask in God's presence while remaining fully aware of his sovereignty and holy standard.
- Verse 12
  - To "kiss the son" means to show honor and respect to God in all of your dealings. If one failed to do so, they could possibly incur the anger and wrath of God, which could have fatal implications.

Now the question is begged: *how could one have such deep, intimate knowledge concerning the fear of God?* This does not sound like a mere oral tradition passed down from one generation to the next. This message has the tenor of experiential knowledge.

Fear Learned Through Experience

1 Chronicles 13:5-14
5 So David assembled all Israel from the Nile of Egypt to Lebo-hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim.
6 And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim that belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord who sits enthroned above the cherubim.
7 And they carried the ark of God on a new cart, from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio were driving the cart.
8 And David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets.
9 And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled.
10 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark, and he died there before God.
11 And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.
12 And David was afraid of God that day, and he said, "How can I bring the ark of God home to me?"
13 So David did not take the ark home into the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

14 And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had.

Honoring God on His Terms

The Levites, specifically the Kohathites, were to transport the Ark, as outlined in the Book of Numbers and Exodus.

- But appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, along with all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its articles, care for it, and camp around it" (Numbers 1:50).
- The Ark was to be carried using poles inserted through rings on its sides, ensuring that no one would touch the Ark itself, as touching it was forbidden and would result in death (Exodus 25:14-15).
- **Our greatest intelligence, ingenuity, or image will never be greater than the Lord's instruction.**

Two Responses to the Fear of the Lord

- **David:** let his ingenuity become iniquity, and Uzzah paid the ultimate price.
- **Obed-edom:** followed the Lord’s ancient instructions, and he and his household experienced God's blessings.

To serve the Lord with fear means doing the Lord's will with reverence and awareness, avoiding his wrath and attracting his blessing.

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