

Biblical Fear

Title: A Biblical View of Fear

Text: Exodus 34:10-17

POINT 1 - THE EXTENT OF EVIL

A biblical fear of God isn't natural to mankind. In fact, a lack of fear of God is often exacerbated when a generation is raised without God as the center of that society. This is never more clear than in Judges 2:10, "All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel." Thus resulting in the following from Judges 2:11-12, "Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from *among* the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger." This is problematic with people who on the outside make a profession, but on the inside are not possessors. When a nation, society or generation forsakes the God of heaven and creation, the end results is the depths of wickedness.

Romans 13:3 defines the goal of laws and government, "For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil." Government is designed to prevent evil from it's full expression. It creates some boundaries for behavior. We know that men break these rules, but when there is no rule or law, then lawlessness abounds. But there are generations that don't know what God has done. Exodus 1:8, "Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." He did not know the account of what God had done to save Egypt. The new kings concern was for his political power. He appointed taskmasters to make the work harder. But in the providence of God, they multiplied.

His evil was elevated in order to maintain power, he ordered the midwives to kill the male babies. Exodus 1:16, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see *them* upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." What sickens me today is the hideous murder of a baby in order to maintain power. Yet, in today's America this is what we see. Many advocate for the killing of a baby up to and even after the moment of birth. Evil hasn't just landed in this world the past few years. Children are image-bearers of God. Men are killing them by the millions in order to maintain control of their lives.

Application: All around us in this world are men who are wicked and rule according to their wickedness. Georgia elected a senator who claims to be a "reverend" who labels himself a "pro-choice pastor" and that "Jesus would support abortion." This is beyond wicked. This is the false shepherds that Jeremiah speaks of. Leaders support trans-gender, homosexual, gender altering transformation. Abusing the image God created each person in. Imagine for a moment you are instructed by a political leader to abort a child or perform a same sex union, it's not a marriage by the way. What's our response? What's our duty? To God or to man?

POINT 2 - GODLY FEAR NOT HUMAN FEAR DEFINED

The response to the wicked command was not one of political thought. It was one of biblical truth. Exodus 1:17, "But the midwives feared God." Let's define the word fear from a biblical viewpoint. The Hebrew word is translated "afraid, terrible, dreadful, fearful." Depending on the context fear means several things. In the NT it can be used in the form of "a flight" literally means running away. That's human fear. Many have a fear

Biblical Fear

of heights or confined spaces. There is a fear caused by adversaries. We see that in the OT quite a bit. But there is a reverential fear as defined by Vines Bible Dictionary, “of God, as a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere "fear" of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a "fear" which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence, and which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God, through the indwelling Spirit of God.” Every Christian should fear displeasing God. Every Christian should fear not keeping His word.

This is the context of the midwives position. They feared God more than an evil, power seeking king. The rest of vs. 17 says, “and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them.” Paying taxes or abiding by laws is not a violation of God’s word. But being asked to violate God’s holy word by men is a means of fearing God more than man. And this is exactly what the midwives did. Daniel is another example as he was asked to bow down to worship false gods. Nor did his friends who were thrown into the fiery furnace. Man isn’t who we fear, it’s God.

Application: How does this affect us today? We can learn from the midwives. Exodus 1:18-19 they were brought before the King and asked why, they responded because of the strength of the Hebrew women. But it was God who ordained such. Exodus 1:20-21, “So God was good (dealt well) to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. Because the midwives feared God.” The Kings response was to put the male children born into the Nile, and it was there was Moses was found and God’s plan for deliverance was established. For us today, we must have a biblical fear of God. We must fear disobeying His clear commands of Scripture.

Transition: A lot has taken place between chapter 2 and 34. Deliverance, rebellion, complaining, establishing the Ark of the Covenant and laws and order. Our texts comes on the heels of vs. 1-9 where the tablets were replaced and Moses prayed for mercy for the children of Israel.

POINT 3 - GOD’S PROMISE, GOD’S COVENANT, NOT MAN’S

What we have just established about fear is going to be a major part of this text. Exodus 34:10 starts with the only one who can keep and will keep His word, God. It is that God said, and God establishes what He wills. When the covenant was broken, it was Israel that broke it; now that it comes to be renewed, it is God that makes it. God is going to make a covenant, He is going to do miracles, things never before seen by men or nations on the earth. And all the people on the earth who live will see what He is doing.

Psalms 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.” We should wonder in amazement at the beauty of what God does for us to see. However, we often stand in amazement at His goodness to us. The point is God has established eternal life not man. God had prepared a place for us not man. God keeps us in His hands, not us. The point to the children of Israel was, “watch what I am about to do.”

It will be a fearful thing. It will be an amazing things. Your fear will not be of man’s fear, but you will fear what God can and will do. The very fact He has the capability of life and death, punishment and judgments should drive fear in you to obey His commands.

Biblical Fear

Application: The fear of God and what He is about to do brings about three responses in our text, observe (vs. 11), watch (vs. 12), and tear down (vs. 13).

POINT 4 - OBSERVE

In our text they are commanded to observe what God is telling them in the following verses. The Hebrew phrase for observe means to “to guard, to keep, to hedge.” For matters of safety, you should observe who is hanging around the gas pump when you get out for gas. In other words, you guard, look, or put a hedge around you. This command is just that, it’s not a suggestion. Why do we observe the commands of God? Because we should fear God’s judgement if we don’t.

What were they to observe? God was going to by divine intervention drive out the inhabitants before you. Matthew Henry notes, “God, as King of nations, plucks up some, to plant others, as it pleases him; as King of saints, he made room for the vine he brought out of Egypt.”¹ And observe it with fear. Observe it with a reverence to the power and will of almighty God. In the 1689 Baptist Confession, they agree upon the providence of God in their life when they state, “The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often times leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends.”² And so God does for us, and we must be fearful to observe what He can and will do.

POINT 5 - WATCH

What are they to watch against? Themselves! They are to “take heed” to watch and be aware. The most familiar passage is Proverbs 4:23, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” Your heart will lead you astray, thus you are to watch over it that it doesn’t drift. When Jesus was in the garden praying he came back and found His disciples sleeping, “And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:40-41).

In our text they were commanded to watch against making a covenant with these inhabitants of the land. They were to watch against letting the gods of the inhabitants to have a seat in their life. The Bible is clear on fundamental doctrines. Grace alone. Faith alone. Christ alone. The word of God alone. The blood alone. Jesus is returning. He is the only way. Whatever God removed, don’t let Israel establish again. If God made war to drive them out, don’t offer a branch of peace. Watch!

Paul warned young Timothy of such men in his last letter, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching” (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Watch! A former SBC President said concerning homosexuality, “God whispers at it.” God destroyed cities because of this specific sin. That’s hardly a whisper. A popular

¹ The Matthew Henry Commentary

² The 1689 Baptist Confession; Of Divine Providence; Paragraph 5

Biblical Fear

pastor has recently said, “[Don’t say the Bible says](#)”, “[say an author says](#).” You must watch men that try to define biblical terms such as what a pastor is. Watch those who try to make the Bible fit the culture. Why? So that it doesn’t become a snare. Most of you hunters know what a snare is, it’s a “trap.” Half right doctrine or 99% right doctrine is a trap to adjusting the Bible’s clear commands into mere suggestions.

POINT 6 - TEAR, CUT AND SMASH

The clear commands is they are to tear, smash and cut. Don’t leave a remnant. [Don’t let a petty little sin you like remain at your door.](#) Hebrews 12:2, “[let us also lay aside every encumbrance \(weight\) and the sin which so easily entangles us.](#)” The command was to tear, smash and cut. [Don’t let a remnant of temptation bring about disobedience in your life.](#)

We the reason for this in vs. 14, you shall have no other gods before me. Why? He is a jealous God. Friend, [God isn’t going to share the platform in your life with others.](#) You say, “I don’t worship other gods.” But I ask you today, [what occupies your time in your life? What has priority in your life? Where does God fit in your views of life? How does His word play a part in your behavior? Actions?](#) Vs. 15 gives us the hinge of which way we may go by saying “lest” or “otherwise”. [If you don’t remove all these from the land, if you don’t destroy, cut and smash the lingering little false gods, you may unite with them.](#)

[If you don’t rid your life of the things that draw your attention away from God,](#) there’s a high likelihood of you uniting with them. Even worse, there’s a chance you make them equal with God. The danger for the Israelites is they [would play the harlot with other gods.](#) In other words, be unfaithful to God. Matthew Henry says, “[Those cannot worship God aright who do not worship him alone.](#)” [You cannot come to worship God alone on Sunday, and yet, be influenced by unbiblical ways during the week.](#) The sin of making a molten image was a sin they were tempted to do often. You may be tempted to dis-guard holiness in order to be pleasing to the world.

It is said, “fences make good neighbors.” Don’t make a covenant they were told. Don’t be tempted to do so. God warns against marrying the inhabitants of the land, not because they were a different ethnicity, but because they [worshipped other gods,](#) “[If they espoused their children, they would be in danger of espousing their gods.](#)”³ Again, Henry says, “[The way of sin is downhill: those that are in league with idolaters will come by degrees to be in love with idolatry; and those that are prevailed upon to eat of the idolatrous sacrifice will come at length to offer it.](#)”

Conclusion: What have you left standing in your life today that is causing you to make little gods in your life?

[Would you let a snake in the house, even though you couldn’t see it? The greatest danger in the church is discernment. It’s not you can’t see what’s wrong, it’s you can’t see what’s almost right.](#)

³ Matthew Henry Commentary