

God's Plan For Moses

I Absolute Sovereignty

God's absolute sovereignty is displayed in two manners over situations and men. Let us begin.

A Over situations

"Go back to Egypt"

TRANS: God has His own prerogative. He not only determines the moment when things come to pass but also the means as well. Moses would have perished were it not for the timing of God. God's sovereignty over situations is seen in 1) timing and 2) provision.

1 Timing

His timing is not set on human time tables. The psalmist is noted for saying "How long O Lord how long?" God does things at His own pace, and according to His own plan. Its not about your plans but God's plans, and God will interrupt your plans anytime He wants. Let us consider the return of Christ. The Word says, "He will come like a thief in the night." When no one is expecting Him and when no one is ready. When His time table is ready then He will return and not ours. That is exactly what is going on here with Moses. Here he is in Midian.¹³⁸ He has seemingly settled down, gotten married, working for his father in law. And then God interrupts this for His sovereign purposes. Moses' response is a perfect example of how we ought to live. He when called by the Lord while in Midian just previous to our passage quickly goes to Jethro to ask permission to leave.¹³⁹ He picks up his entire family and is ready to go without any rebuttal and complaint. He packs them on the back of a donkey and prepares to take off. How many times do you postpone doing the work God has called you to do. How many times do you put it off to the last minute or ignore an opportunity for displaying God's glory. Perhaps you should seek the example of Moses and not grumble and be ready for the work of the Lord. And once again God interrupts His time table, and it is not with the news I'm sure Moses wanted to hear. God gives Moses two sets of news one good and the other seemingly not good.

TRANS: One of the interrupting declarations of God is a manner in which God shows His Sovereignty over situations through the provision of Moses life.

"for all the men who were seeking your life are dead"

2 Provision

The good news that God gives Moses is another display of His sovereignty, that of His sovereign provision of Moses life. God provides for the good of His people. In the end whatever God seeks to do; it is for ultimately His glory which is our greatest good. God provides for us, He provided for the Israelites in the wilderness with Manna and quail. He provided for Elijah with the ravens bringing him provisions. He provided for the safety of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego while they were in the fiery furnace. He provided for the safety of Daniel while he was in the Lion's den. And here God displays His sovereignty over situations by the provision of Moses in allowing for the time to pass for the death of those seeking Moses life. Moses had it not been for the provision of God would have gone there and not known if those seeking to kill him were dead. Moses was wanted for murder, when he killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew slave. But God preserved His life. Friends do not take for granted the glorious provisions of God. Look around you, you are not persecuted, hunted down, starving, or wanting. God has given you much more than you deserve and you ought to thank Him for it continually, living a life that is grateful and humble for His provision. There is not a reason today why God keeps this building from collapsing with all of us in it, there is not a reason why God did not strike you dead in a car accident on the way to school or work, there is not a reason why God allowed you to wake up and breath the air, other than His divine prerogative.

B Over men

God also displays His absolute sovereignty not over situations of time and provision, but also through the eternal decrees of the actions of all men. The second piece of news God shared with Moses was not one perhaps he particularly wanted to hear. God tells Moses that although he will perform all the miracles before Pharaoh¹⁴⁰ it will be to no avail. God will not allow Pharaoh to repent, for God will cause the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

"see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart"

God has sovereignly ordained every step you take as is declared in Proverbs (Prov. 16:9). But God's sovereignty over men is a shunned doctrine in our day, it has had the rough and offensive edges sanded down and cut off. But God will not remain silent; He has shouted it from the rooftops of scripture, and through His vessels throughout church history. God's absolute sovereignty is over the eternal destiny of all men's souls, it is for a purpose, it is just and without partiality.

1 Election or Reprobation

The sovereignty of God in election and reprobation, the destinies of men, is clearly taught here before our eyes. Here we see the sovereign right of God to choose. God here has chosen Moses over Pharaoh and the Israelites over the Egyptians. God has set His special love, favor, and grace upon some people and purposely not given it to others and caused their hardness. With every choice there is a refusal. 2 Thess. 2:13 if there is an election of some, there are others who are not elected. John 6:37 When there are some given by the Father to the Son there are others who are not given. Rev. 21:27 there are some whose names are written in the Lambs book of life and there are others whose names are not written there. The hearts of all men rest in the hand of God, from the peasant, servant, warrior, and even the kings of men, they all rest in the hand of the potter, and He will use these vessels for His purpose. (Prov. 16:4) This is not a doctrine God is ashamed of, He has not hidden these truths under a rock, but put them in His Word, and made them known, God is not ashamed, yet we as pastors seem to be.

2 For a Purpose

God's sovereignty over the hearts of men is for a purpose. God's sovereignty in hardening Pharaoh is for a reason. For God determined to bring all creators into existence. There is not one person who exists whom God did not create. Therefore, there are those whom God created that He knew would despise and reject Christ as their Saviour, never the less, God determined to create them. It was not purposeless, but purpose full as a means to display Christ's infinite worth, God's absolute Sovereignty, and His impeccably righteous character. He purposed that some would spend eternity in heaven and that others will spend eternity in the tormenting Lake of Fire. (Mark 16:16) God creates people fully aware of their future rejection of Christ and fully aware of their unbelief. And it is for the purpose of displaying His glory.

Before the incarnation Israel was the only recipients of divine Salvation (Acts 14:16; Amos 3:2). Rev. 4:11 God has made everything for Himself, all people for His pleasure, not for our own happiness, but for His own glory. The fact that God decreed to establish one child to be born into one family and another child in another family shows His purpose reigns supreme. God determined the pigment of your skin, the color of your hair and eyes, the abilities you would possess, the desires you would have in your heart, the height and weight of every individual rests in His sovereign hand. The things you would accomplish in your life and would not accomplish. God has chosen to make some men lame, while others can run triathlons. God has decreed that some men would be blind while others would have perfect sight. God has ordained that some children would be born deaf and others would enjoy the sound of music and speech. God has determined your intellect and your life span. There is not one second that could be added to your days for they rest in the Hand of the Almighty. God has alone decreed this and all of it to the praise of His name. This is a testimony belloyed by this passage. God decreed that Moses would be born a Jew and Pharaoh a King. Moses a messenger and Pharaoh a ruler God has decreed grace in the life of Moses through direct verbal communication, the burning bush and a heart that would listen. But to Pharaoh, God made Him a king (Prov. 16). God decreed to hide the truth from his ears and eyes Luke 10:21, "At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."

3 Just

God is just in damning all men. All men while in the flesh are blind to the things of God. According to Psalm 36:1 "Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes." They do not see a need to fear Him or give Him reverence, and even though they know their own wickedness, they have blinded themselves to it and convinced themselves they really are not that bad! But God's Word reminds us of our previous state of blindness and the blindness of the whole world that even when Christ is right in front of them, they refuse to see. They are spiritually blind. Romans 11:8-10 says "just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM." LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." To this very day this remains true. "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear" (Deut. 29:4). Christ would come and live amongst such as these, He would then later be preached to multitudes more, yet they having ears could not hear (Ezekiel 12:2). It is so natural in man to hear things which pertain to the true God and then to be offended, turned off, or even apathetic but I tell you if the truth of Christ does not stir religious affections in your heart, if the talk of God does not define the sum of your conversations, the work of your hands, and the meditations of your heart and mind, you are no different than the rest of humanity. Pharaoh himself justly invited the hand of God's hardening because he is a fallen lump of clay, deteriorating, wicked, and dead.

4 Without Partiality

TRANS: God has every right to make any man He sees fit for the sole purpose of chaff to ignite the eternal fires of His wrath. God is not a respecter of persons. He did not sit here and look upon the wealth, social persuasion, political power, or the good looks of Pharaoh and decide for that reason not to harden him. Rather, God chose to give Pharaoh his powerful footing so that God's glory might be displayed in Pharaoh's humiliation and destruction. What a mighty and powerful God! Let us turn to Paul's account of this passage in Romans 9.¹⁴¹ Which reads 9:17—18, "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."

II Particular Love

TRANS: God's mercy is amazing, it is always surprising to me that God is merciful to anyone, yet it is a great comfort to know this mercy. Just as God has created some vessels for dishonor, He has also created vessels for honor. Let us take a look at the amazing love of God that He has for His people.

""Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My firstborn. "So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'""

A Undeserving

The Israelites were in the midst of Egypt. They had adopted the idols from Egypt. (Josh. 24:14). The Israelites were not a great people; they were not a people deserving to be called the children of God. They were not faithful to God for they had adopted idols in their midst and did not trust God's spokesmen when he came to deliver them. But, God, not because of anything in them chose them to be called to His throne as His children. He did not appear to Pharaoh in a burning bush as He did Moses. He did not give grace to Pharaoh as He did to Moses, He did not give grace to the people of Egypt as He did to the people of Israel, God's love is contingent on nothing other than His mighty will. They were undeserving just as we are undeserving. We did not deserve the adoption to be fellow heirs to the throne of grace. But God was rich in His mercy brothers when He made His choice of us. In His sovereign love He is not ashamed. Who among us was righteous and deserved to be called a son of God? Was there one of you who has not sinned since the moment you woke from your beds? No there is not one! God unashamed professed His sovereign love particularly for the people of Israel, there is not one person who would think God would love a slave. The slaves were the lowest of the low. They were dirty and disgraceful, but God loves the hopeless, the weak, the cast off, and the slaves of men. God to display His glory on the back drop of human self righteousness raises up the weak to shame the wise. God loves these slaves and He is not ashamed to say so. God is not ashamed to display the beauty of His love on the backdrop of the hardening of Pharaoh. God is not ashamed to call particular people His own, yet we seem to be ashamed to say He loves only whom He loves, and He hardens whomever He wills to harden. We are ashamed of God!!! Could you imagine with me for a moment what it would be like if your wife, your prized possession, the sole instrument of your intimate love, were standing amongst the women of the world and you looked at her and in shame would not declare your particular love for her. Your unashamed love for her and her alone. Think of how crushing it would be to her, for your wife to hear you say to the mass heard of women whom she was in the midst of, "I love you all the same". What a crushing blow. This is what you do to God when you do not reciprocate the love He declares to have for you. That when you were in the deadness of your sin and He pronounces you by name, you are ashamed to say He loves you. No wonder the Israelites were undeserving, and how much more undeserving are we, when we have the full Word of truth and we are ashamed of it. We are ashamed of God's sovereign particular love!

B Purpose of hope

But God in His special love ordained all these events for a purpose, for a purpose which can give us hope and remove the guilt of our short comings. This whole section is setting up the Exaltation of Christ! As God would purpose the hardening of Pharaoh's heart it would bring about the death of His son. God would through various means bring about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Whether those means be; Pharaoh hardening himself, his hardness coming as a result of the display of God in the works of Moses, or some unwritten means, God would bring about the final plague. Because the final plague was the whole point of God's displaying His glory. Had God stopped His glory would not have been displayed. God wanted from this point to make Christ the center of all His delivering works. You see God was not just going to kill the first born of Egypt, He was going to kill the first born of Israel as well, unless there was a substitute, unless there was one to stand in their place. Unless there was a spotless lamb to be slain and whose blood had to cover the door post of the Israelite children they too would have likewise died. We all two were on the road to hell as all of humanity is, but God displayed His special love for us as well, that He sent His spotless lamb to die on our behalf. And As Spurgeon so cleverly said, "Indeed, we shall sing at last the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, clearly indicating that the redemption out of Egypt was always meant to be a leading type of the redemption of God's people from out of the midst of this world, for Christ has a people whom He hath redeemed from among men, and there is a church of which it is written, "Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it."¹⁴² That is why He is called the Lamb of God. Let us take a look as He comes upon the scene when John declares in the Gospel of John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World!" Behold the Lamb of God! The one who will open the books of life and only those whose name have been written in His

book will be saved. Behold the mighty Lamb who was slain on the door posts of our hearts, saving us from the coming wrath. This type in the Old Testament was for the sole purpose of dragging our minds to Christ, so when you look back here look to Christ!

Conclusion

But what if God, wishing to display His glory and to make His name known chose you as a vessel of destruction? Would He not be justified and righteous in doing so? I tell you today he would, and there are some people in the world, who were created for that very purpose, but today is a day of mercy and the floodgates have been thrown wide open. And in the Prince of Preachers words once again, "The work of rescuing perishing sinners out of the present evil world is as worthy of God as the work of delivering Israel out of Egypt."¹⁴³

This great wonder of God ought to bring every man to one of two positions, because this word we read today sets itself as a mighty indictment on the souls of all men, and it should bring you to a place of great terror, or great humility.

If this be true, we must examine ourselves. If Christ is not the center of our satisfaction, if Christ is not the center of our preaching, if Christ is not esteemed highly, and costly, and beautiful, if all other things do not seem as worthless in comparison to Him, than we ought to be in great terror. If the God exalting doctrines of His sovereignty and particular love are not central to our affections than we ought to be horror struck. Perhaps, if you are uncomfortable with these doctrines than, and see yourself as safe, than take a look to Pharaoh. God hardened him, and he would not have thought the wrath of God was abiding over him, yet swift destruction came upon him. If these great truths are not continually on your tongue, but are left for discussions in seminary or only with people who pronounce loving them than you ought to be utterly ashamed. God is not ashamed of these doctrines therefore, they ought to be pouring from our hearts. Brothers let us examine our hearts and glorify God. For we are but pots on the potters wheel, peaces of clay in His mighty hand. These things should be gushing out in your speech, Behold the Lamb of God, slain on your behalf! They should be gushing out of your mouth to exalt Christ like a cup that overflows with water. Let us love the cross of Christ the way we ought to.

For you my friends were not better than Pharaoh no less wicked and corrupt. Your destitution was great. Your sin stunk so high that it reached up into heaven and brought an immediate offence to God Almighty. You were and are no less deserving of God's hardening. My friends God's hardening of Pharaoh was not because he was any more guilty than you or me, but God's hardening of Pharaoh was to insure his guilt. All men deserve to be hardened...none deserve to be His children. Everyone's affections ought to be moved to love or hate these doctrines.

If you are His you ought to be humbled, because you were taken from the pit and placed in the heavenlies. If you were a poor, destitute, slave in bondage to your own wicked Egypt; if you were a slave and have been reborn by amazing love. Then you know this better than any other, how mysterious God's ways are. If you are honest with yourselves your pride ought to be brought low and Christ raised up. For He became a curse for us. He took our punishment, bore our wrath, the perfect spotless Lamb of God was slain for us. While we were haters of God He bleed for us, while we mocked Him with every breath He bleed for us, But God calls us sons because of the Work of Christ! What a mighty God! Let us pray.