



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15:9

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And Yet Another Discrepancy

Occasionally I'm told that the Adventist organization doesn't teach the things I claim they teach. Even though I have provided documented evidence that the organization does in fact teach these things, people tell me that I am confused because the church doesn't teach this. It makes me think that those who claim this aren't reading the evidence that I've provided. Well, I can lead you to the water but I can't make you drink it. And no, I didn't just call you all a pack of horses. I simply used the old saying.

So, that memory kinda hit me in the face this morning as I came across the following that I'm about to share with you. What memory? The memory that people will occasionally tell me that the Adventist organization doesn't teach what I claim it teaches.

Let's take a look at the word "fear."

noun

1. a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid. Synonyms: foreboding, apprehension, consternation, dismay, dread, terror, fright, panic, horror, trepidation, qualm.

Antonyms: courage, security, calm, intrepidity.

2. a specific instance of or propensity for such a feeling: an abnormal fear of heights. Synonyms: phobia, aversion; bête noire,

bogy, bogey, bugbear. Antonyms: liking, fondness, penchant, predilection.

3. concern or anxiety; solicitude: a fear for someone's safety.

4. reverential awe, especially toward God: the fear of God.
Synonyms: awe, respect, reverence, veneration.

5. something that causes feelings of dread or apprehension;
something a person is afraid of: Cancer is a common fear.

6. anticipation of the possibility that something unpleasant will occur:
Having grown up during the Great Depression, he had a constant
fear of running out of money. verb (used with object)

7. to regard with fear; be afraid of. Synonyms: apprehend, dread.

8. to have reverential awe of. Synonyms: revere, venerate, honor.

9. to consider or anticipate (something unpleasant) with a feeling of
dread or alarm: It's about to snow again, I fear.

10. Archaic. to experience fear in (oneself): I fear me he will ne'er
forgive us. verb (used without object)

11. to have fear; be afraid: I'll go with you, so do not fear!

12. to feel apprehensive or uneasy (usually followed by for): In this
time of economic instability, I fear for my children's future. Idioms

13. for fear of /that, in order to prevent or avoid the risk of: She is
afraid to say anything for fear of the consequences.

14. put the fear of God in /into, to cause to be greatly afraid.

– Source: Dictionary.com

By this source it appears that the word “fear” has more than one meaning. So the question I contemplate is which usage of the word does the Bible employ when it speaks of God?

To get a more truthful, more positive picture of God, we need to study the meaning of many of the words that the Bible uses in order that we may get a

better understanding of what it is trying to say.

An example of this was in a sermon I recently heard about. The pastor preached from the pulpit that any doctrine that teaches God is Love yet leaves out his justice is an incorrect doctrine.

The pastor who said that showed that he didn't have a correct understanding of the word "justice." I looked it up and found that the word didn't come into existence until the 1200's which was well after the Bible had been written. That would mean the word was inserted by the translators.

I can think of 2 reasons they would have used the word "justice." The first reason is that they were infected with the human law construct and were of the belief that God was going to zap people because they had broken his law. The second reason might be that they had the correct understanding of the word and assumed that their readers also understood the word through the lens of the natural law construct. However, considering how infected humankind is with the penal substitution view, I find the second idea to be unlikely. The various organizations which call themselves the church are notorious for teaching that God is wanting to harm his creation. When you hear that you need to remember where Mrs. White stated the concept of punishment for sin came from:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. – Desire of Ages, 761

But I'm here to investigate the word "fear". By the entry at dictionary.com we see that the word "fear" has several meanings. The religious organizations tend to teach that the Bible uses the word in a way that would encourage the people to be afraid of God. Though there is the text that states to fear God and give him glory. The definition the organization chooses to use with that particular text is reverential awe.

TERM	Natural Law View	Supporting Text(s)	Imposed Law View	Texts Often Misinterpreted
Fear of God	Deep love for God	Psalm 27:8 Isaiah 41:10 Isaiah 12:2 Revelation 22:4 Genesis 42:18 – Yare Exodus 1:21 – Yare Deuteronomy 6:24 – Yare Proverbs 2:5 - Yirah	Being afraid of what God can do with his power.	Revelation 14:7 Exodus 33:20 Isaiah 41:14 Isaiah 43:5 Daniel 10:19 Matthew 28:5 Luke 1:13 Rev. 1:17

The word FEAR in the English Old Testament is often translated from the Hebrew word Yirah (noun) and Yare (verb). All the passages which talk about the fear of the Lord come from these words which mean reverence. Centuries of misunderstanding God led us to think fear was an appropriate way to translate this word.

Teaching someone to be afraid of what God will do to you isn't a way to lead someone to freely love God with all their heart. There will always be a dread of what he might do to you if you slip up. This is not a teaching that shows love.

When you accept that a teaching showing God to be anything less than loving or compassionate is a false teaching, then you begin to come to know the true God, a God that loves beyond our human comprehension. A God that is willing and did go to the utmost length to try to rescue us. When you come to know him, any fear you have of him will be replaced with trust and a deep love and a desire to have/know more and more of him.

So, why am I bringing this up and what has this got to do with the Adventist church not teaching the things I am claiming they teach? Let me share with you something I just ran across this morning.

Following is a comparison from different translations of the text found in Luke, chapter 12 verses 4 and 5:

“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and

after that have nothing more they can do. But I will warn you whom you should fear: Fear the one who, after the killing, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! – New English Translation

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.-- King James Version

“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. – New International Version

“I tell you, my friends, don’t be afraid of people who can kill the body but after that can do nothing more to hurt you. I will show you [warn you about] the one to fear. Fear the one who has the power[authority] to kill you and also [after the killing] to throw you into hell [Gehenna; a valley outside of Jerusalem where in the OT period children were sacrificed to a pagan god; later used as a burning trash heap; a metaphor for hell]. Yes, this is the one you should fear. – Expanded Bible

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath [c]power to cast into [d]hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him – American Standard Version

Of course there are more Bible versions than this. This was only a small sample. I wanted you to notice the capitalization of the one that we are supposed to fear. It's lower-case. This indicates that the translators of those versions don't believe that God is the one with the power to throw us into hell therefore we need to be afraid of him.

Then who is it that has that power? Is it satan? He certainly has the ability to send us on the pathway to hell, but I'm suggesting that the one we need to fear is ourselves. God does not tempt us. We are tempted by our own evil desires.

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God

cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. – James 1:13-15 NIV

The Bible states that God doesn't tempt anyone, we are tempted by our own evil desires. Would this not indicate that the one we should fear because he/she has the ability to cast us into hell would be ourselves?

One of the fruits of the spirit is self control. When we achieve that perfected Christ-like character then evil acts will no longer be a temptation for us. Until we reach that point then we need to fear our lack of self-control because that has the power to send us to hell. It separates us from the source of life.

Consider the story of creation and the fall of humankind. When our earliest parents fell who was it that was changed? Was it Adam and Eve or was it God? It was Adam and Eve. They were suddenly filled with self-awareness which led them to fear God. Yet God hadn't changed. He still loved them and acted in no way to cause their fear. Still, they were afraid of him. They had trusted in themselves and lost sight of the truth and that truth they lost was the knowledge of the love God had for them. They became afraid.

Let me share with you one more Bible passage and this one is also taken from Luke 12, verses 4 and 5.

I'm talking to you as my friends. Don't be afraid of what people will do to you. If you're arrested for my sake and they kill you, then they've only killed your body but they can't touch your soul. The only One to fear is God, who has power over your body and soul. In the end He can destroy both. Yes, you should fear him. – Jack Blanco, The Clear Word

If you're wondering who Jack Blanco is, The Adventist Book Center sells his paraphrase and has this to say about him:

Jack Blanco, Th.D., has spent a lifetime in ministry as a pastor, missionary, professor, and dean of the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University. He is the author of The Clear Word and his desire is to help others experience a deeper devotional experience with Jesus Christ. Dr. Blanco is retired and resides in Collegedale, Tennessee. –

<http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/authors/jack-j.-blanco>

When The Clear Word first came out my son was attending the university where Dr. Blanco was on staff. My son purchased one of the first printings of the paraphrase and had Dr. Blanco sign it then it was given to my husband as a birthday present. On the original publication of this book is the word "bible". Originally this book was titled The Clear Word Bible. We were told that people didn't like that the word Bible was on there so the publishers dropped that and the book became known as The Clear Word.

The Clear Word has been touted as the Adventist Bible. People were using it in place of their Bible because it was so easy to read. It more clearly said the things that they had been taught by the Adventist system. Yet when you compare Dr. Blanco's book with the Bible you'll find that he has taken numerous liberties and rewritten passages to better fit the Adventist dogma. This passage in Luke is just another example of his tampering with what the Bible actually said.

To sum this up, this is just one more instance where the Adventist organization is misrepresenting God and teaching their parishioners to fear, to be afraid of the One who Loves and desires to rescue them.

Morning beckons and I need a bit more sleep.

Love to all of you,

Hannah

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