

## The Genesis and Exodus of Fear

Exodus 19:16-25; 20:18-21

*Catastrophizing* fears has become common today. How do we avoid this?

- Aim to have one fear, not zero (which is impossible). One Fear, capital 'F': aim for *the Fear of God*.

The Genesis (beginning) of fear: Abel is killed. Abram fears failure. Rachel dies in childbirth...

The Exodus (exit) of fear

- The midwives choose to fear God (Ex 1:21)
- Excursus: *Wait, is the fear of God out-of-date Old Testament stuff?*
  - No, see 1 Peter 2:17: "Fear God." See even stronger words from Jesus in Matthew 10:28.
  - It's true that "perfect love casts out fear [of punishment]" (1 John 4:18). More on that later in this series!
- Exodus 20:20 fascinates: it says both *do* fear, yet *do not* fear. Why?
  - Things feared in this scene: smoke, lightning, sounds, fire. So is God *another* thing to be added to this list? No, for God *is in control* of all these things. Fear Him, and all other fears will shrink.
- Our problem: many of us don't know a person who is to be feared who is also *good*.
  - About the lion Aslan: "He's good, but not safe."

Application in a COVID moment

- When the Fear of God informs our fear of COVID, we begin to live in terms of *stewardship*. Fearing Him, we recognize our body and our life are His. That doesn't mean we always know what to do! It's an uncertain world. But we know we don't want to take unnecessary risks with what the Lord has given us, yet we also don't want to fail to live the life opportunities He's given us as well.
- The Parable of the Talents is helpful for considering stewardship in light of the fear of God (Matthew 25:14-30)