

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD: Part I - Exodus 7:1-7

Introduction:

No doubt you have likely heard over the past months, 'The world is out of control', and have likely heard of the unstoppable virus, the mass shootings, the riots, the stabbings, the cities burning, and maybe you yourself have even said or thought, 'The world is out of control'. And it is. This is very true. The world is out of control. It seems we cannot get a handle on anything. It is like jello. You, me, mankind, we cannot control the virus, the corrupt government, people's choices, or evil. And really, it has always been out of control, radically, drastically, and increasingly, 'out of control'. Humanity has never been in control.

All that 2020 has done has been to reveal 'the illusion of control', that 'blissful illusion' that we are in control, that illusion that has been so prevalent in these recent years. Concerning health, for example, we are not in control; control over health is a lie, otherwise, we would not face death, would not die, nor would we have such terms as 'chronic' and 'terminal'. No, the concept of control over health is a deception, and is intellectually misleading. The 'utopian ideal' of 'control' over harmony is another 'illusion'. Why can't we just get along! We long for that blissful feeling that all will be well, and assume that once the 'right policy' or the 'right circumstances' are set in place, then it will all work out. But it is a lie. We cannot stop people from hating each other. It is 'telling' in the irony of a protest set in motion for the purpose of 'harmony', yet is carried out with riots and burning. The modern myth cries out, 'Be Safe', but it too is a lie. We cannot manage our risks. We do not live life in a 'bubble of protection'. No. We live in a world filled with danger, with the daily threat of broken bones, bad weather, accidents, and theft. We cannot control our lives, and never have been able to. We cannot stay safe, and never will be able to.

As Christians, we rejoice, if honest, because we know what would happen if, as a society, we truly did have control, and the trouble that would result, for it would be even far worse than it already is. Our praise, and our peace, is rooted in the fact that we have 'no control', that it is **GOD ALONE who is in 'complete' SOVEREIGN control**. We need to correct our thinking, therefore, for 'UNDER GOD' the world is 'not out of control'. UNDER THE GREAT '**I AM**' the world, and everything in the world, is under **HIS COMPLETE SOVEREIGN CONTROL**.

And what is the definition of '**sovereignty**'? Sovereignty is God's all-powerful rule and absolute power and control over all things in His creation. Biblically that means from heaven's heights to the human heart. This is true, but it is also our comfort for these times. The world is not out of control, the world is in God's hands, and God is spinning the earth, moving the earth, as He wills.

Does that comfort you, or are you struggling with current events? So the question is, to whom do 'you' ascribe control? Do you believe that God is '**sovereign**' above, and over, and through, and in everything? If you are struggling, then you need to consider today's text.

Exodus 7:1-7

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.’ Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.”

I. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER POSITIONS: (vv 1-2)

Verse one of chapter seven, is a continuation of the end of chapter six. We read:

Exodus 6:28-30, and Exodus 7:1

“On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, the LORD said to Moses, ‘I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you.’ But Moses said to the LORD, ‘Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.’”

Once again, we find Moses 'protesting' the Will of God, but yet again, God is not deterred. Rather, He again moves Moses along. 'I make you as God', He tells Moses. You will be speaking to Pharaoh as though it were Me, speaking My words. I am making you 'like' Me, Moses, so that you will speak all the words that I have commanded you to speak to Pharaoh.

These verses are so 'instructive'.

1. What We Learn About Prophecy:

There is much confusion and misunderstanding about prophecy. Some claim to be modern day prophets with a message from God. Some claim to hear from God, having a special relationship

by some due process, prophecy being just a commentary on God's Word, a retelling of it. But this is not what you see here in these verses.

God defines prophecy herein Scripture. God defines prophecy here as 'speaking through human vessels, communicating, revealing, new information'. Something new is happening here in Egypt. And when God speaks, does it have 'weight'? Does it have 'gravity'? YES. When God speaks, the matter is 'grave' and the words are 'weighty' because they are GOD 'INSPIRED' WORDS, GOD 'BREATHED' WORDS. Therefore, cherish these words, for they are the WORDS OF GOD.

So, you might then say, If someone claims to have a 'Word from the Lord' ... what they are saying is that the words that then come from their mouth are on par with Holy Scripture. But, NO, this cannot be. We discover the problem with this scenario in Revelation where we learn that such is NOT TO BE DONE. To do so, is in fact, a very serious and scary matter.

Revelation 22:18

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.”

Also, one is not permitted to cut out anything from Scripture. Picking out only what a person wants, is also not tolerated. Have they actually read the Bible, one might question?

Revelation 22:19

“...and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

What we learn about prophecy from this Exodus text is that Moses and Aaron are to 'SPEAK ONLY WHAT GOD HAS COMMANDED THEM TO SPEAK'.

Exodus 7:2

“You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.”

They are commissioned to deliver the 'direct revelations' from God only, no preferences, no feelings, no interpretations, only the divinely given material. This is a lost view of prophecy today.

2. What We Learn About Position:

Here we see two extreme positions, like bookends. We have the old veteran shepherd, Moses, being eighty years old; an old exiled Hebrew, standing before the exalted, modern, younger and powerful king of Egypt, the Pharaoh himself. (At a human level it is understandable that pondering this situation Moses initially became anxious.) But God establishes proper perspective.

Exodus 7:1-2

“And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.”

'I make you *like* God to Pharaoh.' I have made you God to Pharaoh. You, Moses, are standing in for ME.

This is God stating that God's people stand as 'ambassadors'. You stand as though it were Me, He tells, Moses. You stand as an 'ambassador' for Me. You have been specially chosen and appointed to represent Me before Pharaoh.

This is God stating, 'as if it was me', in My Image.

Paul also addresses this 'ambassadorship' in the New Testament. Professing Christ, and living for Christ, cannot be divorced.

II Corinthians 5:20

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

We tend, as Christians, to brush over this fact, to water it down, but the fact cannot be divorced, and life must be lived carefully. This is like Christ standing before you, calling to you as a 'representative', a viceroy, an agent, to serve in place 'of the king', in place of Himself, The King of Kings.

And so we have God, speaking to Moses. "I make you *as* God to Pharaoh." To Pharaoh you will be *like* God. This is God positioning the 'lowly shepherd' well above Pharaoh, the king. Moses, you will stand '**like God**' before Pharaoh! This is not a divine pep talk to rally Moses up. No. And don't miss this: THIS IS '**SOVEREIGN GOD**' TELLING MOSES WHAT IS HAPPENING, AND THEN MAKING IT HAPPEN. Moses is to stand before Pharaoh 'like' God. Moses is not only positioned in the court, but is positioned 'far above the court', 'LIKE GOD HIMSELF', with signs, plagues, and devastating power from God.

God is '**sovereign**' over every 'position', highest to lowest. We see this throughout Scripture.

Job 5:11

“He sets on high those who are lowly,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.”

I Samuel 2:7

“The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.”

Psalm 75:7

“But it is God who executes judgment,
putting down one and lifting up another.”

Daniel 2:21

“He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding.”

HE IS GOD ALONE!

These visuals clearly place God in control, moving the pieces, as He pleases and wills.
Indeed, **GOD IS 'SOVEREIGN' OVER POSITIONS.**

II. GOD IS 'SOVEREIGN' OVER PEOPLES:(vv 3-5)

Exodus 7:3-5

“You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.”

We note that we have seen this message before in chapters three and four.

Exodus 3:19-21

“But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty.”

Exodus 4:21

“And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.”

God is '**sovereign**' over people of all kinds.

God declares, “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (Exodus 7:3), so while God provides a number of miracles, and Pharaoh should be moved, yet he is not moved. Such is not an isolated event. This is not the only time that we have seen ‘king’s’ hearts hardened and turned when the time was right by God's plan. We read about the Moabite, King Sihon, for example.

Deuteronomy 2:30

“But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day.”

And later we read of Joshua's conquests over kings, as a result of God's undertaking.

Joshua 11:18-20

“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. For it was the LORD’S doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.”

God's influence over kingly hearts was not only to 'harden' them, but sometimes was to 'turn' them in a way that would also serve His plans.

Ezra 6:21-22

“It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. And they kept the Feast of Unleavened

Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.”

Proverbs 21:1

“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.”

In word and picture, God is in '**sovereign**' control of the intimate domain of man, the 'heart' of man. And He has purpose in this control, layers and layers of understanding built up, one layer at a time, and overlapping. And here we see that God hardens Pharaoh's heart for purpose, for the purpose of His people's 'DELIVERANCE'. God is not hardening hearts for random pleasure. God is not cold and without purpose. No. God is a God of purpose, acting in '**sovereign**' power, with passion and intention for His people.

Exodus 7:4

“Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.”

God has purpose in His '**sovereignty**', deliverance, yes, but more still, EGYPT WILL KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

Exodus 7:5

“The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.”

Looking back to the initial contact with Pharaoh, we learned that Pharaoh does not know the Lord.

Exodus 5:1-2

“Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” 2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”

Pharaoh is the pagan rebel, proud and arrogant. Who is this God, he questions? I do not know this God. But God has purposed that Pharaoh, and Egypt, should learn who the great 'I AM' is. EGYPT WILL KNOW THAT 'I AM' THE LORD.

THIS IS 'SOVEREIGNTY' FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S GLORY.

Psalm 33:10

"The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples."

II Chronicles 20:6

"And [Jehoshaphat] said, 'O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.'"

Ezekiel 25:6-7

"For thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within your soul against the land of Israel, therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you, and will hand you over as plunder to the nations. And I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries; I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

These are parallels in Scripture, showing God's '**sovereign**' judgment on the nations, so that once and for all, they will know that 'HE IS THE LORD GOD'.

Ezekiel 25:8-11 (Moab)

"Thus says the Lord GOD: Because Moab and Seir said, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations,' therefore I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities, from its cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, that the Ammonites may be remembered no more among the nations, land I will execute judgments upon Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 25:12-14 (Edom)

"Thus says the Lord GOD: Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended win taking vengeance on them, therefore thus says the Lord GOD, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. And I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath, and they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 25:15-17 (Philistines)

“Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity, 16 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast. 17 I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them.”

Ezekiel 26:2-6 (Tyre)

“Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, ‘Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste,’ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers, and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock. She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. And she shall become plunder for the nations, and her daughters on the mainland shall be killed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Such tracking of the nations goes all the way to Egypt, and then to Pharaoh himself.

Ezekiel 30:6-8 (The supporters of Egypt)

“Thus says the LORD:

Those who support Egypt shall fall,
and her proud might shall come down;
from Migdol to Syene
they shall fall within her by the sword,
declares the Lord GOD.

And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries,
and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste.

Then they will know that I am the LORD,
when I have set fire to Egypt,
and gall her helpers are broken.”

Ezekiel 30:13-19 (Egypt)

“Thus says the Lord GOD:

“I will destroy the idols
and put an end to the images in Memphis;
there shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt;
so I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

I will make Pathros a desolation
and will set fire to Zoan
band will execute judgments on Thebes.
And I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium,
the stronghold of Egypt,
and cut off the multitude⁶ of Thebes.
And I will set fire to Egypt;
Pelusium shall be in great agony;
Thebes shall be breached,
and Memphis shall face enemies by day.
The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword,
and the women shall go into captivity.
At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark,
when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt,
and her proud might shall come to an end in her;
she shall be covered by a cloud,
and her daughters shall go into captivity.
Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 30:22-26 (Pharaoh)

“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 32:15

“When I make the land of Egypt desolate,
and when the land is desolate of all that fills it,
when I strike down all who dwell in it,
then they will know that I am the LORD.”

THEY WILL KNOW! Nothing changes with God. God, in His '**sovereignty**', does what He does with the nations, all for His purpose and FOR HIS GLORY, every time. And thus He will bring judgment to the nations. GOD IS '**SOVEREIGN**', AND KINGDOMS WILL RISE AND FALL FOR HIS PURPOSE.

Ezekiel 36:22-23

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.'" (Italics added).

Ezekiel 39:21-22

"And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward." (Italics added).

III GOD IS 'SOVEREIGN' OVER PLANS: (vv 6-7)

Exodus 7:6-7

"Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh."

Moses and Aaron did what they were told to do, just as the Lord commanded. This is a turning point for Moses. We see a change in Moses from here on. Moses will be obedient, in spite of his protests, delays, excuses and former disobedience. It is a 'changed' Moses who faces Pharaoh's court, who leads in the wilderness. Moses's 'meekness' is replaced with 'boldness'; his 'protests' are replaced with 'petition'. Moses has become God's 'ambassador' and Israel's 'intercessor'. In spite of Moses's protests, GOD STILL HAD HIS WAY. God is '**sovereign**', over our plans, and over our wills, and His will is irresistible. Because God is '**sovereign**', HE WILL HAVE HIS WAY.

Proverbs 16:1

"The plans of the heart belong to man,
but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD."

Proverbs 16:9

"The heart of man plans his way,

but the LORD establishes his steps.”

Proverbs 19:21

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.”

The Apostle Paul notes that his plans are not the final word; it is a matter if 'God wills'.

Acts 18:20-21

"When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. But on taking leave of them he said, 'I will return to you if God wills,' and he set sail from Ephesus.”

Our plans are always filtered by God's '**sovereign**' will. We make our plans, yes, but God establishes the steps.

James 4:13-16

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’ – yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”

It is God's plan that matters, not our own. We cannot boast our plans. Plans are not wrong, and in fact are needed, but when these plans get thwarted, God is working. Our plans must always be filtered through God's '**sovereignty**'. And unBiblical responses to changes are sin.

And so, at long last, Moses is on board with God's plan, fully focused, fully committed. "Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.” One is often making plans for retirement at such ages, but for these brothers, regardless of their age, they are not winding down as one might expect, as indeed they themselves might have expected. No, for GOD HAD HIS OWN PLANS. God 'called and equipped' them for a mission. (And God may well have plans for you in your eighties; but your plan must be 'God's plan'.)

This was the plan '**sovereign**' GOD set forth for Moses: ten plagues, one long continental journey (on foot), forty more years leading HIS sheep. Moses, at eighty, and Aaron at eighty-three, were just getting started. Age is no barrier when it comes to being used by God. Do you believe this? Do you believe that age is no barrier, that the stages of life are no barrier, to GOD'S PLANS? God always has purpose for His people. We are here for God, and God is not finished

with us yet. We are here for HIS PURPOSES and HIS GLORY, and GOD IS 'SOVEREIGN' OVER OUR PLANS, plans on earth, and plans in heaven.

The Apostle Peter, back in the first century AD, points to this plan of God.

Acts 2:22-24

"Men of Israel, hear these words: 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.'" (Underline added).

This is Jesus, delivered up according to the 'plan of God'. (Yet the lawless who carried out the death are still responsible, still accountable.) This has always been the plan, the plan for His people, to be saved, redeemed, delivered; the plan for gaining a sanctified position in Christ; the plan for union in Christ.

In His purposes in 2020, rest in HIS GLORY. That is the only way to stay safe, to be safe. The consequence of 'not' being in Christ results in what we see today; our own plans, our own purposes, our own glory. Instead: RECOGNIZE "GOD ALONE 'FOR WHO HE IS, 'SOVEREIGN GOD'. *Repent and believe in THE ONLY ONE* who is truly in control. Time is short now. We are dying. We are not in control. Will you trust in HIS '*sovereign*' control?

Where will I spend eternity? Where am I going? Will I trust in my own control, which is a mirage, an illusion? Or will I turn and trust in the Lord and His '*sovereign*' control?