

GOD OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT:
Lessons from the Exodus on Christ, the Gospel, and the Life of the Church
(Exodus 14:1-19)

I. INTROUCTION

A. The Church: In Search of Her Beloved (Song 3:1-5)

B. This Morning's Text:

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. ³Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.’ ⁴And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did this.

⁵When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, “What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!” ⁶So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. ⁷He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. ⁸The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. ⁹The Egyptians—all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

¹³Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

¹⁶Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. ¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

¹⁹Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

C. Opening Prayer

D. General Remarks About the OT and This Text

1. This text is an OT picture of God redeeming His Church

- *Rescue* from bondage in Egypt and God's judgments upon it, by means of election and ransom, especially by the Passover Lamb
- A subsequent *journey* through the wilderness of this world (where God's people worship and serve Him)
- Hot *pursuit* to the death by her enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil)
- Final *destruction* and *deliverance* at the Red Sea (i.e., at the Consummation, when Christ returns)

3. My focus today: A portion of our text that I very much desire the Holy Spirit forever to burn into your hearts and minds:

¹⁹ Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long (NIV).

4. The first and foremost point: The angel of God is the Son of God!

- Christophanies (e.g., to Abraham on Mt. Moriah, to Moses in the Burning Bush, etc.)

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night *the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud* at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

5. Keeping this in mind, let us consider FIVE LESSONS we learn about Christ, the Gospel, and the life of the Church from this amazing text

II. (1) BEING SPIRITUALLY BLIND, THE WORLD CANNOT SEE WHO JESUS IS (the INSCUTABLE One!)

A. The case of the Egyptians: They cannot see the Angel, only darkness

B. How the blindness began: Adam never beheld the Son, *and through his sin he rendered both himself and his family incapable of it*

C. John the Baptizer confessed this truth:

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is

preferred before me, for He existed before me.’ I did not know Him; but in order that He should be revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

D. Jesus taught it to Nicodemus:

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – John 3

E. The confusion of Israel proved it (They identified Christ as a prophet, Jeremiah, Elijah, a madman, and a deceiver)

F. Jesus affirmed it as a matter of principle in His glad and grateful prayer to God:

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and learned, and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *those* to whom the Son is willing to reveal *Him*.²⁸ – Mt. 11

G. Paul did as well:

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whom² the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ *For it is the God who said, “Light will shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* – 2 Cor. 4

H. The diversity of modern opinion proves it (HSL)

I. A wise old Indian parable affirms it (Reading)

J. Prior to his conversion, Dean experienced it many times!

- My initial brush with the Lord
- Winn
- George
- The Evangelist and his son
- Always challenged, convicted; yet always staring, not into light, but darkness!

III. (2) BEING THE OBJECTS OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN GRACE, THE SAINTS CAN SEE WHO JESUS IS

A. This is the destiny of the saints:

¹⁴ So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten *Son* of the Father, full of grace and truth.

B. They see Him **partially** *before* their conversion

- The miracle at Cana (John 2)
- The awestruck disciples, after Jesus calmed the sea:

“And when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. “And behold, a great windstorm arose upon the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He himself was asleep. “So they came to *Him* and woke Him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re perishing!” “But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, you *men* of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and a great calm came *over the waters*. “And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” – Mt. 8

- Peter, after the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5)
- Dean’s early glimpses
- **Note:** Let everyone who has glimpsed Him keep a-s-k-ing for more light!

C. They see Him **truly** *at* their conversion

- Peter’s good confession (Matt. 16)
- Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9)

Now Saul remained with the disciples in Damascus for some time, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, *saying*, “He is the Son of God!” – Acts 9

D. Note: At their conversion, they are *most likely* to see Him on the Cross

- This pillar is LIFTED UP
- Isaiah saw the Lord, high and LIFTED UP
- This is what our Lord taught us:

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, “You are the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak what we know and testify what we have seen, and you do not receive our witness. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven but He who came down from heaven—the Son of Man.¹ ¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* ¹⁵ *that whoever believes in Him should have eternal life.* – John 3

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself.*” ³³ This He said, signifying what kind of death He would die. – John 12

- What the world sees looking at the Cross

- What the saints see, beholding the Cross (Reading: Furnace for Gold)
- The gaze that saves:

39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up on the last day. **40** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, *that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life*; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” – John 6

D. They see Him **more and more** *after* their conversion (The Three Chapter Ones)

- “Aslan, you’re bigger!” “That’s because you are older, little one.” So it’s not because You are?” “I am not. But every year you grow, you will find Me bigger.”
- The Three Chapter Ones!

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were created through Him, and without Him nothing came to be that came to be. ¹⁴ So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten *Son* of the Father, full of grace and truth. ---**John 1**

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and upon *the* earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ⁴ ¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church; *and* He⁵ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that in all things He may have the preeminence. – **Colossians 1**

1 God, having spoken in time past¹ to the fathers by the prophets in many portions and in various ways, ² has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who, being the outshining of *His* glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made provision for the purging of *our* sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to the angels as He, by inheritance, has obtained a more excellent name than they. – **Hebrews 1**

IV. (3) BEING THE OBJECTS OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN GRACE, THE SAINTS CAN SEE WHO JESUS IS *FOR THEM!*

A. HE IS LIGHT TO THEM (but darkness to their enemies)

- The case with Israel
- The Case with the Church

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness; the darkness overcame it not . . .

- He is a light to teach us (I am the Truth; He sends the Spirit of Truth, to guide into ALL truth; a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him)
- He is a light to make us holy

⁵ Now this is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If, *then*, we say that we have fellowship with Him but continue to walk in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. – 1 John 1

- He is a light to guide us

The Case of Israel: ^aAfter leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ^bBy day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ^cNeither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. – Exodus 13

The Case of the Church: ¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” – John 9

B. HE IS WARMTH TO THEM (but wrath to their enemies) (*)

- The two faces of the Angel
- The face of a Father vs. the face of a Judge

Note: Christ went face to face with the Judge, that we might live face to face with His Father!

- The face of Love vs. the face of Wrath

C. HE IS ETERNAL PROTECTION FOR THEM

- The case of Israel

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed (removed) the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, “Let’s get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.” ²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.” ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

- The case of the Church: Christ as Heavenly Overseer!

“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age!” –Mt. 28

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. **28** And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand. **30** I and *My* Father are one.” – John 10

- The case of the Church at the End of the Age (Rev. 15:1f)

VII. CONCLUSION / APPLICATION

A. Let eternal thanksgiving and praise begin NOW!

The Lord has made a distinction between the Church and the Word; He has set a ransom between them. Let us be very glad!

⁹But you *are* a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God’s own* possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies⁷ of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once *were* not a people, but now are the people of God; who *once* had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. – 1 Peter 2

B. The Gaze that Saves is the Gaze that Sanctifies

¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding⁶ as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.⁷

C. Lift Jesus Higher! (Song)

- Reading: Jared Wilson on Esteeming Christ
- Song: Lift Jesus higher, lift Jesus higher, lift Him up for the world to see; He said if I, be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all (mine) unto me.