

Exodus 040

Face to Face

Exodus 10:27-29

April 26, 2026

Dr. Andy Woods

Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 10:26. The title of our message this morning is "Face to Face."

God, in the Book of Exodus, is redeeming a nation that has been in bondage for 400 years. He has done that through various plagues. We are at the end of number nine, darkness, which means there is only one plague left: death of the firstborn. Before the Book of Exodus, we will segue, or transition, into the actual liberation from Egypt. For next time, you might think about reading Exodus 11 and 12, the events of Passover.

| 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 |

I had tried to time this so it would take place on Easter, but my timing is not that good because I take too long with other parts of it, so just pretend it is Easter for the next couple of Sundays. What you see there is foundational for the crucifixion of Christ and also ultimately the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we are dealing with this subject of the plague of darkness, the darkness has manifested (Exodus 10:21-23), which we saw that last time—in fact, the darkness was so thick you could actually feel it, the Bible says. This is obviously miraculous. It was not just an eclipse, as they try to teach you on cable television. There was something obviously supernatural about it.

As is typical, when the plague hits, all of a sudden Pharaoh wants to come to the negotiating table and he wants to strike a deal. Moses says in Exodus 10:24-29, as he is speaking to Pharaoh, "Here is the deal. We have to leave." Pharaoh says, "You can leave, but you cannot take your animals with you."

Now, that is a big problem because the animals are necessary for the sacrificial system that is going to be implemented at Sinai. If you do not have the sacrificial system, you do not have the typology leading to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist would see Jesus one day and say, *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29). If there are no animals, there is no prefigurement towards Jesus.

Darkness (Exodus 10:21-29)

- I. Plague's Manifestation (21-23)
- II. Pharaoh Speaks to Moses (24-29)
 - A. Entrance (24a)
 - B. Pharaoh's command (24b)
 - C. Pharaoh's qualifications (24c)
 - D. Moses' rebuttal (25-26)
 - E. God's hardening (27)
 - F. Pharaoh's command (28)
 - G. Moses' affirmation (29)

What happens is that as Moses continues to speak, Pharaoh continues to harden his heart. All of this will end with some very aggressive rhetoric from Moses following aggressive rhetoric from Pharaoh himself. That will pave the way into the next and final tenth plague, which is the death of the firstborn.

We pick up there at the end of Exodus 10:26, where Moses, in the midst of this conversation, says something. We did not really have a chance to look at it last time. Moses says in Exodus 10:26, halfway through the verse:

"...And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the Lord" (Exodus 10:26).

"We have to have these animals with us. You cannot keep them back in Egypt, because these animals are necessary in the service of our Lord."

If you go back to Exodus 10:24, it says,

"Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, 'Go, serve the Lord;...'" (Exodus 10:24).

"You can go, and you can serve Him, but not really, because I am keeping the animals," is what Pharaoh says. We camped on this last time, and I want to spend just a little bit more time about this whole subject of "Go, and serve." That is a beautiful type. It is a beautiful personification of what Christianity is.

Number one, we are to go. What does it mean to go? It means to be set free, set free from Egypt. That is what Jesus does for us, Egypt being a type, if you will, of the bondage associated with sin. All of us, whether we realize it or not, are in horrendous bondage to original sin. Jesus comes into our lives and into our world to set us free.

Some of these verses I shared with you last time, but let us go over them again.

"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).

In Galatians 5:1, Paul's Magna Carta, if you will, on the whole subject of Christian freedom and liberty, he says,

"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 you go back into legalism when you have been set free from a mindset that says, "I have got to do a bunch of works to make myself right with God"? Jesus set you free from all of that. Why would you ever return to it?

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

That is how you always recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in a group, in a family, in a marriage, or in a church. It is not dominated by a bunch of rituals; it is dominated by a spirit of liberty and freedom because that is what Jesus does for people. You see this tremendous emphasis as you go through the Scripture on this subject of freedom and liberty. That is what God is doing here for Israel.

But then the question becomes, what do we do with our freedom? A lot of people unfortunately move into legalism. Other people use their freedom to move into license, which is kind of the opposite of legalism. Legalism is you are trying to keep the flesh or the sin nature under control through willpower, trying to follow a bunch of man-made regulations without power associated with it. Some people say, "I am so frustrated with legalism now that I am free, I am just going to go back and live a life of sin." That is called licentiousness.

I am not here to challenge whether such people are saved or not. A lot of people will sit in judgment on them. They see a Christian move into legalism or license, opposite ends of the spectrum, and sit in judgment on them as to whether they are saved at all. I think it is possible to be saved in those kinds of conditions, but they are not God's blueprint for your life.

If you are going back into legalism or licentiousness, you are living below the privileges that God has for you. Ephesians 2:8-10 gives us the big picture here. That is what you see happening in the Book of Exodus through the repetition of "Go, and serve."

Ephesians 2:8-9 is our liberty. It says,

"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" (Ephesian 2:8-9).

Now, do not stop reading there. I cannot tell you how many Bible memory programs I have been in, and they have you read Ephesians 2:8-9, which is great, but what about Ephesians 2:10? Doesn't verse ten come after verse nine? What is the rest of the story?

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

We have mentioned before that "walk" is "peripateo" (περιπατέω) in Greek. It is in the subjunctive mood, meaning that it is the mood of possibility. It is not automatic. It is God's best—it is God's will—but the subjunctive mood indicates that maybe my life as a Christian will be characterized by licentiousness or legalism.

When that happens, I am falling short of God's pattern. It is not that I lost my salvation, it is just that the purpose for which He set you free is not being fully realized or actualized. When God set you free, He did not just set you free for the sake of setting you free, although that is a big part of it.

He set you free because His desire was to use your life in such a way that it would bless other people; that you would start to grow in the principles of progressive sanctification; that you would start to grow in the principles of discipleship. Now you are walking into your destiny. You are walking into the reason that God set you free, because He wanted to use you as His instrument of blessing to other people.

I have no corner on God. That is what God wants to do in your life. That is why He set you free to begin with. To just say, "I am just going to go back into sin." or "I am going to go back into ritual." is to completely miss what God desires to accomplish in our lives. May the Lord help us to not only be people that are set free, but people that are what we call FAT Christians—Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

That is what we need at this church. This is what any church needs. We need FAT Christians. Yes, your pastor said you can go out and get fat. Get FAT—Faithful, Available, Teachable—being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, in our decisions, in our usability.

That is what you see explained here by "Go, and serve." Even Pharaoh seems to understand this. "Go (liberation), and serve." This, by the way, is how most of the New Testament books, particularly Paul's letters, are set up. The first part of the book is liberty. The second part of the book is usability. The first part of the book is justification. The second part of the book is progressive sanctification. The first part of the book is orthodoxy, correct belief. The second part of the book is orthopraxy, correct practice.

Paul never tells us to live out what we do not understand that we have been given. So he develops our freedom in the first part of these various books. Then he tells us how to live it out as God wants to use us in the second part of the book. Paul's hinge word in these things is the word "therefore."

When you see the word "therefore" in Paul's writings, you should ask, "What is the word 'therefore' there for?" It moves us from knowledge to wisdom—"hakma" (חִכְמָה), the Hebrews called it; "sophia" (σοφία), the Greeks called it. Wisdom is knowledge, "gnosis" (γνώσις), applied. That is God's blueprint.

Now that you have been set free, here is how the principles of God work in your emotional life. Here is how the principles of God work in your daily habits. Here is how the principles of God's Word work in your family life. Here is how the principles of God's Word work in your family life, in your financial life, in your relational life, et cetera.

You read Paul's Magna Carta on Freedom (Galatians 1-4), then you hit Galatians 5:1, and it says,

"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).

The final two chapters of Galatians are an explanation on how to do that.

The whole Book of Romans is set up this way. Romans 1-11 is about doctrine, freedom, salvation. There is no greater treatment on that subject matter in the whole Bible than in the Book of Romans. Then you will notice that Romans does not end with Romans 11. The Book of Romans does not stop in Romans 11. There is Romans 12. What do we see in Romans 12?

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,—" (Romans 12:1).

What mercies of God? Paul says, "Have you been paying attention? I just explained them to you in Romans 1-11 those mercies: freedom, liberty, something that you have been given that you cannot earn.

"Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies—" (Romans 12:1).

Now he is getting personal because he is telling me what I am supposed to do with my physical body.

"—to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1).

You will notice that the Book of Romans does not start that way. The Book of Romans would be lethal if Paul started that way, because we would not understand how to get saved and how to even live this out. But now that you have had these mercies explained to you, you are now in a position to apply what you know and offer your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

The Book of Romans has a lot of "s"'s in it: Salutation (Romans 1:1-17); Sin (Romans 1:18-3:20); Salvation (Romans 3:21-5:21); Sanctification, (Romans 6-8). But how can I trust these promises when God has forgotten Israel, the people that He gave the Abrahamic covenant to? Paul says that He has not forgotten Israel (Romans 9-11). God is going to keep His word to Israel. He is going to keep His word to the Jew, which means He is going to keep his word to you.

I get to the end of Romans 11, and I am tempted to say, "What a great theology lesson. Let us close up shop here." Paul says, "Not so fast." We learn about Service (Romans

12:1-15:13). At the end of the book is another “s.” It is a Summation (Romans 15:14-16:27).

Now, Paul writes Romans 12:1, after that long discussion about Israel, in which he vindicates that God's promises are ironclad. Romans 8 does not mean anything to me if God is going to break His word to the nation of Israel. "Nothing can separate you from the love of God" (paraphrase, Romans 8:35) means nothing to me if God can break His word to the Jew. If He can break His word to the Jew, He can break His word to you.

In Romans 9-11, I discover He is not going to break His word to the Jew, which means that what He said in Romans 8 is completely trustworthy. You can take it right to the bank.

Then Paul says, *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God—"* (Romans 12:1)—since God is the only promise keeper, right? You now have a God whom you can trust, so give Him your body. Give Him you. Give Him everything that is in you and about you, and say, "Use it however You want." If you start doing that as a Christian instead of going back into legalism or licentiousness, now you are walking into the purpose for which you are set free.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says that it is the same principle in salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith, not based on works. Once saved, believers retain salvation unconditionally. It is yours. It is called a gift. But in response to God's love for them, believers are expected (this is what is desired) to keep His commandments. However, whether believers keep them or do not keep them, their salvation is still secure.

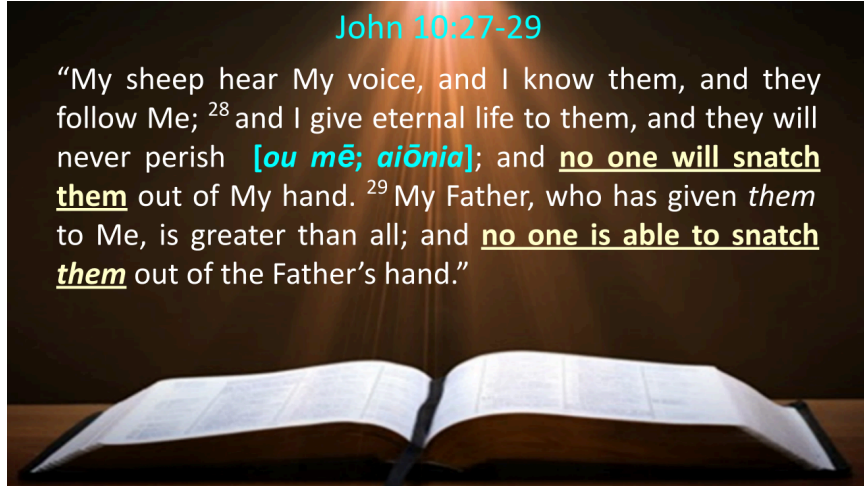
You can be a saved, blood-bought saint and go right back into licentiousness, or go right back into legalism, and still go to heaven, but you are missing the purpose of why you were set free. You were set free to grow, to mature, to become a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, to pick up your cross daily and follow Him, and to discover one of the most amazing joys of the Christian life: that God wants to take little old me and little old you and use us for His eternal purposes. Amazing!

Of course you did not lose your salvation, because Jesus said in John 10:27-29,

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28).

John 10:27-29

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish **[ou mē; aiōnia]**; and **no one will snatch them** out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them** out of the Father's hand."



That is a terrible translation. It totally undervalues what that verse is saying. He is not saying they will never perish. What you see there is an "ou me" (οὐ μὴ) construction (in blue), which is two negatives used together. This is the strongest negation you can have in the Greek language. It is like saying "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!" If that were not enough, thrown into the mix is "aiona" (αἰῶνα), which means "forever." Can you ever perish as a Christian? "No, no, no, no, no! Forever." This is what it is saying.

"and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).

You are in, as a Christian, the double grip of grace. You are in the Son's hand; you are in the Father's hand. God has got you so tight in there that there is nothing that can happen to take you out of that arrangement.

I used to have all kinds of discussions about this with people who say that you can lose your salvation. They would say to me, "Can Satan take you out of God's hand?" The last time I checked, "never" means never, and "no one" means no one. That would include Satan, would it not? How about this one: can you take yourself out of God's hands? Does "no one" exclude yourself? "No one" means that absolutely nothing can take you out of this double grip of grace.

You discover that the point of the Bible is not what man does for God, but what God has done for man by reaching down to us rather than us climbing up—reaching down to us through the person of Jesus Christ. Once I figure that out, as it has been revealed in Scripture, I say to myself, "The only logical and reasonable thing I can do with this arrangement is to offer Him my body," not because He is threatening to pull the carpet out from under me (because you cannot take a gift away), but because I would miss what it is all about were I to go back into legalism or licentiousness.

Go, serve—Book of Galatians. Go, serve—Book of Romans. Go, serve—Book of Ephesians.

Do you realize that when you study Ephesians 1-3, there is not a single command there telling you what to do? There is nothing there that says, "Do this," or "Do that," or a "What are you doing for Jesus?" type of mentality. It is all, "This is what you have. This is what you have. This is what you have."

You have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3). Here is what it looks like in your individual life and in your corporate church life. You have been blessed individually; you have been blessed together (Ephesians 1-3). You read all of that and you say, "Wow! That is amazing." But then you do not stop reading when you hit Ephesians 4:1, because once you hit Ephesians 4:1, Paul says,

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk—" (Ephesians 4:1).

Wow. There is our first command.

"—to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have been called," (Ephesians 4:1).

"What calling?" "I just finished explaining that to you in the first three chapters, and I did not tell you to walk worthy of your calling when you do not even understand what your calling is. Now that you have understood it, and I have just spent three chapters talking about it, I am in a position to tell you how to live."

One of the things that is destroying people is that preachers are telling congregants what they ought to be doing without telling them who they are. If you are constantly being told what to do without understanding who you are and what you have, that is going to lead nowhere in the Christian life other than to defeatism and futility.

Once you figure out what you have—the heavenly account looks pretty good, as I am looking at your balance and my balance; you have been blessed *"with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 1:3); nothing has been withheld from you—now you are in a position to walk worthy of your calling.

My hinge word is "therefore." Ephesians 1-3, relationship; Ephesians 4-6, responsibility. Ephesians 1-3, doctrine; Ephesians 4-6, deed. Ephesians 1-3, orthodoxy, correct belief (like going to the orthodontist and getting your teeth corrected); Ephesians 4-6, orthopraxy, how to live. Ephesians 1-3, knowledge; Ephesians 4-6, wisdom. We just went from "gnosis" (γνῶσις) to "sophia" (σοφία), or "hakma" (הַכְּמָה)—we are now taking knowledge and applying it.

| EPHESIANS: WHAT IS INSIDE? | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1-3 | 4-6 |
| Relationship | Responsibility |
| Doctrine | Deed |
| Orthodoxy | Orthopraxy |
| Knowledge | Wisdom |
| Belief | Behavior |
| Position | Practice |
| Privileges | Responsibility |

Ephesians 1-3, believe; Ephesians 4-6, behavior; Ephesians 1-3, position; Ephesians 4-6, practice. Ephesians 1-3, privileges; Ephesians 4-6, responsibility. He deals in Ephesians 5 with sexual immorality and gossip, and says things like, "You know these things. If you get involved in these things, they are unfitting of who you are. They do not even fit your identity to be involved in something like that."

This is a tremendous trajectory in the Christian life, and it is all typified here in God's dealing with the nation of Israel, in their Egyptian bondage.

The Book of Hebrews (we are starting that in Sunday School) does the exact same thing. Hebrews 1:1-10:18 is doctrine. Then you hit Hebrews 10:19 and it says,

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus," (Hebrews 10:19).

Now that you understand who you are, here is how you in turn should live. Go (Exodus 10:24), and serve (Exodus 10:26). It is a tremendous microcosm of what the Christian life is.

But Pharaoh is not getting the picture because God hardens his heart. You see that there in Exodus 10:27:

"But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go" (Exodus 10:27).

You say, "God is surely a meanie here. He came into this guy's life and did not even give him a choice in the matter and just hardened his heart. What kind of God is that?" But the truth of the matter is that Pharaoh has hardened his own heart six times.

"For the initial five plagues, the text registers Pharaoh as the agent of his hardening. Not until the sixth plague does God participate in the confirmation of Pharaoh's own volitional choices."¹

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. 86). Thomas Nelson.

"Seven times Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God first hardened it, though the prediction that God would do it [harden Pharaoh's heart] preceded all."²

In Exodus 4:21 you have a prediction that God is going to harden Pharaoh's heart. Then you have Pharaoh repeatedly hardening his own heart (Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7). It is not until you get to plague number six that God says, to quote the Burger King commercial from days gone by, "Have it your way" (Exodus 9:12).

First of all, I am dating myself when I say that because young people have no idea what I am talking about. Secondly, it is just a frightening thing when God actually gives people over to what they want to do. In fact, you reach a point in this where God cooperates with people. "You want to hate Me that badly despite multiple opportunities? I will let you reject Me and I will expedite the hardening process." Wow.

But the truth of the matter is, God cannot come into a person's life and coerce them into believing. The reason, as Genesis 1:26 tells us, is that we are made in His image. What does that mean? It means that we share in some of His attributes. One of His attributes is volition, free will.

The moment God created you in His image is the moment He imparted to you that same thing: free will—the opportunity to reject Him—the opportunity to trust Him. The frightening thing about it is that God starts to respect our own decision making, because if He did not respect our own decision making, He would be disrespecting how He has manufactured us.

People ask this all the time: "If the tree of knowledge in Eden caused so much trouble for the human race, couldn't God have just preempted the problem by not putting a tree of knowledge in Eden? Just put the tree of life in there. We do not need a tree of knowledge. That is where all the trouble came from."

There has to be a tree of knowledge, because there has to be an avenue for rebellion if man chooses rebellion. If you do not have a tree of knowledge in Eden, you have nothing more than a computer saying, "I love you," which means nothing, because the computer (and even AI) does not have free will. It is a programmed response. To not put a tree of knowledge in Eden would be for God to not respect how He has manufactured us as image bearers of God. It lowers what human beings actually are.

"God created them in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

(There is no distinction in the genders there in terms of value.)

"But didn't the Fall of man short-circuit everything?" It did, but it is interesting that when the Bible talks about the Fall of man (man and woman, boy and girl, in their fallen state), it still references the fact that we are image bearers of God. That is Genesis 9:6, a statement made post-Fall, post-Flood.

² Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, page 96.

*"Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God
He made man" (Genesis 9:6).*

The Fall of man (Genesis 3) effaced our image bearing status, but it never erased it. Even in the New Testament, you read these words in the Book of James, speaking of our tongues (that two-by-two slab of mucous membrane between the gums that we have such difficulty with). James says,

"With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;" (James 3:9).

I like how some of the English translations refer to this: the similitude of God. Be careful about using one's tongue to (in modern vernacular) go off on somebody, to put someone in their place, to tear down somebody.

James is saying, "Be careful about that, because whether you like the person, whether you agree with the person, whether the person offended you or not, whether they were wrong first—whatever the issue is—if you unleash your tongue on a human being you are destroying or attacking someone who is very special as far as God is concerned, whether they know Christ or not, because they are an image bearer of God." That is said way into the New Testament, long after the Fall.

Part of this image-bearing status that we have is the capacity for choice. That is what Pharaoh has been offered here. Do not grab this verse and read it in isolation of the rest of the book. This man has had ample opportunities.

God is giving the human race, as I speak, ample opportunities to get right with Him. Romans 1:18-20 says,

"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).

God constantly reveals Himself to people—if not in the Bible, then through general revelation itself. He has revealed Himself.

The word "revealed" ("apokalypto," [ἀποκαλύπτω]) is the verb form of the word "apokalypsis" (ἀποκάλυψις) that is used to describe the title in the opening of the Book of Revelation—the disclosure of God. The existence of God is evident to people. It is clearly seen by what God has made, and so men are without excuse.

Everybody knows God exists and should have an incentive to search for God and seek God, because God has revealed Himself. Yet, what is the problem with people? It is not

a lack of data. It is not a lack of information. It is the deliberate suppression of truth. "I do not want you to be God because I want to be God—because the moment I submit to you as God is the moment I am not God, and I want to call the shots."

What do people do with the disclosure of God in creation? Romans 1:18 tells us:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," (Romans 1:18).

There is the problem. It is not a lack of data. It is not a lack of information. It is not God holding back on people. It is the suppression of truth. If a person cannot respond to a knowledge of God as revealed in creation, what in the world are they going to do with His Son? They will not have any respect for Him either. What are they going to do with His book, the Bible? They will not respect that either.

But if you get someone that wants to respond to the obvious (you see it in Acts 8 with Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, and in Acts 10 with Peter and Cornelius), if a person is responding to the light that they have, God, who desires none to perish but all to come to repentance, will move heaven and earth to see that that person has the sufficient information that they need for salvation. Do not get this idea that God is holding out on people. That is contrary to everything you read in the Bible.

Pharaoh's heart is hardened. That is all true, but there has been a long process of rejection. A person can become so rebellious against God that God gives them over. As you continue with Romans 1:22 and following, it says,

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and...[of earth]..." (Romans 1:22-23).

Earth is not in there, but I added it—earth first, earth worship. Yes, let us be stewards of the planet, but do not sell me on this earth worship stuff. I am not going to do that. I am not going to go into Gaia and worship the earth in place of God. That is just utter foolishness.

"and [people] exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (Romans 1:23).

You see what humanity is doing. They are giving up on God. Do you know what God does? He gives up on them. It is divine sarcasm. "You give up on me, I will give up on you." Is that in the Bible? It is right there:

"Therefore God gave them over..." (Romans 1:24).

"For this reason God gave them over..." (Romans 1:26).

"...God gave them over..." (Romans 1:28).

It describes humanity's descent into moral insanity. If you give up on God and God gives up on you, how do you explain life? You cannot even explain relationships that are normal—you end up with men with men, women with women. If you are a Bible reader, you say, "That is just crazy."

If you are a Bible reader and a God follower, then transgender does not make any sense at all. "You mean you are going to take my children against my wishes, and you are going to try to change their body parts because you are trying to help them with some kind of emotional issue in their lives? Then they come back into my house saying, 'I am not a she anymore. I am a he.' or, 'I am not a he anymore. I am a she. I have been fixed.'—literally."

What is wrong with us? How could a culture do something that bizarre? It relates to the fact that if you give up on God and God gives up on you, you have no ability to explain life, because life makes sense under God, since He is the Author of all of these relationships.

The last time I checked (I do not mean to go off on a crusade about this), I see two genders in the Bible. I do not think it is like a multiple choice test or something. You are either one or the other. It is a biological reality. Now we are letting people define their gender by their emotions.

Part of me wants to react with anger and throw rocks. I do not want to do that because it is symptomatic of a very sick culture about which God has just made a decision. "You know what? You gave up on Me, so I will give up on you. That is how it is going to work. You will descend into baseless insanity."

We think that if we just get the right people elected, then we could fix this problem. But the truth of the matter is, it is a God problem. It is a condition of the heart which says "No." to God. God gives cultures over.

You can vote and get involved politically. (We promote that here, by the way. I wrote a book on it called, "The Bible and Your Vote.") You can do all of these things and you can petition, but do you know what? It might have some negligible impact, but until the culture realizes they have a big God problem, a political piece of legislation or whatever is not going to change it. It is what Paul said in Romans 1. It is what Pharaoh is going through.

Pharaoh gave up on God. God gave up on Pharaoh. May the Lord help us not to act that way. How do you know when someone has given up on God and God has given up on them? They get angry; they get belligerent; they get in your face; they get aggressive. It is all there in Exodus 10:28. Look at what comes out of his mouth, as if this guy holds the cards (which he does not):

"Then Pharaoh said to him,—” (Exodus 10:28).

That is Moses, God's spokesperson. People are mad at God, so they take it out on His spokespersons. It is a very peculiar thing to be in public ministry, because you have a bunch of people out there who do not even know you personally, who hate your guts.

I share some of these comments with my wife and she is like, "They do not even know you, and they are saying stuff like this." We have had people here who have travelled across the country to picket little old me. As big as Rush Limbaugh said of himself, "I am a great big teddy bear." Are you going to drive across the country to picket me? That is just crazy.

But people are like that. They hate something about God. They see you as some sort of exponent of God, advocate of God, whether it is public ministry or something of that nature, and they just hate your guts.

So here is Pharaoh, who has given up on God, turning on Moses and getting belligerent.

"Then Pharaoh said to him, 'Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!'" (Exodus 10:28).

"Permanent removal from my presence. If you come back in here, I am going to kill you, execution style."

Dr. Ed Hindson said of this verse,

"The king expelled Moses and Aaron from his presence, forbidding any future return, with the promise of capital consequence for any infraction."³

This is one of the most difficult things that you will face in the Christian life. At some point it will come your direction, I can almost guarantee you, as you are standing for God and you have to deal with people that are threatening you. There are all kinds of ways to threaten people—"I am going to go online and I am going to threaten you, and I am going to ruin your reputation."

If you are a student, and you are not toeing the woke, politically correct line the teacher may threaten you with a lower grade, or with not passing the class; or if you are standing for God and the cause of righteousness in the workplace, they might say, "We are going to take your job away. You are not going to get hired by anybody else. I am going to write a bad recommendation letter for you. It will not be a recommendation letter. I will portray you as just a terrible person."

You have to understand that Christians all over the world (and it is even starting to become normative here in the United States, I am sad to say), live every single day of their Christian life under perpetual threats.

What I am saying is that it is an outworking of somebody who does not know God at all. People want to threaten you, not because you are obnoxious. That is one thing. A lot of people are threatened because they are rude, crude, lewd, and obnoxious. I am not talking about being obnoxious. I am talking about just loving Jesus and letting that impact your life. If people start threatening you because of that, that is more of an indicator of them than it is of you.

³ 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. 98). Thomas Nelson.

That kind of thing happens to Christians. There is a lot of Bible on what you ought to do when that happens to you. I do not say, "if it happens to you" anymore. I say, "when it happens to you." This happened to the apostles. The Sanhedrin threatened them.

"And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence," (Acts 4:29).

"Lord, they are threatening me. Take note of that and allow me to fulfill my ministry. Allow me to fulfill what You want me to do in the workplace, or in education."

Peter, who experienced these things himself in Acts 4, talked about this in his letter written a few decades later. In 1 Peter 3:14-15 he says: *"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed...."* In other words, if you are suffering, make sure it is for the cause of righteousness, not because of obnoxiousness.

"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED," (1 Peter 3:14).

"Yeah, but they are threatening to take my job away from me. They are threatening to ruin my career. They are threatening to destroy my reputation." The Bible is very clear: do not be afraid of them.

Didn't Jesus talk about things like this? He sent the disciples out to preach and to offer the Kingdom to first-century Israel. He said things like this in Matthew 10: "Do not be afraid of someone when the very worst thing they could do to you is kill the body." That is a worst-case scenario—the body's gone—you are dead.

What is the worst thing that they can do to you? They can kill you, I guess. Do not wish that on anybody. But Jesus says, "Do not fear those who, in the worst-case scenario, can kill the body. Fear the one who is able to take body and soul and put it into hell" (paraphrase, Matthew 10:28). You reach a point in your life where you are way more afraid of God than of people. At some point, you have to get there as a disciple of Christ, or you are not going to be very fruitful or effective.

I try to cooperate with people to the best of my ability. The Bible says to, as long as it depends upon you, pursue peace with all people (Romans 12:18). But there are some people that are not cooperative people. They are ugly and they are threatening and they are nasty. It is because of a spiritual problem that they have. So what do you do with those kinds of circumstances? You stop being more afraid of them than you are of God. That is what you do. You do what God told you to do, and you leave the repercussions or the consequences of a temporal nature to God.

That is what Moses has to do here. Moses comes back with some verbiage of his own:

"Moses said, 'You are right; I shall never see your face again!'" (Exodus 10:29).

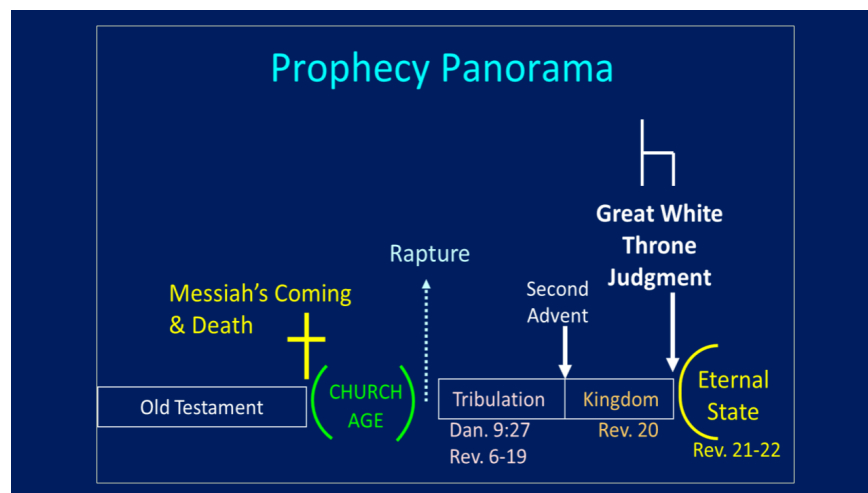
What is he talking about here? Back to the Ed Hindson quote:

"While they would indeed shortly see each other once again, it would be for the sole purpose of Pharaoh's humiliating admission of defeat before YHWH."⁴

The two will meet again, but the days of negotiation, the days of long conversation, this interview style stuff, is done. "When I see you again, it will be to announce your defeat." is what is being said here.

There is a lot of information here on face-to-face communication. My military friends call it F to F. They will put in an email, "F2F." I did not know what that meant. So finally I asked them, "What does that even mean?" Here, Pharaoh to Moses, "You are not going to see my face again. If you do, I will kill you." Moses comes back and says, "You are right. I will not see your face again—not like this—except to announce your defeat." No more conversation, no more interview, no more negotiation.

What a concept that is: face to face, "F to F." I almost entitled this "F to F." Did you know there is an F to F with God in your future? "Pastor, where is that in the Bible?" It is in Revelation 21 and 22 in the eternal state.



"There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants [that is us] will serve Him; they will see His face,..." (Revelation 22:3-4).

What does that mean—"they will see His face" (Revelation 22:4)? That is what it means—they will see His face. We will see face to face with God in our resurrected state. There is coming into our lives (and this is why you need to be more afraid of God than people) a face-to-face encounter—future judgment—which is a distinctive of the Christian worldview. This life ends in judgment. You do not get recycled. You do not come back as something better, bigger, and braver.

"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," (Hebrews 9:27).

⁴ Ibid.

In fact, when this country got off the ground, you had to believe in this or you could not hold office. Did you know that? This is the Constitution of Vermont. Look at this. This is one year after the Declaration of Independence was signed.

"The Vermont Constitution of 1777 required of every member of the House of Representatives that he take this oath: 'I do believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked [you had to believe in a future judgment or you were not qualified to serve], and I do acknowledge the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration, and own and profess that Protestant religion.'"⁵

"If you do not believe in F to F, face to face, then you cannot be a leader in our country." That is what it is saying. Why is that? Think of the temptation to skim off the top and cheat and deceive people. (Not that that happens today, right?) Think about how that is minimized if there is an F to F in your future, whether you are saved or unsaved.

The Bible describes four judgments: two for survivors of the Tribulation Period, one for unsaved people, and then our judgment, the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ. We saw this in our Book of Acts study on Wednesday. Paul concludes his sermon on Mars Hill, and says,

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day—" (Acts 17:30-31).

"Has fixed." The train is coming. I cannot stop it. The only thing I can do is get out of its way.

"because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness [perfect judgment] through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Wow! Then there is our judgment, the Bema Seat Judgment, the judgment of rewards.

"Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes [F to F] who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts;..." (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Yikes. I do not know if I like that because my heart is deceitfully wicked. I do all kinds of things with wrong motives. Lord help me with that.

"...but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5).

⁵ Brewer, *United States A Christian Nation*, 25.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

That is what I think of when I think of all of this F to F talk here. There is an F to F in our future. May the Lord help us to organize our lives accordingly.

We have seen the plague's manifestation (Exodus 10:21-23). Pharaoh speaks to Moses (Exodus 10:24-29). It does not go well for Pharaoh, as we are going to see. Next week, we will be moving into the final plague, the death of the firstborn. I would encourage you to read Exodus 11 for next week.