

Wrestling with the Sovereignty of God & the Freedom of Relationship

Introduction - His Tactical Flexibility in the OT

*Review last week

Goals of the study

1. Expand your thinking on God
 - a. More Sovereign
 - b. More Wise
 - c. More Relational
2. Help you challenge your “evangelical theology” with simply what the Narrative says
 - a. History of this theology, background, etc.
3. To know what is specifically pre-determined & what isn't when we can know
 - a. Pharaoh story – Israel predestined to leave, why point this out if everything is pre-determined, the exception proves the rule
 - b. Romans 8/9 and Ephesians 1

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

- Ex. 33:3

Now what is God saying?

God has His own plan B

And it DOESN'T have God in it

[And what is God's reason?](#)

He is worried if He went He would destroy them (foregone conclusion?)

So the people start mourning over Plan B

So Moses asks God to reconsider going with them

What does God do?

God says He will send His Presence along

Moses of course wants more so he keeps pushing

[Again why?](#)

BECAUSE HE KNOWS GOD IS WILLING TO CHANGE HIS MIND SOMETIMES

So God changes His mind – His FACE will go with them – returns to Plan A

Moses then doesn't want to go if God doesn't go – Ex. 33:15-16

Then Moses wants to see His glory – not entirely clear why – Ex. 33:18

Quirky huh? Welcome to God

Point – you will find that the patriarchs ASSUMED THIS ABOUT GOD

Why we don't is another topic

- Deut. 8:2

“To know”

Why would He need to test them if He already knows?

- Ex. 33:5

- Deut. 13:3

“that I might know what to do with you”

Time of the Judges

Turned away from God, then cried out for help

God tells them to go ask their little gods they have created for help but they repent and beg Him

Here you can see the severe pain of God

Not a God who has just worked everything out ahead of time, but a God in the moment

- Judges 10:16

God could bare their misery no longer

Isaiah – the Vineyard

- Is. 5:1-2, 4

[What did you notice in verse 2 & 4?](#)

Says He “expected” 2 times

Odd language don't you think for someone who is supposed to know everything as a fore gone conclusion?

- Is. 1:18

Jeremiah

Standing in the gate proclaiming there need to change...and if they don't...

Jer. 7:1-29 (20-26)

This is not an unusual passage

Most of the Books of the Prophets contain language like this

God begging for someone to listen so He can CHANGE HIS MIND

[How much freedom is implied here?](#)

They are personally responsible precisely because they had a choice

Waistband illustration – hidden in rock by river – deteriorates – LIKE ISRAEL

- Jer. 13:15-17

[What do you see here? Shocked if they don't turn?](#)

Probably not

But why so disappointed if He already KNOWS EVERYTHING?

Jeremiah– Harlotry language

- Jer. 3:6-7

“I thought” 3 times in this section

Jeremiah

In chapter 15 God says He is done and Israel will reap judgement

And in the middle of this brutal speech from God listen to what He says

- Jer. 15:6

[What is God saying here?](#)

“I am TIRED from changing my mind concerning you Israel”

- Jer. 18:7-10
- Jer. 32:34-35

Ezekiel

“I sought”

“Found no one”

Can you seek for something you KNOW isn't there?

Ezekiel – Exile illustration

Pack bags, dig hole in the wall, travel and come back in front of everyone

- Ez. 12:3

“Perhaps”

Ezekiel eating human waste

Hezekiah and his death (II Kings 20)

Gets 14 years added

II Chron. 32:31 ³¹Even *in the matter of* the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him *alone only* to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

Jonah

How about Jonah

[What does God say He is gonna do?](#)

In book of Jonah, 3x it says He repents of His previous decision

[After God changes His mind and helps Nineveh, do you remember Jonah's response?](#)

- Jonah 4:2

What is Jonah saying he knew already and why he is SO upset?

“I KNEW” you would change your mind and forgive these people

Are 2 passages in the OT that say God does not change His mind

(This is not a lot compared with approximately 250 that say He does)

- a) Qualification 1 – I Sam. 15:29 saqar = speak falsely
Fascinating, in this same story where God supposedly doesn’t change His mind, God regrets His own decision to make Saul King
 - I Sam. 15:11
AND here we have Samuel trying to change God’s mind about His decision
So the whole context of this story is shrouded in God being willing/not willing to move within this decision
Verse mean God is not like us, He doesn’t lie, and in this He will not change
- b) Qualification 2 – Num 23:19 verb is kazab = lie or deceive
God is not a liar, He is not fickle

One of the most famous CREEDS in the OT = Ex. 34:5-7

Quoted over a dozen times in the OT

In two of them, Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2 – a key phrase is actually added

“God repents (niham) of carrying out threatened punishment”

Divine acceptance and love is placed ALONG SIDE God’s willingness to change His mind

Goal - You see the people in Scripture needed to be taught that God is greater than His decisions

Keep in mind, God doesn’t always change His mind

* Nathan going to David – son still died despite his prayers

Tell me this though...for a guy that appears to have known God potentially better than any human save Jesus that EVER LIVED, why does David even ask God to save his son’s life if he knows it is deterministic in nature?

Because David knows what God is like and how He created the chess game

David did not accept the clear word of God as unalterable

Few believed that what God said at the time was written in stone

God, the Sovereign One, who has destined to complete His Story is in constant interaction with Creation

This God, un-thwarted in His commitment and ability to pull it off

Stands ready to hear our laments and cries and longings

Longing to interact with His Covenant partners in the ruling of His Covenant Kingdom

What is it that Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah...what is it all these people assumed about God that we for some reason do not

This should greatly change how you read the Story – is it Strategic or Tactical = YES

This should greatly change how you view God – both Sovereign and moved by compassion because His GOAL IS RELATIONSHIP

And this should greatly change how you view your own life