



Session 3 - Understanding the Fear of God

The scene we are going to look at is when God spoke what the 10 commandments to Moses and the people. The scene though, was overwhelming for the people watching.

Let's take a look.

Exodus 19:17-19 (NASB) 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. 19 When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

Fast forward to the next chapter.

Exodus 20:18-20 (NASB) 18 All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

This is a really great passage for us to review and study to begin our study on the fear of God.

20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

On the surface this doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. Moses essentially says "Hey guys don't **fear** Him, He is simply testing you so that His **fear** will remain with you."

Huh? In order to understand what Moses is saying here we need to look more closely at the meaning of afraid and fear in this passage.

When Moses says "Do not be **afraid**", afraid in this verse means:

Afraid - yare' (yā·rā')

1. be dreadful, be feared
2. to make afraid, terrify

But notice that Moses also says the following: **"in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."**

Is Moses saying that God wants to TERRIFY us into not sinning?

Fear in this part of the verse means:

Fear - yir'ah (yir·ä')

1. fear (of God), respect, reverence, piety
2. revered

So the answer to that question is no, Moses is saying the following: **20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be TERRIFIED; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the REVERENCE of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."**

God doesn't desire for us to be afraid of Him so that we don't sin.

Isaiah 41:10 (NASB) 10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

But He does want us to understand that reverence for Him is good for us. It's a need of ours.

Proverbs 19:23 (NASB) 23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

What God wants us to understand is that Fear or Reverence for Him will help change our perspective about sin, about our lives, about our relationship with Him...frankly it changes EVERYTHING!

Let's see how this looks practically in one's life from from a well known character and a well known story from scripture.

Job 1:1-4 (NASB) 1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. 2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. 3 His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

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Job was a very successful man. Notice from a worldly perspective it says that Job **“was the greatest of all the men of the east.”**

Job has an incredibly successful life from the world’s perspective. Based on what he owned just in Live Stock, the land that he must have owned to maintain these animals, the many servants that worked for him we can easily say that Job was a multi millionaire. Certainly in the 10’s of millions of dollars. **But one day Job lost all of it.**

Job 1:14-21 (NASB) 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Can you imagine hearing what Job did that day and in that manner and all at once. Devastating! It certainly was for Job.

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Fell to the ground and worshipped?? Blessed be the name of the Lord?? - How does a man come a place where this is his response to this kind of devastation in his life?

I believe scripture would say this is why.

Job 1:1 (NASB) 1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil

Fearing God - in this passage is not the dread or emotional fear of God we discussed earlier. This is reverence or awe of God.

How can we know this? By reviewing Job's words from scripture:

Job 26:5-14 (NLT) 5 "The dead tremble--those who live beneath the waters. 6 The underworld is naked in God's presence. The place of destruction is uncovered. 7 God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing. 8 He wraps the rain in his thick clouds, and the clouds don't burst with the weight. 9 He covers the face of the moon, shrouding it with his clouds. 10 He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundary between day and night. 11 The foundations of heaven tremble; they shudder at his rebuke. 12 By his power the sea grew calm. By his skill he crushed the great sea monster. 13 His Spirit made the heavens beautiful, and his power pierced the gliding serpent. 14 These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?"

Additionally:

Job 28:23-28 (NLT) 23 "God alone understands the way to wisdom; he knows where it can be found, 24 for he looks throughout the whole earth and sees everything under the heavens. 25 He decided how hard the winds should blow and how much rain should fall. 26 He made the laws for the rain and laid out a path for the lightning. 27 Then he saw wisdom and evaluated it. He set it in place and examined it thoroughly. 28 And this is what he says to all humanity: 'The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding.'

Job understood this spiritual principle:

Psalm 111:10 (ESV) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

What can we learn from Job's fear or reverence for God?

Fear or reverence for God is how we put everything in this life into perspective including trials. Much like Job hearing in a matter of a few minutes that he had lost EVERYTHING...growing in our reverence for Him will be the thing that will bring us to a place of saying "Blessed be the name of the Lord" when everything in our lives is collapsing or has collapsed.

LET'S TAKE THE SECOND HALF OF THIS LESSON TO TRY TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE FROM THE BIBLE ON UNDERSTANDING WHAT JOB UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE FEAR OF GOD.

FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THIS LESSON I WANT US TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IT DOES TO ONE'S HEART WHEN WE JUST STOP AND REVERE HIM:

LET'S BEGIN WITH HIS NAME

Exodus 3:13-14 (NASB) 13 Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I AM - hayah (hä·yä)

1. to be, become, come to pass, exist, happen, fall out
 1. Qual
 1. to happen, fall out, occur, take place, come about, come to pass
 2. to come about, come to pass
 2. to come into being, become
 1. to arise, appear, come
 2. to become
 1. to become
 2. to become like
 3. to be instituted, be established
 3. to be
 1. to exist, be in existence
 2. to abide, remain, continue (with word of place or time)
 3. to stand, lie, be in, be at, be situated (with word of locality)
 4. to accompany, be with
2. (Niphal)
 1. to occur, come to pass, be done, be brought about
 2. to be done, be finished, be gone

He exists outside of time. We experience time linearly, but He exists outside of time. In other words I can't go back and experience the second that just happened. But as that second that just went by is gone to me, He is still in it as well as in this second we are experiencing right now and He is already in the second that is about to happen. That is because He is I AM.

CREATION HAS REVERENCE FOR HIM

Psalm 19:1 (NASB) ...The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

God spoke the universe into existence. Scientists have this to say about the **ever expanding** universe:

By the early 1990s, astronomers had calculated how much mass was in the universe, and decided on the Big Chill (EXPLAIN MECHANICS OF BIG CHILL) as the most likely end of the universe. But then dark energy showed up in our observations.

According to the Big Chill, the universe should be expanding more slowly today than it did in the past, because gravity has had time to work on slowing the universe down over all these billions of years. But astronomers found that the universe is moving faster today than it was a billion years ago, meaning something must be working to speed it up.

This result seems crazy because gravity always pulls and slows — it never pushes. Yet some force appears to be pushing the universe apart. Astronomers, concluding that we just don't know what this force is, have attributed it to a mysterious dark energy. -Hubblesite.org

Scientist don't know what energy it is that is expanding the universe and keeping it from stopping. They can't see or detect the energy. Might it be because it is The Source of all energy that keeps the universe expanding?

Psalm 19:1 (NASB) ...The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

Might it be that the Law that states creation will glorify God is greater than the law of gravity?

THE SPIRIT WORLD REVERES HIM...WE SEE SOME PRETTY EXTRAORDINARY TRUTH ABOUT JESUS AUTHORITY WHEN WE SEE HOW DEMONS INTERACT WITH JESUS.

Mark 5:5-13 (NASB) 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones. 6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" 8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he *said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. 12 The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." 13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

*I find it interesting that these demons never challenge or mock Jesus by telling Him that *their* master will one day defeat Him. **Almost as if they know even Satan's power does not rival His. WHY?**

Because they've seen Jesus on the Other Side. They know who He is.

Jesus Himself, had reverence for the Father.

Hebrews 5:7 (NLT) While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God.

Can finite man understand the Trinity?

THE AUTHORITY THAT RESIDES IN JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 26:52-53 (NASB) 52 Then Jesus *said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. 53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

How many angels would there be in twelve legions? Since the word “legion” refers to at least 6,000, it means a legion of angels would be at least 6,000 angels. However, Jesus said the Father would give Him “more than” twelve legions of angels if He requested it. Because it would be pure speculation to try to figure out how many “more than” twelve legions would be, let’s just stick with the figure of twelve legions to see how many angels that entails.

One legion is 6,000 angels, so if you simply multiply that number by twelve, you’ll discover that twelve legions of angels would include a minimum of 72,000 angels. But Jesus said the Father would give Him more than twelve legions of angels; therefore, you can conclude that there were potentially many additional thousands of angels available to Jesus the night He was arrested!

Finally, let’s look at our third question: **What would be the combined strength in this number of angels?** Angels are powerful! In fact, Isaiah 37:36 records that a single angel obliterated 185,000 men in one night. So if a single angel had that kind of power, how much combined strength would there be in twelve legions of angels?

Isaiah 37:36 (NASB) 36 Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

Since a single angel was able to obliterate 185,000 men in one night, it would mean the combined strength in a legion of 6,000 angels would be enough to destroy 1,110,000,000 men (that is, one billion, one hundred ten million men) — and that’s just the combined power in one legion of angels!

Now let’s multiply this same number 185,000 by twelve legions, or at least 72,000 angels, which was the number of angels Jesus said was available to Him on the night of His arrest. When we do, we find that there was enough combined strength at Jesus’ disposal to have annihilated at least 13,320,000,000 men (that is, thirteen billion, three hundred twenty million men) — there are currently 7.5 billion people on earth. <http://www.renner.org/problems/twelve-legions-of-angels/>

What kind of authority resides in Jesus Christ? How often do I forget that I serve the King of Kings? The King of the Universe?

So what's the significance of reverential fear of Him?

The significance of it is that it causes us to be right sized when we meditate and spend time thinking about who He is.

We are right sized, as John the Baptist said:

John 3:30 (NASB) 30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."

One cannot be trying to satisfy the desires of self and also be fearing Him. You are either serving yourself or you are serving Him.

*Notice in this passage that the natural order is first looking to Him to increase in one's life and then the individual will decrease.

This is the understanding of the fear that is spoken of in scripture. It is the understanding of the totality of who He is. He is the creator of all of the universe, not only that He is the one holding it together simply with the word of His mouth. That is someone to be greatly revered.

Yet that same magnificent, marvelous, all powerful God wants fellowship with you and me! Stunning?!

This fear is good for us it causes us to believe and understand the following:

Psalm 56:11 (NASB) 11 In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

Romans 8:31 (NASB) 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

This fear or reverence for Him was missing in the Children of Israel:

Deuteronomy 5:29 (NASB) 29 Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

Psalm 33:8-9 (NASB) 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.