

Do New Testament Believers Still Need to Fear God?

[Hebrews 10:26-31](#)

Hebrews, Day 36

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- Hebrews 10:26-31, ESV

"I don't believe in the angry God of the Old Testament. I'm a New Testament believer."

"People in the Old Testament had to fear God, but I believe in the God of the New Testament."

"In the Old Testament, God was angry and judgmental, but once Jesus came, God became a God of love and forgiveness."

Have you ever heard or maybe thought or even said yourself any of these things? Many people put a division between the Old Testament and the New Testament that would even go so far as to see two different Gods at work. "The God of the Old Testament" seems to many people to be so different from "the God of the New Testament." This is due mostly to stereotypes, misconceptions and a superficial reading of isolated portions of the Bible.

Consider what the Old Testament says about God's relationship to His people:

"Fear not, O Zion;

let not your hands grow weak.

The Lord your God is in your midst,

a mighty one who will save;

he will rejoice over you with gladness;

he will quiet you by his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing." - Zephaniah 3:16-17, ESV

And then read today's passage from Hebrews again: *"fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire . . . much worse punishment . . . Vengeance is mine . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

This is seriously sobering language! We cannot say the fear of the LORD ends with the close of the Old Testament, can we? After all, it was Jesus Himself who said, *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Matthew 10:28, ESV)

It is never safe to reject the grace of God. It is never wise to trample underfoot the goodness of God. And the more grace and goodness God has given, the more dangerous and foolish it is to spurn it and trample it underfoot. Thus, it was really foolish for the people of Israel to break God's Law even as God was giving it to Moses, but it is even worse for people today to turn their backs on Jesus and forsake the One who poured out His life on the cross.

I do not believe anyone can lose their salvation, if they are truly born again and justified by saving faith. But apostasy is a real sin. Professing Christians - who believe they are redeemed but are mistaken - fall away from the faith, deny Jesus, and end up under God's wrath.

So we should rejoice in the salvation we have in Jesus, but we should rejoice with trembling. We should seek the Lord for the grace to never deny Jesus, never turn away from the faith. For it is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God - and that's New Testament theology!