

Wrestling with the Sovereignty of God & the Freedom of Relationship Introduction - His Tactical Flexibility in the OT

*Review last week

Moses & Pharaoh

When you read the first 2 chapters, God isn't even mentioned in regards to the birth of Moses, the decision of the maidservant, etc.

The focus instead is on human activity and their decisions and THEN how God uses them
[Could the women have decided differently and let the boy die?](#)

I think absolutely yes

[Would that thwart God or take Him by surprise?](#)

Of course not

But He uses their decisions for a greater good

Things turn out in the end of this story, so we tend to read BLUEPRINT when we read it

But I don't think that is an accurate reading

- Ex. 2:23-25

Makes an impact on God

Ex. 3

Moses resists God – 5 times no less

Why? Doesn't this seem like the wrong thing to do? Doesn't this seem a tad scary?

Because Moses' working with God is not necessarily a foregone conclusion

If it is, then the things that transpire are phony

In fact, if it such a foregone conclusion, why does God relent and send Aaron?

[What does this say about the story?](#)

IT IS FLUID

Why would Moses get praised as a man of faith if God blue printed it all

- Ex. 4:1-2

[What is Moses' question?](#)

[Now, when God starts talking about using the staff in verse 2, what can you glean out of this?](#)

[What does the "If" language of God imply?](#)

Apparently God thinks Moses has a good point, gives him signs

Didn't do this out of the gate – in the moment

"If they don't believe"

HE AGREES WITH MOSES...THEY MIGHT NOT BELIEVE...OR MIGHT

- Ex. 4:6-9

If If If

And many of the things that are supposed to happen by the way never happen

- Ex. 3:18

[Can someone show me the place where the elders went with him?](#)

They didn't, elders are never said to appear before Pharaoh

Ex. 5:1 – Instead Aaron takes their place (4:14 is the reason)

With Aaron, God concedes to Moses and picks PLAN B

- Ex. 4:1

What is Moses really saying to God?

What if you are wrong

What does Moses presume about God here and the way He interacts with creation?

The future is open

How about the whole “hardening” of Pharaoh’s heart

“Harden” – Normally think of complete control

1. Pharaoh is no saint...this isn’t Mother Theresa we are talking about here
2. Before it ever says God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, 4x he hardened is OWN HEART
3. Term harden

The 3 Hebrew terms used here (kabad, hazaq, qasah) generally mean “to make something strong or heavy or to encourage...to reinforce”

It is not a deterministic term when used in the OT

If it is, then why does God have to repeat the process with Pharaoh?

4. IF language

Tells Pharaoh judgment is coming IF he does not release them

Why would he use this language if it is a foregone conclusion

So why would God do this?

Well, if we know the heart of God, He is usually doing more than one thing at a time

He is clearly nudging Pharaoh in the direction he is already inclined to fulfill His covenant goal

Also, why do we never consider that God cares about Pharaoh too? Or the Egyptians?

Could it be that God ALSO wants Pharaoh to come to his senses too?

We say God cares for all people, but I have NEVER heard that in a sermon

Pharaoh is in a sinful place, so God gives him over to judgment pressure in the hopes he too will turn

And when you look at the plagues, they aren’t so much directed at Pharaoh, but at their Pantheon of gods

Pharaoh (and his people) is being pushed by God to decide

- Ex. 5:2

Is this unlike anyone else unsaved that you know?

God’s goal is NEVER judgment...even with Pharaoh and Egypt

Let’s take a second to address the whole ALLOW or PERMIT word

I personally think this is kinda cop-out language

What sense does it make to say God “permitted” Pharaoh’s specific evil choices if God determined things ahead of time so he could not possibly have chosen other than he did

Normally with permission the person granting permission does not determine the choice of the one granted permission

Even more, the person who grants permission usually also has the power to deny it and may even prefer that what is permitted not be done

And if that is the case, maybe God is completely open to Pharaoh’s choice

If God’s permission is simply His choice to get what He wants, that is an ODD way of explaining it don’t you think?

Let’s tackle one more thought

One HUGE argument against the future being more open and God being more flexible is it LIMITS HIS SOVEREIGNTY”

But I ask you, which is more Sovereign

The God who predetermine everything and pre-plans everything

Or the God who somehow still reaches His ultimate goal while flexing with millions of our personal decisions

I submit to you, this takes an infinitely more wise and powerful God

Leading the People out to Sinai

- Ex. 13:17

“lest they change their minds”

Might change their minds?

Destroying the children of Israel & Moses

After golden calf

- Ex. 32:9-10
- Ex. 32:11-13

3 reasons why God should not follow thru on this

Ex. 32:11-13

1. people belong to God
2. Look bad to the Egyptians
3. His promise to Abraham

God had a rebut to all 3 of these easily

The people are sinful, I could care less what Egypt thinks of me, and He will keep His promise thru Moses, a descendent of Abraham

But He doesn't

- Ex. 32:14

Why the change of heart?

Because of His relationship with Moses

Not because of Israel

Not because his argument was so effective

But rather because of MOSES

Doesn't it seem just a tad insincere to you if this isn't a real decision and God has already predetermined His decision?

- Ex. 32:31-34

Now what does Moses want?

Now he wants God to forgive them

To ask God this, **WHAT DOES MOSES ASSUME?**

Does God do it?

God DOES NOT go with Moses' plan this time