

# Matthew 10:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

## Analysis

---

Jesus reorders fears: 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Greek: φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γέεννῃ, 'fear rather the one able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna'). The command distinguishes temporal versus eternal threats. Humans can only kill the body (σῶμα) - temporal harm. God can destroy both soul (ψυχή) and body in hell (γέεννα, Gehenna) - eternal judgment. This isn't fear as terror but reverent awe that prioritizes eternal over temporal consequences. Right fear of God eliminates paralyzing fear of humans.

## Historical Context

---

Disciples faced persecution from religious authorities (Acts 4:1-3, 5:17-18) and civil powers (Acts 12:1-3). Jesus prepares them for martyrdom by establishing proper fear hierarchy. 'Gehenna' referred to Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem where refuse burned, symbolizing final judgment. Jewish martyrdom theology (2 Maccabees 7) emphasized faithfulness despite bodily death, trusting resurrection. Early Christian martyrs embodied this teaching, fearing God more than execution. The promise addressed real threats, not hypothetical persecution.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. How does proper fear of God eliminate unhealthy fear of human threats?
2. What is the relationship between reverent awe of God and confidence in His protection?
3. What temporal fears need reordering in light of eternal realities?

## Interlinear Text

---

καὶ	μὴ	φοβηθήτε	ἀπὸ	τὸν	ἀποκτεῖναι·	τὸν	σῶμα
And	not	fear		him which	kill	him which	body
G2532	G3361	G5399	G575	G3588	G615	G3588	G4983
τὸν	δὲ	ψυχὴν	μὴ	δυνάμενον	ἀποκτεῖναι·	φοβηθήτε	
him which	but	soul	not	able	kill	fear	
G3588	G1161	G5590	G3361	G1410	G615	G5399	
δὲ	μᾶλλον	τὸν	δυνάμενον	καὶ	ψυχὴν	καὶ	σῶμα
but	rather	him which	able	And	soul	And	body
G1161	G3123	G3588	G1410	G2532	G5590	G2532	G4983
ἀπολέσαι	ἐν	γεέννῃ					
to destroy	in	hell					
G622	G1722	G1067					

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Revelation 2:10** (Parallel theme): Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

**James 4:12** (Parallel theme): There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

**Jeremiah 5:22** (Parallel theme): Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

**Isaiah 51:12** (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

**Ecclesiastes 5:7** (Parallel theme): For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

**1 Peter 3:14** (Parallel theme): But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

**Isaiah 66:2** (Parallel theme): For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

**Psalms 119:120** (Parallel theme): My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

**Matthew 25:46** (Parallel theme): And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

**Hebrews 10:31** (Parallel theme): It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.