



2025 Weekly Devotions

Week of: Oct 27th - Nov 2nd

Sermon: October 26th



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
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October 27

Genesis 6:3

I want to take the first devotion for the week to deal with a question that is troubling to many within our passage of Scripture today. In verse 3, God says that He appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as “God Almighty” but “by my name the LORD, I did not make myself known to them.” The Hebrew term denoted by the English rendered “LORD” (in all capital letters) is meant to denote the term “Yahweh”.

The statement is complicated by the fact that all three of the men refer to God as “Yahweh” in the biblical narrative (Genesis 13:4; 26:25; 32:9-10). So, in one sense God made known His identity as Yahweh to all of them and yet, in another sense, they did not know Him in this manner... at least not experientially.

You see, Yahweh has very special significance within the biblical narrative as it is meant to express the covenant keeping nature of our God. While a word like “Elohim” refers to God in His exalted nature, the word “Yahweh” refers to a God who keeps His covenant with His people and this begins to help us hone in on what the Lord means when He tells Moses that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not have the knowledge of God’s revelation in the same way as Moses and the people of God at the time of the Exodus.

What God was getting ready to show the people was His identity in action. Whereas He had made the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, these men died having not realized the promises (Hebrews 11:13). They knew and believed that God was faithful and capable, but they were not able to see Him bring to fruition the mighty things He had guaranteed for His beloved covenant people. In this manner, the Lord reserved the right to reveal Himself, or make Himself known, in a unique and special manner to the people of Moses’ day.

In the same way, we live in a day in which we have an even clearer picture of our faithful God. You see, Moses was only given a small glimpse of the glorious covenant that Yahweh would make, and ratify, with us. In a very real sense, Moses and the people of God during the time of the Exodus did not know God like we do today. We now live in a world in which God took on flesh. He came to show us what His character and righteousness looks like; He died showing us His love and He rose again to demonstrate His power and in all these things we were able to see and savor the fact that our God is truly faithful to keep His Word. I am so thankful that I live on the other side of the cross and I’m so grateful that God saw fit to allow me to know and embrace this Gospel truth, that Yahweh took on flesh, dwelt among us and died to liberate us from an oppressor (death and sin) that was even worse, and more formidable, than Pharaoh.

October 28

Exodus 6:1

Verse 1 is a verse that merits numerous sermons by itself! Whereas we chose to focus on the promises of God as given in verses 6-8, verse 1 is loaded with truths that deserve our earnest attention.

Every once in a while, it would behoove us as Bible students to linger over certain passages of Scripture. I fear that we can be so fixated with quantity, thinking we need to read so many chapters per day to “stay on track” that we might lose some of the joy and significance of meditating upon smaller sections of Scripture for the purpose of attempting to draw out all of the truths contained in our passage of study. What I would like for us to do this week is to linger for a bit on this passage with the specific goal of considering all of the truths that God reveals about Himself in this particular verse.

We will begin today by reflecting upon the fact that God’s Words to Moses (and their subsequent fulfillment in later chapters) show us that He is omniscient. Indeed, God knows absolutely everything including that which has happened (past), is happening (present) and will happen (future). In this case, God speaks with remarkable conviction and clarity regarding what He is planning on doing in the future and, you will notice, He does so with no qualifications.

God doesn’t say to Moses, “If everything goes right” or “assuming nothing changes”, instead the Lord simply tells Moses that He will accomplish His specific purpose of freeing the Israelites through Pharaoh.

Consider for a moment how marvelous, and supernatural, this little verse is in the lives of Christians. We learn here that God knows exactly what is going to happen, that His plan encompasses all that is going to take place and, therefore, we learn that we can trust God’s promises and predictions. Psalm 147:5 reminds us that God is great and abundant in power but, in addition to these glorious truths, we are also told in that precious verse that His “understanding is beyond measure.”

Folks, we serve an all-wise, all-knowing God! He has proven throughout the centuries that He can be trusted because He is never wrong. He cannot fail, He will not be surprised, and His declarations always take the totality of the circumstance into account.

When Moses heard these words, my assumption is he wondered, and perhaps even doubted, whether God could pull this kind of thing off! What kind of miracle would need to take place for the Lord to use Pharaoh (the great obstacle to the people’s freedom) to release His covenant people? While the declaration may have sounded too good to be true, we now know that God’s Word was right on the money and this is due, in part, to the fact that He knows all things.

October 29

Exodus 6:1 & Genesis 50:20

Exodus 6 begins with the word “But”. The term is small and, some might argue, insignificant! However, upon further review, the contrast that is taking place between Moses’ words that conclude chapter 5 and God’s Words that begin chapter 6 demonstrate a very important truth for today’s believers.

If you recall, Moses has just finished a complaint regarding the way that God had allowed difficulty to befall the Jews at the behest of Pharaoh as a product of Moses’ God-given directives. Moses essentially wants to know why the Lord would take that which was spoken and use it to motivate additional pain on the very people that God desired to free from tyranny.

The complaint is understandable, but it is also shortsighted. Undergirding Moses’ words is that concern that perhaps this was all that would take place. Overwhelmed by the evil that had befallen the people, Moses cries out and worries because of the obvious possibilities of sustained oppression. It is in this context that God speaks, and this is why this little conjunction is so loaded with meaning.

Moses saw the circumstance one way, BUT God had ordained it for an entirely different purpose. Moses saw the obvious and clear evil that had befallen the people of God BUT God saw through the momentary pain to a greater, and more enduring, good. Stated differently, Pharaoh set out to do evil BUT God was using his rebellion for a greater good.

This is the pattern in all of Scripture, isn’t it? Joseph’s words are recorded in Genesis 50, but they have application for all of us. Saul sought David with evil intentions, but the Lord intended to use his rebellion, and faithlessness, for the good cause of bringing David to power. The Babylonians had evil intentions when they conquered the Israelites, but God had good plans to wake His people from their spiritual slumber. The religious elite had evil intent when they allowed the persecution of the church in Acts, but God had the greater good in mind when He allowed His people to be dispersed so that they might take the Gospel to the nations. Finally, Satan and the Jews had evil intentions when they sought to kill Jesus, but God had a glorious plan to use His death for the eternal life of the multitudes.

Exodus 6 falls into this camp. Whereas Moses saw the dark intentions of Pharaoh, God’s Word redirected him to a truly remarkable, and good, plan! Dear reader, never fall victim to the kind of thinking that refuses to see reality greater than what you can observe. Whereas it is true that there is real evil, it is even more true that the real evil pales in comparison to our Sovereign God. There is always a “but” to any dark circumstance because there is always a good God who designs to use our difficulty for good!

October 30

Exodus 6:1 & Proverbs 21:1

There seems to be a bit of a contradiction in Exodus 6:1. Initially, God says that He is the one who will act upon Pharaoh and yet, the very next clause tells us that Pharaoh will be the one who drives Israel out of his land. So, which is it? Is Pharaoh the one who acts or is it God who superintends? The answer, as is sometimes the case, is that both are in fact true!

When it comes to God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility, we must understand that while God's Sovereignty superintends man's actions, it does not absolve man of his freedom nor culpability. The Lord is absolutely able to lead, direct and ordain what takes place while, at the same time, not violating the natural disposition and desire of the individual in question.

Today, we will be reminded that God does this by provoking and, therefore, guiding man's heart. Our Proverb teaches that man's heart (the center of his will) is in the hands of the Lord such that God can steer and guide his desires in anyway that he pleases. In the case of Pharaoh, the Lord ordained that his heart be tilted towards allowing Israel to flee, but only after the Lord saw to it that the conditions were met that would result in Pharaoh's decision.

Stated differently, the Lord altered the desires of Pharaoh's heart which consequently led to Pharaoh's deciding to drive out the slaves that he otherwise would have desired to keep! How did God do this? He did this by making Israel a stench in the nostrils of Pharaoh by using Moses to inflict horrible plagues on the people in the pursuit of their freedom. He did this further by taking the lives of the firstborn in the country (including Pharaoh's son) in order to drive him to grief and despair thereby breaking the will of Pharaoh and leading him to decide to let the people go out of fear of further consequence.

Please note that these circumstances were not the product of Pharaoh's will nor power. God made these things come to fruition, but He did so in order to turn Pharaoh's heart from his otherwise deeply held desire to enslave Israel to a passion to see them let go for self-preservation! The point then is that we see both. A decision freely made by Pharaoh and God's Sovereignty in the situation and this helps to explain how God could make reference both to His own activity in the circumstance and Pharaoh's will as well.

Church family, may we remember that God is always superintending all of the world's events but may we also understand that His Sovereignty does not excuse our accountability. Pharaoh chose what the Lord ordained but he did so for evil motives (self-preservation which was born out of a prideful unwillingness to yield to God until his people suffered) and this is why he was held accountable even as God accomplished the plan He ordained from eternity past.

October 31

Exodus 6:1 & John 3:20

Yesterday's devotion began to deal with the question of who was responsible for sending the people out of Egypt. Verse 1 seems to give mixed signals at first glance as God states that He is the one acting upon Pharaoh and yet the very next clause attributes the action to Pharaoh himself! Which is it? The answer is both!

God was going to move in such a way as to cause Pharaoh to respond in the way that was prophesied but this action does not negate Pharaoh's freedom to choose, instead it simply leads him to the choice he would always make in light of his constitution. You see, as the Lord unveiled Himself to Pharaoh, He knew that Pharaoh would respond with disdain which would result in his rejecting all that Moses and Aaron (God's mouthpieces) would say until he was so overwhelmed with the consequences of his rejection that he not only allowed the Israelites to leave but would "drive them out".

How could God do this? In this case, God knows the heart of lost men and, therefore, He knows their inevitable response to His Word. The Bible says that we are all sinners, that our hearts are desperately wicked and, therefore, we hate the light (John 3:20). This means that whenever the light is shone upon us, our natural response is not joy but rejection!

In this instance, God revealed the light of the knowledge of His true identity and power to Pharaoh both in word (through Aaron and Moses) and in deed (the plagues). In this revelation of Himself, the Lord was unveiling the light to a man who hated the light and, therefore, the Lord was leading Pharaoh to rejection not by compulsion (He didn't force Pharaoh to reject Him outright) but by volition.

To be clear, God could have stepped in, changed Pharaoh's heart and, therefore, led him to a totally different result! Nevertheless, God ordained that Pharaoh would be raised up to demonstrate the glory of our great God in overwhelming one whose heart was desperately wicked and, therefore, chose to reject God.

This is why we preach salvation by grace alone. You see, all of us naturally had the heart of Pharaoh. All of us were like sheep gone astray, all of us hated the light and, therefore, all of us were enslaved to sin. None of us would ever choose God if our constitutions were not changed (see Romans 3:11) and this means that God's revelation of Himself must be accompanied by His power to change our hearts, thereby altering our love of evil to a love of righteousness. When this transformation happens, our will begins to choose that which we now love and that love is God in Christ!

So, which is it? The answer is both! God would act upon Pharaoh by demonstrating His true identity and Pharaoh would drive out Israel by his own volition in response to his hatred of the revelation of God. In all things, man maintains a will to choose what he most desires and God maintains a Sovereign prerogative to shape those choices and desires to whatever ends He sees fit.

November 1

Exodus 6:1 & Psalm 46:8

As we continue our study of Exodus 6:1, I want us to pause for a day on the guarantee that God makes to Moses stating, “you will see what I will do to Pharaoh...” There are two things that this promise unveils. First, God is promising to do these things in Moses’ lifetime! This must have been reassuring to a man who had given up quite a bit to follow God’s call. The fact that God would guarantee the miraculous freeing of the people of God during Moses’ life is an undeserved grace. Frankly, there are many times in which the work of the Lord transcends our tiny lifespan. Sometimes, the Lord’s plan requires that we work diligently for fruit that will not mature until after we are gone.

Second, and just as importantly, God guarantees Moses that what He is going to do will be observable. Our God is not limited to the spiritual or unseen realm, instead He is very active in this physical world. In Moses’ case, God was going to liberate the people of Israel so obviously that everyone could see His work. Our God continues to move this way today. While I have not heard of Him splitting a sea lately, He absolutely manifests His power and faithfulness all around us if we are observant enough to open our eyes. We see His power in: conversion, sanctification, faith, healing, restoration, undeserved blessings and the like. All around me I can see the goodness and graciousness of God, do you?

On this first day of November, I want to encourage you to follow the admonition of the Psalmist who writes, “see what the Lord has done, amazing things on the earth.” When was the last time you reflected upon some of these amazing things?

It always surprises and disappoints me when I meet folks whose eyes are closed to God’s grace and power in their surroundings. I grieve when I hear of folks who attend worship or gather with the community of faith and leave dissatisfied and full of critique. The problem is not that God has not moved, the problem is that they have chosen not to see!

Some might argue that the miracle that God would work in Moses’ eyesight was more obvious. In some senses, that is categorically true! Nevertheless, I would argue that God is doing more miracles in our moment than before! There may not be a plague or a parting of the sea at Smyrna but there are hundreds of people who were once dead and are now alive. There may not be a multitude of locusts, but there are hundreds of God-honoring disciples full of stories of God’s grace and provision in their lives.

My admonition to you today is simple... won’t you see? Won’t you take the time to look around and marvel at all that God has done and is doing? Won’t you pause for a moment when you are tempted not to believe to consider all of the ways that God has proven Himself faithful? Won’t you take a moment to reflect upon the obvious grace in your life? If so, I trust that this November can be a month full of thanksgiving!

November 2

Exodus 6:1 & Hebrews 1:1-2

I hope you have enjoyed our time diving into the first verse of Exodus 6. To reiterate for a moment, my goal in this endeavor is to both draw out truths for our meditation and to demonstrate the incredible depth of God's Word. The Bible is truly an inexhaustible well of insight which means that it behooves us to take our time and really drill down into its depths at times.

Today, I want us to reflect upon one of the most amazing statements in Exodus 6. The very first sentence in this precious chapter says in part, "the Lord said to Moses..." Stop for a moment and consider the glory in that little clause. God speaks to man! What an undeserved privilege and what a monumental experience. Could you imagine God speaking directly, and audibly, to you?

My assumption is that some of you might wonder why He doesn't do more of that today. It seems that God spoke in various ways in the Old Testament and yet, in our world, His revelation of Himself is overwhelmingly through the Bible. Why?

I believe that Hebrews 1 has the answer. Moses was living in the middle of God's redemptive plan coming to fruition. In fact, Moses had no concept of many of the details of what God was going to do through Israel. He certainly knew some basic promises (made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) but the glorious insight of further revelation was still very much foreign to him.

Moses wouldn't have known that God would send a Messiah through the line of David (he wouldn't have known who David would be!). He wouldn't have had access to the marvelous promises of Isaiah or the great New Covenant prophecies of Jeremiah. He certainly wouldn't have known about John the Baptist, and he would not know the Gospel of Christ crucified.

Now, to be clear, Moses was saved by faith (see Hebrews 11), but his faith was not as detailed as ours. He had faith in the promises that were revealed to him, but he could not have faith in the finished work of redemption which he could not know and I believe all this brings us back to God's speech.

Why did God audibly speak more back then than He does today? In part, because His plan of redemption was still unfolding. In a real sense, when Jesus said, "it is finished", He declared that the work that God was doing on man's behalf had come to a conclusion. Now, the Lord was kind in giving us the epistles to tell us how to live in light of Jesus' work but, at some point, the Lord was finished revealing His plan of salvation which means the need for Him to speak, audibly, to His servants was largely finished as well.

Dear church family, does God still speak today? Most certainly! He speaks to us through His Word and by the indwelling Spirit. What we have is a revelation from God and we should treat the Bible as such. My assumption is that Moses would change places with us in a heartbeat. Yes, he heard God speak to him at the burning bush and in Egypt but he would be quite jealous of what God has spoken to the world in the resurrection of His Son.