

Sermon by Pastor Chuck Rains

3/9/14

God's Authority "Thus Saith the Lord"

Moses - Thus says the Lord

Open to the book of Exodus, if you will, to chapter 5. This is, I'm going to take you right into the time when Moses is speaking to Pharaoh in Egypt. I want you to see how he speaks. Where does his authority come from? He wondered what authority he could go before the children of Israel. How could he dare to speak and say to them that he would lead them from the land of Egypt? And he wondered how his brethren would receive him. And he said, "Well, who will I say, 'Lord, send me?'" You know, with what authority? And God answered, "You just tell them that I am." "Sent you."

That's a strange construction for us in English, "I am." But it means, I am totally within myself, I exist within myself, I don't depend on anything outside of myself to exist. Or, say it another way, I'm the self-existent one. I exist within myself, I'm God. There's no one like me that exists totally based on himself. Moses went, not without objection, but he went.

And in chapter 5, he comes before Pharaoh. I want you to see how he speaks in chapter 5, verse 1.

"Afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord.'"

I want you to hear that. "Thus says the Lord." They're not speaking for themselves. They're not speaking on their own authority. They're telling Pharaoh, "What we have to tell you is from the Lord." "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Let my people go.'" That was the command from the Lord God of Israel, spoken in such authority. Go to chapter 8, verse 1.

Still, Moses, before Pharaoh, chapter 8, verse 1,

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'now this is what he wanted him to say, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me.'"

Moses was given that message, told to bring it to Pharaoh. When you go down to verse 20,

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me.'"

That's how God wanted him to speak.

Chapter 9, verse 1.

¶ *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the Lord, the Lord God of the Hebrews, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me.'"*

Let me just read that section. I think it will kind of bring it very clearly from the page. This is what God says, verse 2-7

"For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep, a very severe pestilence. The Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel. Then the Lord appointed a set time, saying, 'Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.'

¶ *So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died, but the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. Then Pharaoh said, 'And indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead.' But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go."*

He was unwilling to hear the word of the Lord."

Chapter 10, verse 3, Moses now before him, threatening the plague of locusts.

"So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.'"

Chapter 11, verse 4, Pharaoh's being warned here.

"Then Moses said," in verse 4 now, we're in chapter 11, verse 4, 5

Then Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; 5 and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt

shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the hand-mill, and all the firstborn of the animals.”

“Thus says the Lord.”

And it was fulfilled just that way. Finally, Pharaoh let them go for a bit, and then hardened his heart and chased them, of course, they crossed the Red Sea, were out of the land. All the Egyptian soldiers, all their horses, all their chariots, all the riders were all covered by the sea.¹

Now that they were outside of that land where Egypt controlled, we take that to be the Sinai, they crossed over the Red Sea. God called Moses up onto a mountain to give him the law. And he was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights.² He ate nothing in that time, he was waiting before God for what God would give him.

But while he was up there, the people became restless. They wondered, "What happened to Moses? "We don't know what happened to him. "We've been forsaken." And they demanded that Aaron give them a god or gods that they could follow. You know, it's hard to not give in to the pressures of people around us. It's hard. And there's a heavy price to pay if we will not submit to their power.

Chris was reminding me the other day of Pastor Wormbrum that was basically being silenced in Eastern Europe. And he rose from his feet in the face of many who stood against the gospel and he spoke openly. Of the lordship of Christ. He was imprisoned for many years. Three of those years he never saw another face. Tortured. But he would not deny Christ. If you've ever read the book of, Fox's book of martyrs, there's a record there of how Christians through the ages have been unwilling to deny Christ.

You go back to the Roman Empire even, when Christians were being persecuted, many hundreds, I don't know how many hundreds, some say thousands, were given the opportunity at the Colosseum. They were given the opportunity to deny Christ. Or face the wild beasts. Not just lions, they had all kinds of wild beasts. Bears, hyenas, many kinds of beasts that they had captured to bring there for a spectacle. And Christian after Christian said no, I will not deny Christ. And they were torn to pieces in front of crowds cheering. Torn to pieces. Because they would not deny the lord. And that went on in the

¹ Exodus 14

² Deut. 9:9,11

centuries that followed as well. If you want to read Fox's book of martyrs you'll see the record.

But here you go in Exodus chapter 32. Aaron has one of the most stupid excuses for anything you'll ever find in the scripture. Chapter 32 of Exodus. I'm going to read it verse 23. Throw a little curve here. "Well they said to me," this is Aaron now, he's giving his excuse.

"Well they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let him break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire."

Now get this.

"And this calf came out." I threw that gold into the fire and this calf came out."

Now if that isn't one of the most stupid excuses you'll ever find in the bible. Do you really think that Moses is going to believe that they threw the gold into the fire and this calf just came together out of that gold and just came out of the fire? What a lie. Well, it goes on.

"Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained, for Aaron had not restrained them to their shame among their enemies." Verse 26. "Then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp and said, 'Whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel.'"

Without that authority, can you imagine him saying what follows? That any man should say this without the authority of God? He's saying this to the tribe of Levi, the priests. Verse 27, 28

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel:"

"Let every man put his sword on his side and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses."

Was it the word of Moses? Yes, he was a spokesman. But it was the word of the Lord.

"And about 3,000 men of the people fell that day."

What a bloody judgment because they threw their gold into the fire and this calf came out. And so they bowed down to a golden calf and they danced around the fire. Apparently they got drunk. And like the fertility cult worshippers of that day, worshipping Baal, who was often cast as a bull. "Calf" here means a bull. They practiced right there in public sexual immorality. And that's what the Jews were doing. Made the heart of God sick. And he brought a fast taste of judgment, a slap. Not a total destruction, but 3,000 died. There's authority in the word of the Lord.

Joshua - Thus says the Lord

Let's go up to the book of Joshua. Go up to the book of Joshua. Chapter Moses has surrendered his leadership. God has taken him. God has installed Joshua as a leader. I'm going to take you to the 24th chapter of Joshua. I want you to see how Joshua speaks. 24:2,

and Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, "Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham "and the father of Nahor, "dwelt on the other side of the river in old times "and they served other gods."

And then he goes on to tell of how God delivered the Israelites and brought them out and now asked them to serve him.³ But he said this,

"Thus says the Lord."

Judges - Thus says the Lord

Want to go to the period of the judges? Judges, 6:7.

"And it came to pass when the children of Israel "cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites."

You know the book of Judges, don't you? It goes from crisis to crisis to crisis. The Jews would get into trouble. Some nation around them would be plaguing them and then they would decide to leave their sin behind them and cry out to God. And God would hear their prayer and he would send them basically a military leader. Somebody to stand before the people, lead the men into battle and these men were called, or in one case a woman, these men were called judges.

³ read Josh. 24

Well the Midianites were giving them trouble and they came around to the place where they were crying out to God. 6:8.

"That the Lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel "who said to them,"

Now we don't know his name, but he is a prophet. He is sent by God. He said this,

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, "I brought you up from Egypt "and brought you out of the house of bondage "and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians "and out of the hand of all who oppressed you "and drove them out before you "and gave you their land." "I said to you, I am the Lord your God. "Do not fear the gods of the Amorites "in whose land you dwell, "but you have not obeyed my voice."

What a shame. This prophet was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. He was sent by God. This prophet was sent to rebuke them, but he spoke, "Thus saith the Lord." He spoke for God.

Samuel was the last of the judges. Go to Samuel, 1 Samuel 15. Here's a prophet as well. 15-1- "Samuel also said to Saul," this is the one that Israel demanded that they have a king. God was not his first choice. God was not his first choice. He said, "I will give you a king." He gave them a king. It was not his first choice, but he gave them Saul. Samuel also said to Saul,

"The Lord sent me "to anoint you king over his people, "over Israel. "Now therefore, "heed the voice "of the words of the Lord. "Thus says the Lord of hosts."

Now, anytime you have the host added to the name of God, you're being reminded that He is the captain of the army. The host means the forces, the military forces of heaven. It really means all the legions of the angels. I mean, God is omnipotent, but he uses these creatures in his chosen time, and they are a mighty, mighty force.

By the way, whether it be one wrestling with a stubborn Jacob, you know, all night, or whether it be the host, the whole bunch of them that come, like in Revelation 19 with the Lord Jesus, not one of them has ever been defeated or ever been hurt or ever will be hurt or defeated. They are powerful creatures. He's the Lord of hosts.

And so, he says, "Thus says the Lord, "I will punish Amalek "for what he did to Israel, "how he ambushed him on the way "when he came up from Egypt."

You see the formula? "Thus says the Lord." That's what Samuel wanted Saul to know first of all. The punishment of the people called Amalek was going to be in the hands of the Lord. And he could rejoice in that. Saul, of course, offended in it, but he was not offended in it, but go to 2 Samuel. Lost his kingdom over it because he did not listen to "Thus saith the Lord."

David - Thus says the Lord

Chapter 7 of 2 Samuel. Let me read at verse 2. This is the incident where David wants to build a house for the Lord. And even before I read this, I want you to understand that the word house has a double meaning. There is the obvious meaning of a structure, a handmade structure, a building, okay? But there is another meaning behind these words that we find out through the scripture that house also means the bringing together step by step of all the parts that assemble together represent not a physical house, but a family, a lineage, a group of people. Keep that in mind. 2 Samuel 7 verse 2. Where I'm going to begin that the king said to Nathan the prophet,

"See now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." Then Nathan said to the king, "Go do all that is in your heart for the Lord is with you."

I mean, that's the prophet of God telling him, "Well, it seems to me now that you should do that. You can build a house for the Lord God. It seems reasonable. He's been making himself known inside of a tent and it seems more honorable in my eyes to and I see what you're thinking and why don't you go do that? The Lord is with you." God was not pleased with the prophet speaking on his own behalf even though he meant well, even though he assumed the mind of God. God had to set the prophet straight and set David straight. So, verse 4,

"But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, 'Go and tell my servant David.'" Now, this is the way he wants him to talk to David.

Verses 5-7

"Thus says the Lord." "Would you build a house for me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt even to this day but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I've moved about with

the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel whom I call whom I commanded to shepherd my people, Israel saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"

Have I ever said that?

God says. Verse 8

"Now therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David." "Thus shall you say to my servant David." "Thus says the Lord." "The Lord of hosts I took you from the sheepfold from following the sheep."

People, that's not an exalted role in the society to be following sheep. I know you're not a farmer. You don't understand about sheep. You just don't know that they're there. You've heard about somebody being a brick shy of a full load. Well, sheep are about one brick toward a full load. They're not absolutely stupid. I know there's the earthworm. But nonetheless, they're not bright. So you're taking care of sheep.

"I took you from following after the sheep to be ruler over my people over Israel."

Now, could I just in a lighter way say, I don't think he got much of a promotion. Anyway, I won't say that now.

Verses 10,11 "And I have been with you wherever you've gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you and have made you a great name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people, Israel, and will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore as previously."

Now, just, you know, even today, Israel may be in that place never to be moved again. I'm not saying it couldn't happen. But as the years go on, I just tell you, I get more and more convinced it's probably not going to happen. That they're in that place to stay. But this part about not being oppressed by the sons of wickedness anymore, well, not if you've watched yesterday's news or this morning's news. That one's not fulfilled yet. But it will be.

Verse 11 "Since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people, Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies, also the Lord tells you that he will make you a house."

There it is. God is going to make a house for... David wanted to make a house. He said, David wanted to make a house for the Lord. The Lord says, "No, no, no, David. I'm going to make a house for you." Have you been to Israel? You've seen that wonderful cedar house that God made for David? Sitting over there in the middle of the land? No, I don't think you'd better go there expecting to see it either. Because he's not talking about a physical building. He's not talking about a house that, you know, isn't subject to termites or mold or rot or the wearing of the winds and the water and the rot. He's talking about something else. He's going to build a house for David. He's going to build a lineage of people. He's going to come together as a great gathering of people.

Verse 12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed."

Would you please notice the word "seed" is singular, not plural? You're reading the Word of God, not a book that you bought at the bookstore. Seed, in our language, could be plural. But in Hebrew, this is a singular word. It's meant to be singular.

"I will set up your seed after you who will come from your body and I will establish his kingdom."

Now you're going to get a double reference here. David is going to have sons and one of them is going to be the one to reign after David is dead. We know that's Solomon. And we know that some of the things that are said after this do refer specifically to Solomon. Because Solomon will be allowed to build a house for the Lord. A physical building. It's called the First Temple. He built it at Jerusalem. But Solomon could never fulfill this prophecy in its completeness.

God is going to set up a seed from David. A seed from David's body. This person is going to have to be in the lineage of David. It must be by the bloodline of David that this person is going to be. It must be by the bloodline of David that this one comes.

Verse 13, "He will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

And that's where you separate it from Solomon and you say, "Wait a minute. Solomon's kingdom didn't last forever. It certainly didn't. The Assyrians came down. They took the northern tribes captive. Babylon came down. Took the southern tribes captive. Then they came back as a remnant. They struggled. You go through the times of the Maccabees and into the time of the Romans coming. After the terrible onslaught of the Greeks before them. The Romans set up their own king. He's not even a Jew. He's a Idumean. Herod. Didn't establish

the Davidic line. The Jews hated it. King after king. When Herod the Great died his family members all were put in that position. One after the other. The Jewish king line was never reset. Until the Romans scattered the Jews. Forbid them to even be in their own land. And then for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years they were wandering around in the earth being tormented, persecuted. Until in our lifetime.

God brought them back into their land. But you know something? There is no king of David's lineage on the throne. They have a democratic government. Now as wonderful as a democratic government is. And praise God for America. Do you know that the democratic idea of a democratic government is not the best kind of government there is? Do you really know what the best kind of government is for a people? Unless you can see that the government we have is marvelous. They do everything right. They are without sin. They only think on behalf of the people. They only think on behalf of the needs of the people. And serve the people. And they never take anything from the people that they shouldn't take. Surely you can see that as wonderful as that form of government is, it isn't perfect. There is one that's perfect.

And when I tell you it's to have a king, don't misunderstand. This world has seen many kings. And not one time when a king has ruled over a people has it been the best kind of government. It has never been. In fact, sometimes I could say, and most of the time, it was the most awful kind of government. It's not a matter of the fact that it's just going to be a king. It's a matter that the king will be the son of God. It will be his kingdom. He, the seed of David, will reign over his people Israel and over the earth, over every nation in this earth. He will reign.

Thus says the Lord. His house is going to be made up of believers from among the Jews and among the Gentiles. His house is called his kingdom. God is going to build that house. If you're not born of Christ, if you're not born of the Spirit, you aren't a part of the house. I will be his father. He shall be my son. Wonderful, wonderful, powerful statements. Just a few words before we go. You know how David speaks?

I'll take you just to one psalm. In Psalm 12. This is how David, David's a prophet. David speaks as a prophet. Psalm 12. Let me read from verse 5. He says, those of you who say who is over us?

“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise, says the Lord, says the Lord.”

It's not David speaking. It's God speaking. Now I have gone through the prophets. And thank you for looking at these scriptures with me. But let me tell

you. Isaiah says, thus saith the Lord. Jeremiah says, thus saith the Lord. Ezekiel says, thus saith the Lord. And Isaiah says, thus saith the Lord. And not only them, but Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. There are other prophets besides this. But these all spoke this way. Thus saith the Lord.

Now, one last place. The Gospel of Matthew. Chapter five. I do all this as kind of laying a foundation for moving toward our thoughts of the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection. In chapter five of Matthew, I just want to read this. And he repeats this little formula over and over and over in Matthew 5-7. But let me, in chapter 5:21.

“You have heard that it was said, but to those of old, you shall not murder and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.”

Jesus - I say to You

Now, I want you to notice how Jesus speaks. He does not say, thus saith the Lord. When he came, you know, people didn't know who he was. Is he a prophet? Scripture says yes, but more than a prophet. But no prophet would speak the way Jesus speaks. Only the Son of God can speak thus. He says,

“But I say to you, but I say to you.”

What prophet would stand before Israel and say, no, this is what I say to you. None of them. Not one of them. And when Nathan tried it and God had to rebuke him of sorts and say, no, no, don't. You didn't tell David the right thing. You told him, you know, he could go build me a house. I don't want that. Now you go and talk. Thus saith the Lord. The prophets do not speak this way.

Jesus says, “I say to you.” I say to you. He's the seed, the Son of God. He speaks with authority. He is absolute in what he says. He's the one that we must come to and come by and claim as our own. There is no one but him by whom we must come to the Father.⁴ The authority of God is in our Savior.

Lord, thank you for the authority that we see in you. You speak beyond what we have in the law. You speak with authority on how to pray. You speak with authority over the winds and the waves and over the demons, over sickness, over everything in this world. You have demonstrated your authority and you will be the one in

⁴ “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jn. 14:6

authority when they who don't know you come before you and claim you as Lord and you say, depart from me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you. You are the judge. You are the one who says who will go into heaven and who will go into hell. All judgment is given into your hand. You are the voice of authority. And when you say we are saved, we are clean, we are forgiven, there is no voice to be raised against you, Lord. Thank you that you loved us and died for us. God and Savior. Amen. Amen.