

Exodus 6:10-11:10 – The One True and Sovereign God Will Be Made Known

- I. Introduction:
- A. **Fallen Condition Focus:** Sin is independence from God. It is living as an autonomous, self-determining being.
1. We like to think that we are in control of our own destiny. We are in some sense, but in a significant sense, we are not in control at all.
 2. This is a desire to be God himself. Only God is completely self-determining.
 3. The affect of this sinful desire and belief is that we think that when we do good it is by our self-determination. We think that the Christian life is all about making the right choices. We constantly focus on our commitments and choices.
 4. We deal with our sin by resolving to stop.
 5. We look at others as weak for their inability to stop sinning.
- B. Boasting results in living independently.
1. Boasting is something God hates. He tells us to boast only in him.
 2. How can we stop boasting? The wrong way to stop boasting is simply by choosing to stop.
 3. The problem is, we still are boasting in our minds, and it comes out in our attitudes toward others.
 4. What we need is inward change that only God can bring.
 5. We can only stop boasting when we understand God's sovereignty and are humbled by it.
- C. Strength and Weakness:
1. If you feel really strong spiritually, if you feel that you always can do what is right if you just set your mind to it and make the effort or if you just discipline yourself, then you are not living dependently on God. You cannot be dependant upon his grace if you think that we are self-determining.
 2. If you feel really weak spiritually, and if you feel there is no hope for you because you constantly fail to live up to God's standards, then you are in the perfect place to hear the message of God's mercy and to long for it. If you long for God's help, then you need to know that He acts fully to save us. He alone regenerates us and makes us into what we need to be.
- II. **Basic Message:** We must worship and trust God for he is totally and absolutely sovereign and in control of all things.
- III. **Organizational Sentence:** We will see three realms of God's sovereignty in order to learn about the total scope of God's power and control.
- A. Context: Israel's labor has been increased and Moses is again told to go to Pharaoh to demand Israel's freedom.
1. God faithfully prepares to deliver his chosen people.

2. The Holy God makes himself known.
 3. Knowing God saves us from ourselves.
 4. God saves to make known his glorious power.
- B. Note: We won't be going verse by verse because there is a lot that is repeated. We see a similar dialogue between God, Moses, and Pharaoh happen several times.

IV. God controls HISTORY. (Exodus 6.10-30)

- A. Genealogies are the most difficult parts of the bible for us.
1. They don't make exciting reading.
 2. They seem irrelevant.
 3. We don't understand the point of them.
- B. Genealogies were important to ancient peoples.
1. They were a means of recording the history of a people.
 2. They established heritage which was important.
 3. They emphasized the importance of families, tribes, nations, and even individuals.
 4. They were helpful in legal discussions over inheritance.
- C. Our first section today is a genealogy framed by a short record of God's words to Moses in Egypt calling him to go to Pharaoh. The frame, verses 10-13 and 28-30, are very similar but contain slightly words suggesting one is a summarization of the other.
1. The fact that we see this framing should call us to stop and look at the purpose of putting this genealogy here at this place in the story.
 2. First, we have been introduced to Moses already, but not Aaron. So, before we move on with the story showing Aaron's role in helping Moses deliver Israel, we need to know why he is a credible leader.
 3. Second, the genealogy shows the importance of Moses and Aaron.
 4. Third, it shows God's sovereignty over history in electing individuals who are not determined by the customary laws of choosing the blessed or important people in a family. Moses and Aaron come from the line of Levi the third-born of Jacob who was wicked, and the line of Kohath the second-born of Levi.
 5. Fourth, this genealogy introduces us to characters who are important later on, like Aaron's sons who make up the priesthood.
- D. Main point: God elects according to his own good purposes.
1. God choose Moses and Aaron to lead his people even though they were not from the special lines.
 2. God choose Moses even though he was younger than Aaron.
- E. **Applications:**
1. Trust that God is working in history to bring his plan to pass.
 2. Be humble and know that God chose you.
 3. Examine the cultural bias you have. You do you think God cannot use because of their social class, education, race, intelligence, looks, etc.

V. God controls NATURE and ALL GODS. (Exodus 7.1-11.10)

- A. Chapter 7, verses 1-7 serve to introduce and summarize what takes place for several chapters following.
1. We see again that Moses is God's man to deliver Israel.
 2. We see that Moses is to speak the very words of God to Pharaoh.

3. We see that God tells Moses what will happen and it will come to pass exactly this way.
 4. We see that Pharaoh will not consent at first but will be forced by God's mighty power.
- B. Over and over again, we see the same events:
1. God speaks to Moses and commands him to tell Pharaoh to let Israel go.
 2. God gives Moses a sign.
 3. Moses goes and speaks with Aaron and performs the sign.
 4. Pharaoh asks Moses to stop the sign.
 5. Pharaoh hardens his heart.
- C. God defeats the gods of Egypt.¹
1. Nile turned to blood - 7.14-25: Khnum the guardian of the Nile, Hapi the spirit of the Nile, and/or Osiris whose bloodstream was the Nile
 2. Frogs - 8.1-15: Heqt whose form was a frog and was the god of resurrection
 3. Gnats - 8.16-19:
 4. Flies - 8.20-32:
 5. Plague on cattle - 9.1-7: Hathor the mother goddess whose form was a cow, Apis was the bull belonging to the god Ptah and was the symbol of fertility, and/or Mnevis the sacred bull of Heliopolis
 6. Boils – 9.8-12: Imhotep the god of medicine (though this god might be from a later period)
 7. Hail - 9.13-35: Nut the sky goddess, Isis the goddess of life, and/or Seth the protector of crops
 8. Locusts - 10.1-20: Isis the goddess of life and/or Seth the protector of crops
 9. Darkness – Exodus 10.21-29: Re, Aten, Atum, Horus who are all sun gods of sorts
 10. Death of Firstborn – Exodus 11.1-12.36: The deity of Pharaoh who is Osiris the giver of life
- D. Pharaoh's heart is hardened as God predicts, though he slowly relents.
1. At the end of each cycle, we are told that Pharaoh has a hard heart. Though it is said different ways (more on this later) it is clear that Pharaoh is opposed to God.
 2. The signs affect Pharaoh exactly as God predicted several times thus far in Exodus.
 3. God says, as Paul quotes in Romans 9: "But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."
 4. Pharaoh's hard hearted response to the signs leads God to carry out the next judgment upon Egypt to show his systematic defeat of Egypt's gods.
- E. The Magicians and Egyptian people increasingly come to recognize God as true.
1. While Pharaoh is not swayed but is hard hearted, the magicians and the Egyptians slowly begin to turn in fear of God.
 2. For a time, the magicians match the signs Moses performs:
 - a. The staff into a serpent – Ex.7.11
 - b. The Nile into blood – Ex. 7.22
 - c. Frogs – Ex. 8.7
 3. But, eventually, the magicians cannot do what Moses is doing. They slowly begin to believe and fear god. They say to Pharaoh in Ex. 8.19, "This is the finger of God."

¹ Walton, John. Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, pg. 85.

4. The officials of Pharaoh begin to believe. In Ex. 9.20, the officials take precautions once Moses announces that hail is coming and destroy everything in the field.
 5. The officials also urge Pharaoh to relent in Ex. 10.7 and 11.3.
- F. Israel comes to believe in God.
1. While Israel did not believe Moses once Pharaoh increased their labor, Ex. 6.9, they are preserved from the effects of many of the plagues. In fact, at Passover, the Israelites believe and mark their doors with the blood of lambs as God commands so that their first born are not killed, Ex. 12.28.
 2. Later, as the Israelites are fleeing the Egyptian army, they again fear destruction, but are moved to trust and put their faith in God once he delivers them, Ex. 14.31.
- G. The signs and wonders, also called the plagues, are both divine judgments on Pharaoh and Egypt as well as acts of salvation for Israel.
1. While the judgments punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the mighty acts of God also are signs of salvation to all who trust in God.
 2. All who put their faith in God, including Egyptians, are saved and delivered.
- H. God is over all gods and over nature.
1. God makes himself known to Pharaoh who once mocked God, saying, “Who is the Lord?” Now, God has shown himself as the one true god who controls all of nature.
 2. **Applications:**
 - a. We should not deny that there are other powers. We know that Satan has power. He can heal and bring prosperity. But, his ways end in destruction to those who follow him.
 - b. We must trust in the one God in the face of other powers.
 - c. We must trust in God alone to deal with our troubles. There are many methods of dealing with our problems that can work in one sense. But, these methods will never ultimately deliver us from bondage.
 - We can take drugs for depression, but fail to see that some depression is an important part of life, or fail to see the root of unhealthy depression.
 - We can go to counseling and increase our self esteem but fail to see our idolatrous self-righteousness.
 - We can find love in ungodly ways, but it will not last.
- I. Signs and Wonders:
1. The only other place we see God working in this way is in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
 2. In the Gospel of John, there are 7 clear signs that are recorded with the purpose of drawing the reader to believe and know the Lord Jesus.
 - a. water in to wine – Jn. 2.2-11
 - b. healing of an officials son – Jn. 4.46-54
 - c. healing of the paralysed man – Jn. 5.1-15
 - d. feeding the 5,000 – Jn. 6.1-14
 - e. walking on water – Jn. 6.15-21
 - f. healing of the blind man – Jn. 9.1-41
 - g. raising of Lazarus – 11.1-45
 3. In John’s Gospel, these signs witness to the divine nature of Jesus.
 4. The signs Jesus performed were not judgments, but there is a strong similarity between the first and last signs of Exodus and Jesus.

- a. Nile into blood – water in to wine
- b. Death of the first-born – resurrection of Lazarus the first-born
- 5. John also records the ministry of Jesus in relation to the major feasts of Israel given in Exodus.
- 6. John also records many of the ‘I am’ statements Jesus makes. John strongly relies on Exodus.
- 7. In the same way that God used signs to deliver his people, so God used the signs of Jesus to draw us to faith in Christ that we might be delivered from sin.

VI. God controls THE DECISIONS OF MAN. (Exodus 10.1-2)

- A. At the end of each of the narratives of each plague/sign/wonder, we see one of three phrases:
 - 1. “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened.” – 7.13, 7.22, 8.19, 9.7, 9.35
 - 2. “Pharaoh hardened his heart.” – 8.15, 8.32, 9.34
 - 3. “The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” 9.12, 10.20, 10.27, 11.10
- B. What do we make of this?
 - 1. Many people have been quick to argue that God only hardened Pharaoh’s heart after Pharaoh hardened his heart.
 - 2. This is a mistake.
 - a. First, the first phrases tell us that his heart was hardened without explaining who hardened whose heart.
 - b. Second, in 3.19, God told Moses that he already knew that Pharaoh would not let Israel go unless compelled by a mighty hand.
 - c. Third, in 4.21, God told Moses that he would harden Pharaoh’s heart.
 - d. Fourth, in 7.3, God tells Moses that he will harden Pharaoh’s heart.
 - 3. Chapter 10 verses 1 and 2 give us the meaning of these phrases and explains their relationship.
 - a. God explains what is going on in these verses by saying that he has hardened Pharaoh’s heart and the heart of his servants in order that he might show the signs among them, so that the future generations of Israelites might know that he is the Lord.
 - b. From the verse beginning, God determined to harden Pharaoh’s heart to show his own glory.
- C. Why then are these phrases all used to describe the situation?
 - 1. To show that God is sovereign over the decisions of men.
 - 2. To show that Pharaoh is responsible for the hardening of his heart.
- D. The bible affirms both of these truths.
 - 1. God controls everything, even human decisions.
 - 2. We are responsible for what we decide.
- E. How can this be possible?
 - 1. The will is not a separate thing but that by which the mind chooses.
 - 2. We always do what we think is best.
 - 3. The mind is free to choose to do what it thinks best.
 - 4. Because of sin, our minds will never think it best to trust, love, obey, or worship God.
 - 5. We can choose to trust God, but we won’t since our sinful minds do not esteem God highly.

6. We have the *natural ability* but not the *moral ability* to choose God.
 7. Therefore, we are responsible for what we choose even though we are enslaved to sin.
 8. God ordains all things by controlling the things which our minds esteem.
- F. Just because we are commanded to repent and obey doesn't mean that we are able.
- G. **Applications:**
1. Chose to do what is right.
 2. Take responsibility for sin.
 3. Recognize that you could and can't come to God on your own. It is only through the work of Christ through the Spirit according to the will of the Father that this can happen.
 4. Pray. Pray that God's Spirit would work in you. It is only when we are completely aware of spiritual poverty that we can be called blessed.
 5. Cry out for God's mercy,