

Exodus 032

Victory Over the Darkness

Exodus 9:8-12

February 1, 2026

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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 9. The title of our message this morning is "Victory Over the Darkness." We are continuing our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Exodus. God is redeeming a nation from bondage by a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. God has worked strategically and raised up the man that He will use, a man named Moses, along with his brother Aaron, after years of training, are now in a position to be used by God. Are they ever!

We are now into the sixth plague. The Nile has been turned to blood. We have seen frogs, gnats, flies, the death of the livestock, and now, folks, it gets worse. We see boils manifesting themselves on the skin of animals and Egyptians all throughout the land. Here we are with judgment number six. We have the instructions to Moses and Aaron given by God (Exodus 9:8-9). Then Moses and Aaron obey those instructions, and this judgment comes forth.

Boils (Exodus 9:8-12)

- I. God Instructs Moses and Aaron (8-9)
 - A. Symbol (8)
 - B. Meaning (9)
- II. Moses and Aaron Obey (10-12)
 - A. Prophecy's fulfillment (10)
 - B. Magician's defeat (11)
 - C. Pharaoh's hardening (12)

First of all, notice the instructions (Exodus 9:8-9). We have a symbol and then we have a meaning. First, a symbol. Look at Exodus 9:8, which says:

"—Take for yourself handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh" (Exodus 9:8).

This is interesting, because what you start to see in the prophets as you go through the Bible, is that sometimes they communicate their messages through symbolism, through acting out something. A lot of people say, "Is there room in the body of Christ for art and drama and those kinds of things?" Apparently there is, because many of the prophets did not just preach, but they pantomimed, if I could say that, the things that God was communicating to them.

You start to see a lot of examples of this. Right around the time of the Exile the prophet Jeremiah was told, for example:

"Go and buy yourself a linen waistband and put it around your waist, but do not put it in the water" (Jeremiah 13:1).

Then a little bit later it says:

"Take the waistband that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it in a crevice of the rock" (Jeremiah 13:4).

A few verses later the Lord tells Jeremiah:

"Arise, go to the Euphrates and take from there the waistband which I commanded you to hide there" (Jeremiah 13:6).

Then it says:

"Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the waistband from the place where I had hidden it; and lo, the waistband was ruined, it was totally worthless" (Jeremiah 13:7).

This all symbolizes something.

"This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have gone after other gods and bowed down to them, let them be just like the waistband which is totally worthless. For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me," declares the Lord, "that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise and for glory; but they did not listen" (Jeremiah 13:10-11).

What God was doing in the days of Jeremiah was symbolized by Jeremiah taking this belt, if you will, and putting it in a crevice of the rock in the Euphrates.

There are many examples of this in the prophets. One of my favorites is Ezekiel getting a haircut. I like that one because I need a haircut myself. He took his hair, and after the haircut, "One third you shall burn in the fire at the center of the city." It goes on and it says, "One third, you are to chop with the sword, and one third, you are to scatter to the winds" (Ezekiel 5:1-2). It goes on and it explains what these thirds are representing. God says in Ezekiel 5:2, "One third, you will die by the plague or be consumed by famine among you, one third by the sword. one third I will scatter to the wind. Just as you are to take your hair, Ezekiel, after your haircut, and divide it into thirds and to do different things to each third, that is what I am going to do when I bring discipline and judgment upon the nation of Israel."

In this same way, Moses is told to go to this oven and take some soot, and in the presence of Pharaoh, he is to throw it into the air. The nice thing about the Bible is that the Bible is a self-interpreting book. You do not have to apply your sanctified imagination as to what the symbol means, because typically when a symbol is used in

Scripture, it will be interpreted for us right there in the context. If it is not interpreted right there in the context, typically it is interpreted somewhere else in the Bible.

Right on point, we see the interpretation of what this is to mean (Exodus 9:9):

"It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt"
(Exodus 9:9).

In the same way, dust is to be disseminated by God throughout the land of Egypt. As this dust settles on people, and as this dust settles on animals, painful sores or boils will break out on their skin.

This is interesting when you study this issue of skin and skin issues, skin problems, skin diseases. This kind of thing happens frequently in the Bible. It is as early as the Book of Job.

"Then when Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still hold fast to integrity? Curse God and die!'" (Job 2:7-9).

Nothing like that family support in the midst of difficulty.

God told Satan with Job, "Do what you want." There was an attack on his skin. This is bodily.

In 2 Kings 5:1 we read about a Syrian, a man named Naaman:

"The man was a valiant warrior, but he was a leper" (2 Kings 5:1).

He was told how to be healed of his leprosy. The solution was so easy that it insulted him, kind of like the gospel is today to people. The gospel is so simple that it insults the religious minds of people. It cannot be that easy. You want to get rid of your leprosy? Here is what you are to do: you are to dip yourself seven times in the Jordan. Naaman walked away from that feeling angry. Naaman is confronted by his own protege, his own worker, his own man. They say to Naaman, "If the prophet of God had told you to do some great thing then you would have been happy with it, but he told you to do something so simple that it offended you."

That, by the way, is one of the main reasons why people do not go to heaven. They hear the gospel and it is so clear, it is so easy, it is so simple what God asks us to do, that it is almost insulting. Consequently Christ, rather than becoming their redeemer, becomes something they stumble over or they trip over.

Naaman finally had a moment of realization and did what he was told:

"So he went and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean" (2 Kings 5:14).

One of the horrible diseases that you read about in Scripture is this disease of leprosy. It is mentioned frequently in the Bible. It says in Luke 17:12:

"As [Jesus] entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met him... When He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they were going, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:12, 14).

It is quite a study you can do looking at all of these skin issues, skin problems, taking place in Scripture. This terrible disease of leprosy, we look at that and we say, "How horrible." But the truth of the matter is, all of us have a disease. It may not be something as physical as a skin deficiency or a skin problem or leprosy, but it is a disease nonetheless, and it is lethal. That disease is called original sin, and it is killing every single one of us.

If we are not the Rapture generation, every single person within the sound of my voice, myself included, will die. We are dying constantly from this horrific disease that has been inflicted on humanity called original sin. Just as there are cures for skin problems in the Bible, as we are reading here, there is a cure for the disease that we all have of original sin, and it is simply to trust or believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Once we trust in that transaction, our skin, so to speak, is restored like that of a child's flesh. God looks upon us as if we are so holy and pure, just like He looks on His own Son, Jesus Christ.

Many people will go to their graves fighting against this solution. It is a tragic thing that something offends people. Paul calls this an offense when it is the only solution to the problem that we have, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is also a parallel in the Book of Revelation. You might remember from the first bowl judgment in Revelation 16:2. It says this:

"So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on people who had the mark of the beast or worshiped his image" (Revelation 16:2).

"And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they did not repent of their deeds" (Revelation 16:11).

This issue of judgment, manifesting itself in the form of skin and boils, is not going to go away. There is a judgment yet future where the same type of thing is going to be inflicted upon the inhabitants of the earth.

One of the things I have tried to point out as we have gone through the Book of Exodus, is to point out the parallels to the Book of Revelation. Sores are found in the sixth plague in Exodus, and the first bowl judgment in Revelation. Rivers to blood is the first

plague or judgment in Exodus, and the third bowl judgment in the Book of Revelation. Darkness is the ninth plague in the Book of Exodus, and the fifth bowl judgment in Revelation. Frogs are the second plague in Exodus, and the sixth bowl judgment in Revelation. Hail is the seventh plague, and the seventh bowl judgment in the Book of Revelation.

Why these parallels? Because in the book of Exodus, God is taking His nation out of the bondage that it had been in for 400 years. That is a type of a massive campaign that God will do in the Tribulation period, yet future, where He will take not just a nation out of bondage, but the entire world out of the satanic bondage that it has been in since the Fall of man in Genesis 3, where Satan has become the illegitimate, unlawful usurper over planet Earth.

All of these verses show you that Satan is the ruler of this world. He is the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); the God of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4); the prince and power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); he is the reason we have to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:12); he roams about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8); the whole world lies within his power (1 John 5:19).

Consequently, Paul tells us that the whole of creation is in a state of travail. It is in a state of groaning because we today in this world are just as much in slavery as was the nation of Israel under a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. But I have good news. Help is on the way. Victory is guaranteed. Just as God took Israel out of bondage, which is what we are studying here in the book of Exodus, God is going to take this entire planet out of the illegitimate bondage that it has been in since the Fall of man. When these judgments manifest themselves in the Book of Revelation we will read these words and hear these words at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

I hope, as you look at the circumstances in your life today, which sometimes can be very negative and sometimes it can be very unfavorable from the human side, you need to understand that as a Christian, you are on the winning side of history. Jesus stepped out of eternity into time and paid the price for this ultimate victory that is coming. We read about it and celebrated it at the Lord's Table a little earlier.

"And one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals'" (Revelation 5:5).

Jesus has overcome. Look at the Greek word there, where we get the word Nike, like the shoe company. I guess you put the shoes on and you are a victor. You can jump as high as Michael Jordan. Of course, he has his own brand, so maybe you cannot quite jump as high as him, but that is where this whole concept of Nike comes from—victory, "nikao [νικάω]."

The truth of the matter is, we are not waiting to see who is going to win this. Jesus has already won. If you know Jesus personally, you are on the winning side. You may not

feel like a winner; you may not look like a winner; you may not look at the issues going on in your life as if you are winning anything, but biblically speaking, positionally speaking, you are a winner. You are an overcomer, not because there is something great in yourself, but you are connected to the One who wins. He already overcame, which makes me an overcomer. In other words, I am going to be there along with Him participating in this final victory.

Jesus said in John 16:33 to his disciples in the Upper Room:

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

There is our word "nikao [νικάω]" in the perfect tense [νενίκηκα]. It is a one-time action with ongoing results. *"I have overcome the world."* Jesus has already overcome. The victory is guaranteed. It is like going out onto the field and knowing you are going to win. It is guaranteed you are going to win before you play a single second of the game. That is the status of the believer.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one that overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:4-5).

You mean my whole status is changed from loser to winner if I only believe? It cannot be that easy. This was Naaman's hangup. It cannot be that easy. "All I have to do is dip myself seven times in the Jordan, and this problem I have with leprosy disappears?" This is the reality of what God has given us. All you have to do is place your trust in what Jesus did for you. You are trusting in Him rather than yourself, for the greatest problem that we have, which is our sin. The moment that happens, my whole identity changes to becoming an overcomer. I overcome because He overcame.

What about Satan? He is a pretty rough character. Yes, he is, but not from the vantage point of God.

"You are from God, little children, and have overcome ["nikao" [νικάω]] them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

You do not have to go through the Christian life as a depressed, sad-faced saint with a perpetual victim mentality. You walk through the Christian life with flaming optimism because of the one that you are connected to. He overcame; the victory is guaranteed. That is our position as Christians. It is not something that you can earn or gain. It is something that is positionally given to you at the point of faith alone, in Christ alone.

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

There "nikao [νικάω]" is preceded by the prefix "hyper [ὑπερ]" where you get the word "hyper," which means "super." My translation: super duper. You are a super duper overcomer already. This is why you can walk through life overcoming this trial, overcoming that trial, overcoming this issue, overcoming that issue, because,

"greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Though Satan can cause a lot of damage on the way, he cannot derail your destiny. I think that is something to celebrate. He overcame, and we are going to overcome. He brought the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. He is going to bring the whole world out of the satanic bondage that it has been in.

What is interesting is that each of these plagues is designed to mock one of the Egyptian deities. We have made a point of this as we have moved through these plagues. The boils are there to mock Sekhmet and Serapis.

The Plagues of Egypt			
NO.	DESCRIPTION	SCRIPTURE	Egyptian Deity
1.	Water to Blood	Exod. 7:14-25	Hapi, Khnum
2.	Frogs	Exod. 8:1-15	Heqt
3.	Gnats	Exod. 8:16-19	Set
4.	Flies	Exod. 8:20-32	Uatchit
5.	Disease on Cattle	Exod. 9:1-7	Hathor, Apis
6.	Boils	Exod. 9:8-12	Sekhmet, Serapis
7.	Hail	Exod. 9:13-35	Seth, Nut
8.	Locusts	Exod. 10:1-20	Seth, Nut, Osiris
9.	Darkness	Exod. 10:21-29	Re, Horus, Atum
10.	Death of the First Born	Exod. 12:29-36	Min, Osiris, Heqt, Isis

Ed Hindson explains:

"Specific Egyptian deities challenged by this plague were a veritable pantheon: Typhon, the god of boil protection; Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess of disease protection; Serapis and Isis, the god and goddess of healing; Imhotep, the medicine god; and Sunu, the pestilence god."¹

Every single god that they worshiped let them down. This becomes the agenda of God concerning the issue of idols, little gods. God is interested in ridding our lives of all the competition. What is an idol? It is anything that you worship in place of God. It could be a piece of metal, but it generally is a condition of the heart. Anything that you look to for security, anything you look to for meaning above and beyond God. Can I just be honest with you? If that is going on in your life, then things are about to get shaken up, because God is going to shake the house until the priorities are right.

¹ Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *KJV Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the KJV* (p. 94).

You worship health rather than God, medicine rather than God? Believe me, God has really creative ways of dealing with that one. Are you looking to some kind of expense account or retirement account for safety and security? God is really good at turning a 401K into a 201K. Let us just put it that way. You are looking to some kind of relationship to validate meaning in your life? We know what can happen with relationships—they can deteriorate. God will keep working. I happen to know this from personal experience, working and working and working and working until we look to Him and Him alone.

*"I am the Lord, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another,
Nor My praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).*

"I am not going to give it to Isis or Sunu, or the retirement account, or health, or the way you look, or some kind of talent that you have. I want you to recognize that those things are not bad in and of themselves, but I want you to look to Me."

Is this not the story of the Bible? God, perpetually dealing with the subject of ridding us from idolatry. He is going to take the nation of Israel to Mount Sinai (Exodus 20), and at Mount Sinai He is going to give them the Ten Commandments. They are not ten suggestions, by the way. They are not, "Try this on and see how it works." These are the Ten Commandments. Most people do not know the Ten Commandments; they do not have them memorized. Could you do that this week? Could you take the Ten Commandments and commit them to memory?

The first one says:

"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

The second one says:

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations to those who hate Me" (Exodus 20:4-5).

It sounds like God is interested in this subject. John the Apostle in 1 John 5:21 closes his little Epistle—writing to Christians, because Christians can struggle with this:

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

Jesus in Matthew 6:24, during the Sermon on the Mount, said:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).

Translation: God is a lousy roommate. God is not interested in being a roommate with some other god. He wants to take over the house, and He has the right to do it because

He is God. He is our Creator; He is our Redeemer. This whole issue of money—money is not the problem. It is the love of money.

First Timothy 6:10 says, and it is probably one of the most misquoted verses in the Bible:

"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Not money, but love of it. You can have very little of it and still love it; and you can have a lot of it and be a disciple of Christ. It is not a condition of what you have; it is a condition of the heart. Do you have possessions or do possessions have you? That is the issue.

"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Look at Judas who sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. You do not think, throughout the ages of time, that he is regretting that decision every single day of his life? Gold is the most valuable metal; silver is under gold. He did not even sell out Jesus for gold. He sold him out for silver.

"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17).

There is nothing wrong with enjoying life as long as it is not done outside of the parameters that God has given. Praise the Lord if you have an abundance, just do not look to that as some kind of idol. God is your supplier. Your job is not your supplier. God is your supplier. God is your provider. If you lose a job, God can get you a job.

God is really creative at this. We look to Him as the One that provides, not to a boss, not to a company, not to a stock, but it is the Lord. We get confused on this very easily where our hearts drift away from God.

The prophet Isaiah says of the people of God in his generation:

*"Because this people draw near with their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from Me
And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote" (Isaiah 29:13).*

People show up, they do the religious thing, they go through the religious rituals, but their heart is somewhere else. May the Lord help us to understand this, that He is interested in our heart. He is interested in a relationship with us.

Moses and Aaron are to do this thing, cast this before Pharaoh, and tell him what is going to happen. Then, what God says would happen, happens. Moses and Aaron do exactly what God told them to do.

By the way, it took Moses 40 years to get to this point because he liked to do things his own way. When he was 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew. He understood his calling as the leader of Israel, and he went and killed the Egyptian. Talk about a guy that took matters into his own hands. He fled out of fear into Midian, where he got what I call his BD degree—backside of the desert degree. There he was reduced to nothing but tending the sheep of his father-in-law for 40 years, in and around Midian, in and around Mount Sinai.

Finally, God, after 40 years of this, reveals Himself to Moses in the burning bush, and reveals to Moses his calling. Moses has been so reduced to nothing through this process that he starts making excuses. "God, you have the wrong man. I am not qualified to do this at all." That is a different guy from the one we read about 40 years earlier, where he was so self-willed that he actually committed murder, thinking he was doing God a service.

If you find yourself today in a place of isolation, some kind of role where it is less than your abilities, you should take courage and heart in that because God is emptying you of yourself. The biggest problem with Moses was Moses. God reduced, God emptied Moses of Moses, and he got to a point where he said, "I cannot do anything unless the Lord helps me." Then the Lord says, "Now it is time to be used."

Moses does exactly what God says over and over again. God uses this man in the final 40 years of his life, not only to bring these plagues upon Egypt, but to lead the nation of Israel in the liberation from Egypt, to give the law to these people, and to write the first five books of the Bible. That level of fruitfulness and productivity goes off the charts in the last third of Moses' life. The reason it went off the charts is because he went through the middle third, where he was reduced to nothing. This is why Moses is doing exactly what he is doing at age 80, something he would not have done at age 40.

I am certainly not the man I should be all the time, but I thank God I am not the man I used to be. I thank God that the man I am in 2016 is not exactly the same guy in 2015, and I hope that is always the case in my life and your life, as we are continuing to grow into full stature in Christ Jesus. What a privilege it is to be used by God to fulfill His eternal purposes on the earth. I would not trade it for anything, but we have to learn to do things the Lord's way and not our own way.

You see this prophecy fulfilled (Exodus 9:10):

"So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it towards the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast" (Exodus 9:10).

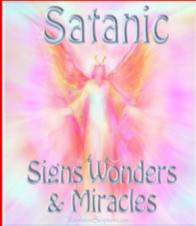
Every prophecy that God utters happens. What happened in Exodus 9:8-9 is fulfilled in Exodus 9:10. You can take that right to the bank. That becomes a pattern or a blueprint, if you will, for interpreting prophecies yet to come. If the prophecies of the past have been fulfilled so literally and exactly, then the prophecies yet to come are going to be fulfilled that way as well.

Look at the severity of this judgment, it even comes upon the magicians. Remember the magicians, the ones that in the first two plagues were not able to reverse the plagues that God used Moses to bring into effect, but they were able to imitate them? You reach a point where you get to the gnats, where it is dirt to gnats, non-living to living is what God does with the gnats. That is plague number three. That is different from the frogs, living to living. The multiplication of the frogs is different from the Nile to blood where they imitated that as well. That is non-living to non-living, frogs living to living. Then God ups the game and says, "Now we are going to go from non-living to living." That is when Pharaoh's magicians say, "We cannot do this. We cannot imitate this. This is the hand of God that is doing these things. This is the finger of God."

While they were able to do imitations to a point, they could not do it with number three. Now number six is so bad that it affects them as well. The very people that could imitate what God had done in the first two plagues are now exhibits of what people with boils and skin issues look like. Do not misunderstand me, folks. The devil has a lot of power. If he did not have a lot of power, he couldn't, through these magicians, impersonate or replicate what Moses and Aaron did.

This is a chart I have shown you many times here. I will not go through the whole thing, but it is a chart that shows you every miracle in the Bible that happens that God does not cause.

Satanic/Demonic Miracles

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exod. 7-8 2. Deut. 13:1-3 3. Job 1:12-19; 2:7-8 4. 1 Sam. 28? 5. Matt. 7:21-23; 24:24 6. Luke 4:5 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Acts 8:9; 16:16 8. Gal. 1:6-9 9. 2 Thess. 2:9 10. 2 Cor. 11:14 11. Rev. 13:3, 13, 15; 16:13-14
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Does God do miracles? Absolutely. Does the devil do miracles? Absolutely. There are lots of examples of it in Scripture, but even though this power exists in Satan, he is no match for God. Ezekiel 28:13, of Satan when he fell, says:

*"On the day that you were created
They were prepared...
You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:13, 15).*

Satan is a created being and as a created being, he is not God. He may have a lot of beauty. He comes as an angel of light. He may have a lot of power, but he is no match

for God because he is a created being, and as a created being he is not omniscient. He does not know everything; he is not omnipresent, like God is everywhere at once; he is not omnipotent, all powerful. We do not get our theology from the movie Rocky, where you have Rocky and Apollo in the ring.

You remember the first Rocky movie, and I have used this example many times. It is like you really do not know who is going to win until the end. There is a slight edge for Apollo because he is the heavyweight champ, defending champ; but that Italian stallion was a tough guy. Who is going to win? You do not know till the end.

A lot of people look at Christianity that way. God and Satan, who is going to win? We do not know. You do know. The moment God said of Satan, "You are created," is the moment that we know who is going to win. The Creator is going to win; at Genesis 1:1, we know who is going to win.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Atheism is not going to win because it says God created. Pantheism is not going to win because that verse says God is transcendent over creation. Polytheism is not going to win because a singular God created. Materialism is not going to win because God created matter. Humanism, which they teach around the clock in the public school system, the worship of man, is not going to win because God did His greatest work, His greatest miracle before man was even on the scene. Naturalism that everything came about accidentally is not going to win because it says God created. Dualism, which is Rocky and Apollo, is not going to win because the two have rivals, but God has no rival.

The only reason the devil is around is because God, in His infinite wisdom, is using Satan for His own power. Satan is a defeated foe and he is on the way out. It is just that the sentence has not been executed yet. It is like a legal trial. You have a guilt phase and a sentencing phase. In the guilt phase, the person accused of a crime is convicted of a crime. In the sentencing phase, the decision is made as to what the punishment is going to be. Is it going to be life imprisonment? Is it going to be the death penalty? What is it going to be? Different phases of a trial.

That is where we are today. We are standing in between two phases of a trial. The conviction stage has already run its course. Satan has been evicted from heaven. We are told in Eden that his head will be crushed. Whatever experiment he was running in the pre-Flood world was unsuccessful to stop the birth of Christ, because Christ was born 2,000 years ago. He accomplished His mission on the cross through His death, burial, and resurrection and ascension. The conviction stage has run its course.

Now we are waiting for the sentence. That is going to happen at the midpoint of the Tribulation, where Satan will permanently lose access to God's throne. It will happen at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom, when Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Then finally we will get to the end of the Millennial Kingdom, and Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire. Then it is over. He is done. I cannot wait for that. I live with great hope and expectation that it will happen because the conviction has already run

its course. The sentence is coming, we just do not know when. We are certainly given a lot of hints and Scripture as to how this is going to manifest itself.

This judgment was so severe—that is why I called this sermon "Victory Over the Darkness"—that even the magicians who could imitate the judgments of God up to a point, without being able to reverse them, even those magicians themselves are now afflicted with this skin problem. God is a winner. We are winners, too, because we are with Him.

We end here with Exodus 9:12 where this happens now for the first time—the Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart. Notice Exodus 9:12. You should underline the word "Lord," because we have not seen the Lord inserted in any passage like this thus far in the Book of Exodus. This is plague number six. For the first five plagues, the Lord did not harden Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh hardened his own heart. For the very first time, when you get to plague number six, God says, "I will help you. You want a hard heart towards Me? I will put it in cement. I will give you what you want," which is to me frightening.

"And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses" (Exodus 9:12).

This is the advantage of moving through the Bible chronologically. You see the order here? Ed Hindson says:

"For the initial five plagues, the text registers Pharaoh as the agent of hardening. Not until the sixth plague does God participate in the confirmation of Pharaoh's own volitional choices."²

The interesting thing about God is that He respects free will. If a person over and over again makes a decision and a decision and another decision and another decision against God, God finally steps in and says, "I will give you what you want. I will help you with the next round." That is where Pharaoh was.

I look at something like that and I wonder how many people on this planet are there. They are so recalcitrant against God, so determined to engage in wickedness and iniquity. I look at so many of them, and they look so far gone. I say, "How many opportunities have they been given?" And now God has finally given them something that I call divine abandonment. He has let them have their own way, and in fact expedited the process of rebellion. This is something that happens in the Bible.

Charles Ryrie, whose numbers are a little different, says:

"Seven times Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God first hardened it, though the prediction that God would do it proceeded all."

² Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *KJV Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the KJV* (p. 86).

You have the prediction of God hardening Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21), but Pharaoh hardened his own heart repeatedly before God did. Then finally, it is not until the sixth plague that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12).

In Genesis 6:3 God says, just before the Flood:

"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Genesis 6:3).

God strove with man for 120 years, that is a long time. We are getting ready to celebrate our 250th birthday as a country. That is half of the United States chronologically. God put up with people and let them do what they wanted through their own volition, striving with them, convicting them, trying to get them to change their ways. Finally, after 120 years, an age of grace, God says, "That is enough. I will give you what you want."

It is a dangerous thing to presume on the grace of God. We celebrated the grace of God this morning at the Lord's Table. There is nothing to be happier and more joyful about than the grace of God, but we think that because we are so accustomed to grace that it continues on indefinitely. It does not. I am talking here about the role of the unsaved, the fate of the unsaved, which eventually eclipses the patience of God Himself.

That is where Pharaoh was. Chance after chance after chance. Rejection, rejection, rejection, rejection. Finally, God says, "Do you know what, Pharaoh? I will make it easy on you this time around. I will harden your heart." It is scary.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them. For God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-20).

It is not that they do not have truth, they suppress it. They hold down the obvious.

You watch these things on TV, of planes that crash and they have got an audio recording of the pilot and what he is saying at the last minute. A lot of them are cursing God. You would think that at the end of someone's life it would have the opposite effect, but apparently it does not because it is a frightening thing, the hardening process. It is almost as if the mind is given over to an incapacity to humble itself before God.

*"A man who hardens his neck after much reproof
Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).*

I say, "Lord, I do not ever want to get like that. Make me humble, make me usable, make me pliable. Make me sensitive to things that You might find in my life that are displeasing." I do not want to be one of these types that hardens and hardens and hardens my heart against God to the point where God does not intervene anymore.

It is like your basketball coach. He is screaming at you, and you get to the point where you ask, "Why is he always yelling at me?" Then you have a one-on-one meeting with him, and he says something like this: "You should worry when I stop yelling at you, because if I stop yelling at you, I have given up on you. The fact that I am yelling at you and correcting you means I see potential in you." That is what the conviction of God is like. It is in your life because God loves you and wants the best for you. The most frightening thing in the world is when the conviction disappears.

You get to the very end Exodus 9:12. Look what it says: *"just as the Lord God had spoken to Moses."* God said that it is going to happen.

Jesus, in John 13:19 says:

"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:19).

"I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (John 14:29).

Everything that God says will happen, happens.