

Exodus 039

Light and Darkness

Exodus 10:21-26

April 19, 2026

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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 10:21. The title of our message this morning is a very familiar theme in the Bible: "Light and Darkness." We are continuing our verse-by-verse look at the Book of Exodus. God is redeeming a nation, the nation of Israel, from 400 years of Egyptian bondage. He is using a man named Moses to do it. Through Moses have come the ten plagues on the nation of Egypt.

We are at plague number nine. We have seen the Nile to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, death of livestock, boils, and hail. We saw locusts the last couple of weeks. Aren't you glad to be leaving the locusts behind? Now we have the plague of darkness.

We can study this two ways. There are two major movements here. This is in Exodus 10:21-29. There is the plague's manifestation (Exodus 10:21-23). Then once the plague comes, as typically happens, Pharaoh summons Moses for a conversation (Exodus 10:24-29).

Darkness (Exodus 10:21-29)

- I. Plague's Manifestation (21-23)
 - A. God's command (21)
 - B. Moses' obedience (22a)
 - C. Plague's severity (22b-23a)
 - D. Israel's exemption (23b)
- II. Pharaoh Speaks to Moses (24-29)
 - A. Entrance (24a)
 - B. Pharaoh's command (24b)
 - C. Pharaoh's qualification (24c)
 - D. Moses' rebuttal (25-29)
 - E. God's hardening (27)
 - F. Pharaoh's command (28)
 - G. Moses' affirmation (29)

Notice, first of all, the plague's manifestation. Notice, if you will, God's command (Exodus 10:21), which says,

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt'" (Exodus 10:21).

One of the things I have tried to communicate as we have gone through the Book of Exodus is that so many of the judgments in the Book of Exodus look like the Book of Revelation. For example, that third one, darkness, appears in the ninth plague in Exodus, and in the fifth bowl judgment in the Book of Revelation.

Why the parallels? In the Book of Exodus, God is taking a nation out of Egyptian bondage. In the Book of Revelation there is the ultimate exodus where God is taking the world out of the bondage that it has been in since the Fall of man in Eden. That is what is spoken of in the Book of Revelation when we read these words:

"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).

To be honest with you folks, I cannot wait. This world just wears on you, the evil and depravity that we see all around us; but if you are a biblical Christian, there is a new world coming. What we are experiencing now in the world is only temporary. It is only a matter of time before Satan is evicted from planet Earth. Just like here in the Book of Exodus, it was only a matter of time before God would take His elect nation out of Egyptian bondage.

He brings now this incredible plague, the plague of darkness. Darkness is spoken of frequently in Scripture, sometimes physically, but sometimes spiritually as well. The Bible tells us that the entire human race, even though physically things seem visible and fine, is in a state of spiritual darkness.

John's Gospel talks about this over and over again. Here are a few verses from John's Gospel:

*"This is the judgment, that the Light [Jesus] has come into the world,—"
(John 3:19).*

You would think that if light came into the world, people would just embrace the light, but a funny thing happens when you are accustomed to the darkness and someone turns on the lights. What an irritation that is. That is why our world reacted the way it did to Jesus Christ.

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

Suddenly the light comes on, and not only is it a source of irritation if you are accustomed to the darkness, but the light is also not very comfortable because the light

exposes everything we are doing, which formerly was covered up. Jesus was the ultimate spiritual light coming into our world, and the world hated Him from day one because His mere presence exposed those who loved the darkness because it concealed their sin.

That is an explanation why the world has always hated Jesus Christ. It is an explanation why you, as a disciple of Christ, are hated no matter where you go. Have you noticed that the more you try to walk with God, the more you do not really seem to fit in anywhere? That is actually the design of God, because we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. That is in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13-16). We stand out as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15).

As you walk with the Lord and you start to get pushback because of it, sometimes from your own family, sometimes, God forbid, from your own church, sometimes from coworkers, do not think as if some strange thing was happening to you (1 Peter 4:12). This is the function of light. Light reveals, light exposes, and those accustomed to the darkness do not necessarily like the light.

Of course, what you see happening here in these various judgments is the sarcasm of God. God is extremely sarcastic. What better way to end Pharaoh's reign, a reign of total moral darkness, than to just shut off the light and say, "If you like darkness that much, if you like spiritual darkness like you do, if you want to persecute the nation of Israel, if you want to worship these various Egyptian deities, if you want to have around you these magicians that traffic in the occult, if you like spiritual darkness that much, then let Me push this over the edge and take it all the way here, and I will bring darkness to the Egyptian Empire."

This explains why, in one of the bowl judgments (this would be the fifth bowl judgment in the Book of Revelation), the beast's empire, yet future, will end in darkness.

"Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain," (Revelation 16:10).

How fitting it is to end the kingdom of the Antichrist, the ultimate prince of darkness, in darkness itself. The sarcasm of God.

What is interesting about the darkness that we are reading about here is that it was so dark in Egypt that it could actually be felt. How do you feel darkness? There it is at the end of Exodus 10:21: "...even a darkness which may be felt."

When you are watching these shows on cable television—the History Channel, A&E, Mysteries of the Bible—they bring on someone from Harvard to make it sound like these things that happened in the Exodus event really were not miracles. "This was just an eclipse," they say. I have seen them say that it was just an eclipse.

What do you do with this passage here that says the darkness was felt? That communicates something supernatural. This was not cloud covering or normal weather patterns; this was a judgment of God that was very severe to the point where you could actually feel the darkness.

How do you feel darkness? Charles Ryrie says,

*"darkness which may be felt. Possibly a combination of a violent sandstorm and supernatural darkness."*¹

What God is doing here, as He is with all of these judgments, is challenging various Egyptian deities. The deities that are being challenged here with this plague of darkness are three: Re, Horus, and Atum.

Ed Hindson writes this concerning Exodus 10:21:

*"The chief Egyptian deity challenged by this plague was Pharaoh's own divine father, Ra, the sun god and high god of the pantheon. This is surely a response to Pharaoh's previous question of YHWH's power with that of Ra (10:10). Shu and Nut, the respective sky god and goddess, would also have been (yet again) shown impotent before the Lord."*²

"You want to worship the sun (not the Son, S-O-N, but the sun, S-U-N)—let us see how well that does for you as I turn the lights out, so to speak, all over Egypt." You might remember what Pharaoh said back in Exodus 10:10. He actually issued a challenge:

"Then he said to them, 'Thus may Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind'" (Exodus 10:10).

That is what Pharaoh is saying to Moses. When we were back in Exodus 10:10, last week and the week before, I gave you this quote from Ed Hindson in his commentary on the Book of Exodus. You could possibly explain Exodus 10:10 as follows:

"The intent of Pharaoh may be conveyed as, 'My god Ra is before you; your god YHWH may be strong, but do not forget that Ra is just as strong.'" ³

That is what Pharaoh is saying to Moses as he is sending Moses away. That is a possible way of understanding Exodus 10:10, because the Hebrew word for "evil" is 'ra' (רע), which is also a reference to this sun god. "Ra is just as strong as Yahweh." Want

¹ Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, page 106.

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. 97). Thomas Nelson.

³ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

to bet? Keep reading. God says, "No light all over Egypt." We know at the end who has the power: God does. He launches a direct broadside on one of the great deities within the Egyptian pantheon.

This much I know about God, that He hates idols. God is going to take His children, the nation of Israel, to Mount Sinai, and He is going to put them under the Law. All you have to do is read the first two commandments in the Decalogue. It is a direct attack on idolatry:

"You shall have no other gods before Me [like this sun god that you were subjected to]. 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" (Exodus 20:3-4).

God hates idolatry. He hates the worship of things revered above and beyond Him.

*"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).*

A lot of people look at Jesus as if He is just one of the gang; He is just one among many gods. They think that there is the sun god, and there is the Nile god, and there is the frog god, and then there is Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth. When Jesus returns, Scripture says this of Him in Revelation 19:16:

And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (Revelation 19:16).

In language we call that a superlative, meaning the ultimate. It is like saying "Holy of Holies." When you use the expression "Holy of Holies" you are using a superlative. You are not talking about a holy place, you are talking about the quintessential holy place, the ultimate holy place.

The superlative is used of Jesus Christ in Revelation 19:16. He is not a king among many kings; He is the King of kings. He is not a lord among many lords; He is the Lord of lords. He is the ultimate Lord. If the Bible is not clear on this, it is not clear on anything.

I hope Jesus, in your mind, is a separate category from everything else people worship. He is the One that spoke in heaven and the earth leapt into existence. No other alleged deity did that. He is the One who, when Creation went awry through rebellion, stepped out of eternity into time and absorbed the wrath of the holy God in our place. He is the One who is coming back to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

You will not be able to vote Him out of office. No opinion poll is going to matter, because He is going to rule planet Earth with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15). He is the Creator; He is the Redeemer; and He is the coming King and Judge.

I am a little troubled by people throwing the word 'Jesus' around a lot. A lot of times people throw the word 'Jesus' around as profanity, but even when they do not use it as profanity, I am wondering, "Do they really understand who this is?" He is not a business guru. He is not a CEO, although He could be all of those things. He is not a consultant. He is not a role model for good behavior, although He could be all of those things also.

We are dealing with the King of kings and the Lord of lords, a name that is above every name, as Paul tells us (Philippians 2:9-10). If there is something else in our hearts that is competing with that, God will take aim at it, and He will keep working on you over and over and over again till that issue gets resolved.

An idol is really anything in our lives that takes supremacy over God. It could be talent, treasure, abilities, the way you look, or your connections. All of those things are God-given, and they are meant to be understood as God-given. They are meant to have their rightful place under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, but the human heart in its wickedness and its depravity has a tendency to elevate such things above Jesus. Jesus, when His children become that way, moves them very quickly into discipline and wants to straighten out their thinking, just like He is straightening out Egypt here with these different plagues.

There is a command given to Moses. Then Moses, of course, obeys the command (Exodus 10:22):

"So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all of the land of Egypt for three days. They did not see another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days,—" (Exodus 10:22-23).

You have to understand that when it keeps saying that Moses did what God told him to do, it took God 40 years in shrinking Moses down to about nothing to get him to this place where he was willing to obey God. Everything God says Moses does, but he was not like that in the first 40 years of his life. Moses is the man, you remember, that murdered the Egyptian that he saw abusing the Hebrew, which caused him to flee into Midian.

Moses, at age 40, was used to doing things his own way. In the next 40 years of his life (age 40 to age 80), through shepherding in Midian, God gave him menial labor, shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. God gave Moses what I call his B.D. degree, his backside of the desert degree, where Moses was emptied of Moses. The problem with God using Moses was that there was too much Moses. So let us take our pride and our self-sufficiency and let us reduce it.

Then finally, at age 80, with the burning bush that he saw, Moses was ready for ministry. That is how God works. He works that way in all of our lives. He has worked that way in my life. He continues to work that way in my life. He is getting us to a point where we say to the Lord, "You know what? My ways are not really working out too well. I am going to do exactly what You tell me to do."

When you see these statements in Exodus 10 about how Moses did what God said—*"Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky" (Exodus 10:22)*—you have to understand that this is coming after 40 years of character refinement. Through this process of character refinement, Moses learned the blessings of obedience.

Obedience in the Christian life is the key towards being blessed in the Christian life. I used to think that knowledge was the endgame, that the more I knew about God, the more blessed I was. There is a certain blessing in learning about the things of God, but if you really want the blessed life, then it is a life that is submissive to the will of God. I am not arguing that we become sinless, but that we live a life in which we are sinning less.

In Jesus' first miracle, when He changed water to wine,

"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it'" (John 2:5).

Remember, they ran out of wine, a social embarrassment. They had no idea how this situation was going to get fixed. Mary, Jesus' mother, makes this statement to these wine stewards: *"Whatever He tells you to do, do it"* (John 2:5, paraphrase). They did, and they were blessed.

In John 13:17, after Jesus got down on His hands and knees and washed the feet of His disciples, He made this statement in the Upper Room:

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).

He did not say that you are blessed if you know them. They knew something now about Christ that they did not know before, but as that lifestyle of servanthood began to be emulated in their lives, He said, "That is where the blessing comes from—not from the knowing, but from the doing."

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22).

One of the weaknesses of being a Bible church that is so focused on Bible teaching is that people get the misguided idea that spirituality is based on how much you know. Knowing things is critical, but it never was intended as an endgame.

Knowledge, Greek 'gnosis' (γνῶσις), has to turn into wisdom, or 'sophia' (σοφία). Wisdom is application. The Hebrews called wisdom 'hakma' (חָכְמָה), which is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also the application of knowledge. You start applying knowledge to daily life, now you are walking in 'sophia' (σοφία), or you are walking in what the Hebrews call 'hakma' (חָכְמָה).

If you want a good book that talks about how to apply the principles of God to daily life, the Book of Proverbs is your book. It will tell you every imaginable thing that you could possibly face in this life: family, relationships, emotions, finances, you name it, it is all there in the Book of Proverbs. It is all about application, application, application. That is where you start to see blessing in the Christian life. This is where Moses was, but for him it was a long time coming.

You look at the second part there (Exodus 10:22-23) and it talks about the severity of this plague. How bad was this plague of darkness?

"..and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days,—" (Exodus 10:22-23).

You say, "Pastor, what is the secret meaning to 'three days'?" Are you guys ready for this? When you see 'three days' in the Bible, it means 'three days.' It is the word 'day' or 'days' with a number. When you see that combination, it always refers to a literal time period. No one would look at this and say, "That really means three billion years," but people do in Genesis, with the same Hebrew structure when it says, "first day," "second day," or "third day."

People do this in Genesis all the time because they are trying to fit Genesis in with evolution. They are trying to get the perspective of people that are trying to explain Creation that were not even there, that are developing theories in the darkness of their own mind. We are so impressed by these people that we want to try to make the Bible fit their new philosophy of the day. In the process, we are rewriting the Bible. We are compromising it—and not compromising it in an irrelevant area—it is the foundation of the Bible.

*"If the foundations be destroyed,
What can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).*

The foundation is the most important part of the house. The most important part of the house is not the color of the walls or the wallpaper or the furniture. If the foundation is not right, then the house will suffer. I have shared with you about our house in the Dallas area. We would wake up in the morning and there would be a crack right through the wall that was not there before. It was not the carpet's color that caused it; it was a foundation issue, which is notorious in houses in the Dallas area.

The foundation is a big deal. If you rewrite the foundation of the Bible, the whole Bible collapses. If Adam did not fall into sin and lead to a life of constant sin terminated by death—if that did not happen exactly like God says it happened—then the point of a Savior does not make any sense. The better you understand early Genesis, the better you understand the need for salvation. Jesus came into the world to undo the damage brought into the world by the first Adam. He did it as the last Adam. But there is no need for a last Adam if the first Adam did not mess everything up.

I say this with a grieving heart because the number one topic that they are discussing today in the Evangelical Theological Society (which is supposed to be the elite among the elite of evangelical scholars), what is consuming their time, is the historicity of Adam. I am not talking about liberals. I am talking about evangelicals. Their whole topic is: Was Adam really a person? Was he really a human being? I have a question: Was Jesus a real person? He is the last Adam. Was He a real human being?

Be careful what you are doing with early Genesis, because from early Genesis, the whole house of Christianity is erected. If you compromise in early Genesis, you are going to compromise everywhere else. If 'six days' does not mean 'six days,' then maybe 'three days' over here does not mean 'three days' over here. It leads to silliness and the superstitions and the philosophies of man.

This plague is very severe, but you will notice at the end of Exodus 10:23 that the Israelis, the Hebrews living in Goshen, were exempted from this:

"...but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Exodus 10:23).

The unbelievers, the pagans, the Egyptians, went into darkness, but not God's people. They had light. That in and of itself shows you that this is supernatural.

Ed Hindson writes:

"Proponents of the miraculous intensification of natural events theory propose that the darkness resulted from the arrival of a blinding sandstorm. This does not take into consideration, however, that the darkness began at the discretion of Moses or the continued distinction the Lord made between Goshen and the remainder of Egypt. Although the entire nation suffered in suffocating, pitch-black darkness, the Hebrews in Goshen had retained the sunlight."⁴

⁴ 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. 97). Thomas Nelson.


These are not naturalistic events. Moses is saying, "It is going to start here and it is going to end over there. It is going to start tomorrow, and it is going to end when you repent, Pharaoh." We have seen that in a number of these judgments.

By the way, in the events of the Tribulation Period (which, thankfully, we will not be here to see, Amen?) the same kind of thing is going to happen. The plagues are going to come upon people that have received the mark of the beast. In some of these judgments (I do not know all of them) those that had not received the mark of the beast are spared.

As Solomon has told us in Ecclesiastes 1:9: *"That which has been is that which will be."* That is the right way to understand the Book of Exodus. It is a type, or a microcosm, of things on the horizon, things that are coming. Do not look at the Book of Exodus like it is only a history lesson. It is a history lesson, but it also contains within it typology that is yet to be played out on planet Earth.

Here is the world of Egypt in darkness, but God's people have light. Does that not describe you?

In John's Gospel, Jesus made seven "I AM" statements: (1) "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35); (2) "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12); (3) "I am the gate for the sheep" (John 10:7, 9); (4) "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14); (5) "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25); (6) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); and (7) "I am the true vine" (John 15:1, 5).

7 "I AM" statements in John		
	I am the Bread of Life	6:35
	I am the Light of the world	8:12
	I am the Gate for the sheep	10:7; cf. v.9
	I am the Good Shepherd	10:11,14
	I am the Resurrection and the Life	11:25
	I am the Way and the Truth and the Life	14:6
	I am the true Vine	15:1; cf. v.5

Number two, right out of the gate is, *"I am the Light of the world"* (John 8:12): *"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am—'"* (John 8:12). This is a reference to a divine title: "I am," in Greek 'ego eimi' (ἐγώ εἰμι), which is a name that was only given to God. It comes from Exodus 3:(13-)-14 when Moses says to God at the burning bush, "Who shall I say sent me?" "Tell them 'I AM' sent you, the self-existing One" (paraphrase, Exodus 3:13-14).

When Jesus keeps saying, "I am, I am, I am," He is claiming God's title. This talk about how Jesus was a good guy, but He never claimed to be God—it is pure biblical illiteracy to say something like that. You wonder if the people that make statements like that have ever read the Bible at all.

*"Then Jesus spoke again to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life'"
(John 8:12).*

You walk with Jesus and you are in spiritual light in a world that is in spiritual darkness. Do you know the longest psalm in the Psalter? Does anybody know what the longest psalm in the Psalter is? It is Psalm 119. The reason it is the longest psalm in the Psalter is that it takes the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse in each stanza begins with one letter, and then the next stanza goes to the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so on.

The first eight verses begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The next eight verses begin with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, each verse beginning with the same letter. The next eight verses begin with the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet. So it goes eight lines times 22. That is why when you read Psalm 119, if you are on a one-year Bible program, it is so long. The reason it is long is that it is an acrostic psalm.

Have you ever asked yourself what that psalm is about? I used to think it was about the Word of God, but that is not even accurate. It is about Torah, the first part of Hebrew Bible, which is the Law—meditation upon the law of God and the blessings that it will bring into your life. It is very interesting to me that the longest psalm in the Psalter is Psalm 119, and it is a Torah psalm.

In the midst of all of that, you get to Psalm 119:105, and it says,

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).*

Why is the world walking around in darkness? Because they reject God's Word. Why is it that you understand things that the world cannot understand? Because you respect God's Word. You do not even have to respect all of God's Word to receive this lamp or this light, although you should. All you have to do is respect the Law, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

"Do you mean that if I study Deuteronomy, I can walk in light?" That is what Psalm 119:105 says. Do you know that three times in the temptations, when Jesus was pushed to the furthest degree a person has ever been pushed in the area of satanic temptation (Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11), Jesus warded off each temptation through citations, from memory, from the Book of Deuteronomy.

To be frank with you folks, most Christians have never even read the Book of Deuteronomy. Yet there is this light that is available. If you give yourself to the Book of Deuteronomy, if you give yourself to the first five books of the Bible, then you are walking in light. You are in light while the world is walking around—stumbling around—in spiritual darkness.

God is light (Psalm 27:1; Micah 7:8; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 1:5). You had better get used to it, because one of these days we will be in the eternal state (Revelation 21-22). If you looked at the things that will not be in the eternal state—no Satan, no sea, no death, no crying, no mourning or pain, no temple, no evil, no curse—right in the middle of that description, Revelation 22:5 says, "No sun." The Son will be the source of light, like in early Genesis.

"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

Wait a minute, God. The sun has not come into existence yet. The sun will not come into existence yet until day four, so how is there light without the sun? God says, "Not a problem. I am light. My very presence is light. I do not need some sort of secondary agent or element to create light."

In the eternal state, there is no sun because we have the Son who is the source of light (Revelation 21:23; 22:5). There is no need for a moon either (Revelation 21:23) because all the moon does is reflect the sunlight. You know, Jesus said that in Matthew 24, when He was describing the events of the Tribulation Period. He makes this really interesting statement:

"THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT,..." (Matthew 24:29).

Throughout history, people thought that the sun and the moon were both light sources, but Jesus makes a statement that is way ahead of His time. He says that the sun will go out and the moon will not radiate the light anymore. "Who do You think You are, Jesus, the designer of this whole thing or something?" You stick with the Bible and you are so far ahead—pardon the expression—you are light years ahead.

One I do not have underlined here is that there is no night in the eternal state. There is no night because there is no sun or moon anymore, because Jesus is always present.

"In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;" (Revelation 21:25).

"And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Revelation 21:23).

Why are things this way? Because God Himself is light.

First Timothy 6:16 says of God,

"who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see...." (1 Timothy 6:16).

God is light, not Ra or any of these fake deities. God is showing Himself this way through these various plagues.

Then, of course, when a judgment like this hits (this is the ninth time this has happened) Pharaoh wants a conference call with Moses because he sees Moses as the problem. Moses is the servant of Yahweh who is bringing these judgments upon Egypt. Pharaoh himself recognizes this, and he always tries (I feel sorry for him in a certain sense) to strike a deal. "I have to do what I have to do to get this judgment called off, because this is the finger of God. My own sorcerers and magicians cannot do this. This has to be the hand of God."

You would think that he would just repent, but he does not. He persists in stubbornness (Exodus 10:24-29). Moses enters the picture (Exodus 10:24). This is the third time this has happened in this chapter (Exodus 10:3, 8, 16). Now it is happening again, and Pharaoh gives a command: *"—and said, 'Go, serve the Lord—'" (Exodus 10:24).*

So far, so good. Go and serve. Go—liberation from bondage—and serve. Is that not a prototype of the Christian life? First of all, we are set free by Jesus. We are not saved by our good works, but we are certainly saved unto good works. God wants to take my liberated life and use it for His glory. "God, You would do a much better job without me." God says, "I know that, but I am choosing to work this way. I have set you free because I want to use you as an instrument of blessing to other people." Go and serve.

First of all, go, meaning to leave Egypt and Egyptian bondage.

In John 8:32, Jesus says, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you miserable." It does not say that.

"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Not bondage and misery and self-doubt and self-condemnation, but freedom.

I love that movie, "A Great Awakening." I love the fact that they mentioned the Scripture verse there in Leviticus 25:10, I believe it is inscribed on our Liberty Bell: Proclaim freedom to the captives, understanding that God, on the year of Jubilee, set the nation free from financial debt; all debts were canceled. You were free. Could you imagine that? All your credit card bills and your mortgage are gone. That is a picture of what Jesus does for people when they place their trust in Him.

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).

Why would I go back to slavery when I am free? Why would I go back to my chains when I have been set free?

Pharaoh here has really good theology: go—liberty—and serve. God would take Israel out of Egyptian bondage. He would bring them to Sinai and He would give them the tools at Sinai for service unto the Lord. That is what the Lord has for us.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

It is interesting that when you study this in Greek, it is the Greek verb 'peripateo' (περιπατέω). It is in the subjunctive mood in Ephesians 2:10, meaning that is the mood of possibility. In other words, good works are not automatic, but they are desired. If you do not do good works, it does not cancel Ephesians 2:8-9, but why not just go all the way with God?

"Lord, You have set me free. What do You want to do with my life? You are the boss. I will listen to You. You open the doors. You provide the opportunities instead of me always trying to kick doors down." I am really good at that, by the way—trying to kick down doors that are not open for me. I have a PhD in that one. Instead of always trying to do that, we ought to say, "Lord, You open the door. You be the boss."

You will be amazed at what God will start to do in and through your life, as you submit to Him as a vessel that has been set free. Why? It is reasonable. Paul says to offer your body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

God is not saying, "If you do not offer your body as a living sacrifice, then I am going to rip the carpet out from under you and you are going to go to hell." A lot of people teach Christian doctrine that way. I do not think it is biblical. Paul does not say, "If you do not submit to Christ as a Christian, your freedom, your original salvation, is canceled." What he says is that it is logical, it is reasonable to offer your body as a living sacrifice, given

the fact that you have been set free from the tyranny of sin. That is what is reasonable: Go and serve.

Here comes the qualification. This is where we say that Pharaoh is not being authentic:

"Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, 'Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you'" (Exodus 10:24).

"Take the kids, but I keep the flocks," is what Pharaoh is saying here. This is actually a step up when you think about it. Earlier, in Exodus 10:9, 11, when you study those out, you will see that in the last judgment Pharaoh said, "The kids cannot go. The kids stay with me." Now he is loosening his grip a little more and he is saying, "The kids can go. It is just the animals that must stay with me."

What you are seeing with Pharaoh is that as each judgment hits, his grip on Israel gets a little looser. Do you see that? That is a prototype of what is happening in the Book of Revelation as God is taking this entire world out of the satanic bondage that it has been in ever since the Fall in Eden. Satan has a grip on this whole thing. This is why it is parallel to what you see in Exodus. As every judgment hits, Satan's grip gets a little looser. This process continues until finally Satan's grip is gone, just as Pharaoh's grip will be gone, as these words say:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He [not Satan] will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

That bondage that the world is in is now a thing of the past. Satan is in the abyss. It is a process that God is taking humanity and the devil through.

You see the same process with Pharaoh. After the locusts, he says, "The kids cannot go," but after the plague of darkness, "Okay, the kids can go, but the flocks stay with me."

You see Moses' rebuttal to this (Exodus 10:25-26):

"But Moses said, 'You must also let us have the sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the Lord our God. Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the Lord our God....'" (Exodus 10:25-26).

"If we cannot bring the animals with us, we cannot do the animal sacrifices which the Lord has called us to do." This is developed in the Mosaic Law in the Book of Leviticus, etc. "When you tell us the flocks are detained as collateral, you are negating the animal sacrifices that we have to do. And we have to have animal sacrifices because we

cannot have a tabernacle functioning without animal sacrifices, and we cannot have Yom Kippur, which is coming, when the blood of the sacrificed animal is applied to the mercy seat."

This is all described in Leviticus 16. God will pass over the nation's accountability for sin for a year. Of course, all of this points to Jesus, right? All of these things are but shadows and types of the ultimate reality that is coming: Jesus Christ.

"The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

"If you do not let us have the animals, Pharaoh, then we do not have a personification of Jesus Christ."

When Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3:7) they clothed themselves. They made garments, some kind of covering, and they clothed themselves.

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings" (Genesis 3:7).

That, beloved, is the first act of religion recorded in the Bible. It is man's attempt to earn a right standing before God through his own religious efforts. Then you get to Genesis 3:21 where it says,

"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

"You will not be made right with Me by covering yourself. You will be made right with Me because I will cover you through animal skins."

Have you ever asked yourself where these came from, these animal skins? Do they just drop out of the sky? Obviously what God did there on the spot was take an animal and kill it right there. That was a shock to their system because they did not even know what death was like up to this point. God is showing them the severity of their actions. They saw an animal killed, and God took the skins from that dead animal and clothed them.

What did the animal do that was wrong? Nothing. That is the point. God covered them through the transaction of an innocent scapegoat that died in their place. If you will not come to God that way, you are not coming. That is why you go to Genesis 4 and you see that you have Cain and Abel. The Lord looked with favor on Abel's sacrifice, but He did not look with favor on Cain's sacrifice.

Why is that? Because Cain came bringing the fruit of the ground. He did not come through the blood of an innocent scapegoat. He was just coming to God on his own terms. God said it was unacceptable, but Abel came honoring this animal sacrificial system. God looked with favor on Abel, and he looked with rejection on Cain.

That is the difference between religion and atonement. People all the time are trying to do the Frank Sinatra approach to spirituality: "I did it my way. Look at all of my good works, Lord." The Lord says, "I do not care and I am uninterested. In fact, your whole presentation is a big fat bore. What I am interested in is My Son's righteousness applied to you at the point of faith alone, in Christ alone."

By the way, that was paid for by the ultimate innocent scapegoat, Jesus Christ. *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29).

All of this stuff that is about to come into existence at Sinai points to that. When Pharaoh says, "You cannot have the animals," it is denying the typology that God is going to set up, pointing to Jesus.

"...and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

There is about to be a big one sacrificed in Exodus 12. It is called the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:5):

"Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may not take it from the sheep or from the goats" (Exodus 12:5).

The animal that will be used in Passover has to be unblemished, no genetic defects whatsoever. That is Jesus, who lived a perfect life in our place, not because of willpower (He had willpower, obviously), but because He was God in human flesh. You take away the deity of Christ, you take away a perfect sacrifice, you take away the virgin birth, for example, saying that Jesus was born naturally into our world and that He had a sin nature—if He had a sin nature, He could not qualify to be our perfect sacrifice. It is to be unblemished.

When you roll this out you see: *"...nor are you to break any bone of it" (Exodus 12:46)*. Does that not sound familiar? Is that not Psalm 22(:17), Zechariah 12(:10), and Isaiah 53(:5)? If those verses do not speak of it directly, they certainly hint at it (see Psalm 34:20).

I believe the strongest indication is in Psalm 22:16-18 that not one bone of Christ would be broken. Dying on the cross was horrific because the victims of the crucifixion would push themselves upward to grab their next breath; you died of suffocation. They wanted to get these people off the cross and down so they could get to business with celebrating Passover, not understanding that the Passover pointed to what they wanted off the cross. It is unbelievable.

What you did was you went to the victims of the crucifixion and you just broke their legs. If your legs are broken, you cannot push yourself up for your next breath and you die of suffocation faster. You know how it worked out with Jesus: they came to break His legs, but He was already dead, so they did not break His legs. Why didn't they break His legs? Because if they broke His legs, it would have violated all of this typology that Pharaoh will not let them even set up.

This is why God's hand has to move on Pharaoh. He has to deal with him because if you take away the nation's ability to take animals with them to use in the sacrificial system, if you take that away, all of the typology pointing to Jesus Christ is taken away, and John the Baptist cannot say, "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29).

This is a bit of a crisis. How is this crisis going to get resolved? You have to come back next week to find out.

At this point, we see the difference between religion and atonement, do we not? You might be here today because you think that your presence here is something that is needed to make you right before God. The difference between religion and Christianity is that religion is man's attempt to climb up to God through his own power; Christianity is God reaching down to man in the person of Jesus Christ, saying, "Receive what I have done as a gift."

Christianity is not a doing system; Christianity is a done system. It is done. It is finished. Christ's final words on the cross were, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), a translation from the Greek word 'tetelestai' (τετέλεσται), meaning 'paid in full.' It is not, "God bought lunch, now I need to leave the tip." If that is what you think Christianity is, then you do not understand Christianity. You might fit really well in some other religious system, but not biblical Christianity.

I would encourage as many people within the sound of my voice as I can to place their personal trust in Jesus, accepting what He did for you 2,000 years ago as a free gift. If you do not want to come to God that way, you can go sit in the corner with Cain and be angry, right? May God help us to understand these basic ideas.