

Locusts & Light

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, this morning if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Exodus chapter 10.

Exodus chapter 10. We're going to read from the beginning. We're going to look at the whole chapter. But if we read again from the beginning.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Go into Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know I am the Lord.

So Moses and Aaron went into Pharaoh and said to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me?

Let my people go, that they may serve me. And so on. You know, only last month it was reported that a locust infestation of biblical proportion was plaguing South Africa.

[1 : 29] The financial impact is already reaching into the millions as the South African government tries to combat this insect invasion. And when you look at the video footage or even the pictures that you can find from the news, you see that these swarms of locusts, this plague of locusts, it's so thick that it makes it impossible for the drivers to see where they're going.

All these locusts are just flying and sweeping across South Africa. But this isn't the first time that the African continent has had to deal with a plague of locusts on a biblical scale.

Because last year, 2021, East Africa, East Africa was hit hard by a plague of locusts that affected over 25 million people. And according to the UN, a locust swarm of one square kilometer in size, so one square kilometer, it can eat the same amount of food in a day as 35,000 people, which is a lot of food.

A lot of food being destroyed and devoured by locusts in just one day. And as one reporter stated, the impact of this locust invasion, it's more than a challenge.

It's a matter of life and death. It's more than a challenge. It's a matter of life and death. And you know, that's what we see here in Exodus chapter 10, because the impact of the locust invasion and infestation, it wasn't on South Africa or East Africa.

[3 : 06] It was on North Africa, the North African country of Egypt. And for the Egyptians, it was going to be more than a challenge. It was going to be a matter of life and death.

And as we read, this plague was something that was going to be remembered. It was going to be revered by all of the Lord's people for generations to come. There was going to be fear among them.

And this was going to be something they would never forget. Because the Lord was still speaking. The Lord was speaking to Pharaoh. But as you know, Pharaoh wasn't listening.

And as we've learned from these plagues and pestilences and pandemics that came upon the Egyptians, they were all given not to drive the Egyptians away from the Lord.

They were given to drive them to the Lord. That they would surrender and submit their lives to the Lord. But as we've repeatedly read throughout this narrative in the book of Exodus, Pharaoh hardened his heart.

[4 : 11] Pharaoh hardened his heart. And now we've been looking at these ten rounds with God. We've come to round eight and round nine this morning. Round eight is locusts.

Round nine is light. And they are our headings this morning. Locusts and light. Locusts and light. So let's look first of all at locusts.

Locusts. It says in verse three, Moses and Aaron, they went into Pharaoh and said to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me?

Let my people go that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. And they shall cover the face of the land so that no one can see the land.

And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail. And they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field. And they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen from the day they came on the earth to this day.

[5 : 20] Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. As you know, these ten plagues of Egypt, they are literally the ten blows. They are ten blows in the sense of entering into this boxing ring and coming to blows with God.

So they're going ten rounds with God. But the clash and the conflict which we've seen, it wasn't between Moses and Pharaoh. The fight was between those who were standing in their corner. Because in Moses' corner, he had the strength and the support of the Lord, who was the creator and covenant God of Israel. But in Pharaoh's corner, he has all the Egyptian gods, the gods of Egypt.

And as we've seen all these clashes, so in round one we saw the Lord deliver his first blow to happy. He was the Egyptian god of the river Nile.

And the Lord made happy unhappy when he turned the Nile into blood. Then in round two, the Lord exposed and even embarrassed the Egyptian frog-headed god Heket.

[6 : 26] And he did so by plaguing Egypt with frogs. Then in round three, the Lord took a swing at Seth. But this Egyptian god who was an aardvark god, you could say, the god of the desert.

And he did so by raising fleas from the desert with only his finger. Then in round four, the Lord undermined Uachit, the god of the flies.

He sent swarms and swarms of flies upon the nation of Israel, which not only filled the air, all these flies, they crawled and they covered the ground. Then into round five out of ten, it was the Lord who saw red.

The Lord saw red when he destroyed the sacred Apis bull of Egypt. He brought this personal pestilence upon all the livestock of the field.

But then as we saw round six, it got even more personal when the Lord brought a personal pandemic of pus-filled boils upon all the Egyptians, which not only affected their attractive appearance as Egyptians, is it also attacked Sekhmet, this fierce lioness goddess of healing.

[7 : 40] Then the last round that we looked at, round seven, the Lord knocked out Newt, the Egyptian goddess of the sky, who was described and depicted as wearing this water pot on her head where she would pour down blessings and benefits upon the Egyptians from the sky.

But when the Egyptians looked into the sky, all they could see was large hailstones of ice and fire falling from the sky, destroying all the trees and plants.

And what wasn't destroyed by the hail, the locusts, as we read, would finish it off. Which brings us to round eight. Round eight, which is locusts.

And of course, the key question is, the key question we need to be asking here is, how does Pharaoh react? How does Pharaoh respond when the Lord defeats and destroys all these dead gods?

And what's remarkable is that regardless of the fact that Happy and Hecate and Seth and Uachit and Apis and Sekhmet and Newt were all these gods, they were all proven to be false and foolish gods, and yet none of it, none of it deterred, none of it discouraged Pharaoh, none of it made him see that the Lord was speaking into his life personally and powerfully.

[9 : 02] There was a glimmer of hope at the end of chapter 9, when it seemed that Pharaoh's heart was suffering and surrendering and even submitting to the Lord.

But Pharaoh, he, as we saw, he only showed remorse. He didn't show repentance. And then like a dog returning to its own vomit, Pharaoh repeated his folly.

Pharaoh hardened his heart by stubbornly refusing and resisting and rejecting the Lord. But the Lord wasn't done with Pharaoh.

Because as we see here in chapter 10, the Lord commands Moses and Aaron once again to go to Pharaoh with the same mission and the same message. Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, or the God of Israel, let my people go.

But the plague of locusts in Egypt, it was a blow to another Egyptian god. The Egyptian god, Osiris.

[10:04] The Egyptian god, Osiris. Osiris was considered to be the Egyptian god of fertility, agriculture, and vegetation. And Osiris, he's depicted and described as having green skin.

So have you ever seen pictures of these Egyptian gods? Osiris. Osiris has green skin, which is a symbol of rebirth and renewal of the harvest.

And if you see a picture of Osiris, you'll see that he has a crook and a flail in his hands. A crook and a flail. The crook was the shepherd's crook, which symbolized kingship and service to the Pharaoh. And the flail, which was originally an agricultural threshing tool, used to separate the grains of wheat from the husk. And so he had a crook and a flail.

And so Osiris was the Egyptian god who was sent to provide for Egypt every year a plentiful harvest. And yet we read that just with the breath of the Lord, with the breath of the Lord, there's an east wind brought in.

[11:16] An east wind which brought a plague of locusts upon the land of Egypt. And as we read it, it covered the land. It devoured and destroyed what was left over by the hail.

You remember from chapter 9 that the plague of hail had destroyed all the trees and all the early harvest of crops. But the Lord sent the locusts later in the harvest.

So the Lord sent the locusts later to destroy and to devour the latter harvest crops. So by devouring and destroying the early harvest and the latter harvest, you can see that there's going to be no harvest at all this year for the Egyptians.

And as we said, it was going to be more than a challenge. It was going to be a matter of life and death. They have nothing to eat. They're starving.

And the thing is, Pharaoh's servants knew this. They knew that, and they could see it, that as a nation the Lord was going to destroy them. The Lord was going to destroy them if Pharaoh continued to harden his heart and resist and refuse and reject the Lord.

[12:31] Which is why Pharaoh's servants, we read that, that they pleaded with Pharaoh in verse 7, saying, how long shall this man be a snare to us? How long are you going to let this man be a snare to us?

Let these men go. Just let them go that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined? The servants of Pharaoh are saying to Pharaoh, their king, they're saying, can't you see the Lord is destroying us?

He's taken everything from us. He's stripped us of our land, of our wealth, of our health. He's taken everything. We have nothing left. And you know, for the past eight rounds, Pharaoh's servants, they're standing ringside.

They're watching this clash and this conflict going on, and they're witnessing and watching Pharaoh receiving all these blows. Blow after blow after blow.

And they're telling Pharaoh, throw in the towel. Just throw in the towel. Give up. They're calling him to submit and surrender to the Lord. They're saying to him, just bow the knee before you're too late.

[13:39] And the thing is, you read it, Pharaoh has such a hardened heart. He doesn't want to concede. He doesn't want to confess that the Lord is God. He doesn't want to bow his knee.

No, he wants compromise. He wants compromise. He wants the Lord to meet him halfway. He wants the Lord to hear his terms and his conditions.

He wants to make a bargain with the God of heaven. You know, Pharaoh, he doesn't want to concede or confess. He wants compromise. And you know, my unconverted friend, here this morning or at home watching at home, let this be a word of warning to you.

Oh, let it be a word of warning. Because I know that you've seen the Lord speaking into your life. I know that you've had the Lord challenge you by his word or by the witness of other Christians.

I know that you've heard the Lord speaking to you through preaching or through the providence of God. I know that the Lord has convicted you about the condition of your soul.

[14:53] Maybe through sickness or through suffering. Or maybe when you were confronted with sorrow. And for some of you, the Lord has been calling you to submit and to surrender to him for years.

The Lord has been calling you just like he was calling Pharaoh to bow the knee before you're too late. But maybe like Pharaoh, instead of conceding and instead of confessing Jesus as Lord, you want compromise.

You want the Lord to meet you halfway. You want the Lord to hear your terms and your conditions of Christianity. You want to bargain and barter with God.

You want to love God and maybe just live as you please. You want to come to church or sit at home having church with no change. No challenge.

No commitment. But let me tell you, my friend, that is not submission. That is not surrender. That is not salvation. Because salvation, it's wholehearted confession.

[16:05] I'm a sinner. It's wholehearted commitment. I need Jesus. It's wholehearted Christianity. I want to follow him.

My friend, and you know, is it not about time that you stopped coming to blows with God? Stop coming to blows with him every Lord's day. Stop coming to blows with him.

Just simply submit and surrender your life to the Lord. You bow the knee. You come humbly and wholeheartedly, confessing to him, Lord, I'm a sinner.

I need a Savior. I want you to save me. I need you to save me. That's it. There's no magic potion. There's nothing fancy about this. It's, Lord, I'm a sinner. I need a Savior. I know you're a Savior. I know you're my Savior. I want you to save me.

[17:13] I want you to save me. I need you to save me. Do you want to know how hard Pharaoh's heart had become? And this, you know, this is what's frightening.

When Moses told Pharaoh that there will be no compromise, there will be no concession with the Lord, do you know what Pharaoh did? He swore at Moses.

He blasphemed the Lord to Moses' face. Because when you read the passage literally, what he says, what he says to him, Pharaoh says, in the name of God, I will not let you take your little ones. He swears to his face. And, you know, with such a rebellious response, the Lord sends the plague. He's not for submitting. He's not for surrendering.

The Lord invades and infests Egypt with this plague of locusts. And as we read through the passage, we saw that after a while, once again, Pharaoh, he's showing a little bit of remorse.

[18:23] He's saying, I've sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Forgive my sin. Please only this once. Plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me.

He showed remorse. But not repentance. Because as we said before, remorse is just feeling sorry for sin. Sorry that you got caught.

Sorry that you were found out. But repentance, repentance is what the gospel calls us to.

Repentance is when we turn away from our sin and turn to the Savior.

Repentance is when we say to the Lord, Lord, I want to leave this behind. I want to follow you.

Forgive me and help me to follow you. Repentance is when you turn away from sin and turn seeking the Savior.

But Pharaoh. Pharaoh. Oh, Pharaoh. Oh, Pharaoh hardened his heart. And the eighth plague of locusts became the ninth plague of light.

[19:25] Pharaoh hardened his heart and the eighth plague of locusts became the ninth plague of light. Which is what we see secondly. Light. Locusts and light.

Look at verse 21. Light.

The way they lived. So similar to some of the previous plagues in Egypt when Pharaoh stubbornly refused and resisted and rejected and rebelled against the Lord, the next plague came unannounced.

There was no declaration from Moses. There was no, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, let my people go. There was no word of warning from the Lord. They said there was silence. And then there was darkness.

There was silence. There was darkness from God. And then there was darkness. Now, as we said before, all of the plagues in Egypt, all of these blows, they're all demonstrations.

[20:46] They're all declarations of the Lord's power in comparison to the impotence and the ineffectiveness of these gods in Egypt. But this time the Egyptian god who is being revealed and even ridiculed by the Lord is called Ra.

The Egyptian god Ra. He's said to be the god of the sun. And as the god of the sun, he was said to be the creator of everything. Ra is described and depicted.

If you see images of him, he's described and depicted as a strong man with the head of a falcon or an eagle. And above his head, he has a disk that is the sun.

And what's interesting is that ancient Greek or ancient Egyptian mythology claimed that humanity, us, we were created by Ra's tears.

That's what they said. And that as the sun god Ra, he would sail across the heavens during the day. So he would journey. He would sail across the heavens on the sun, beginning his journey in the east with the sunrise.

[21 : 52] So Ra would begin his journey with the sunrise in the morning. And he would sail all the way across to the west until sunset where Ra would then descend into the underworld.

And the Egyptians said that he would remain there until the following morning where he would once again appear. He would journey then across the heavens once again from the east all the way to the west.

But what we see with this plague is that Ra disappeared. He completely disappeared. He became darkened as the god of the sun.

And he became darkened as the god of the sun not just for the evening, but for three whole days. Because as we read, when Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, there was pitch darkness, thick darkness, deep darkness, in the land of Egypt for three days.

People couldn't see one another. It was that dark. They couldn't see. Ra was nowhere to be seen because Ra was this impotent and ineffective god.

[23 : 05] There was thick darkness, deep darkness, pitch darkness. But you know, the reason Ra disappeared and was darkened is because the Lord is the creator of the sun.

He's the creator of the heavens and the earth. He's the one who spoke into the darkness and desolation of this world, flooding it with light and filling it with life. He's the one who said at the beginning, as you know from Genesis 1, let there be light.

And there was light. And the Lord spoke, as we read in Genesis 1, he spoke into the darkness of this world because our Bible reminds us that God is light.

And in him there is no darkness at all. And you know, this contrast between light and darkness, it's not only seen in Genesis 1 of the creation. It's not only seen here in Exodus 10 with the plagues as the Israelites.

The Israelites are standing in the light while the Egyptians are sitting in darkness. But this contrast between light and darkness, it's seen clearly in our Gospels.

[24 : 13] In fact, that's how John introduces his Gospel, his good news message about Jesus.

John tells us right at the beginning of his Gospel, he says, Jesus was there in the beginning with God.

And all things were made through him. Because in him was life. And the life was the light of men. And the light shined in the darkness. But the darkness did not overcome it.

And even John the Baptist, whom we were talking to about the children, with the children, John the Baptist, we're told, was sent to bear witness about the light. He was sent to point people to the light. Because as John says, the true light which gives light to everyone who believes was coming into the world. And you know, throughout his Gospel, you read John's Gospel.

If you've never read it, read it. It's a wonderful Gospel. John highlights this beautiful theme of light and darkness. He says in John 3, And with that, John, in John 3, he tells us about a man.

[25 : 37] A man named Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, who came to Jesus, how? By night. He came to Jesus under the cover of darkness.

He came to Jesus because there was a spiritual darkness covering his soul. And Nicodemus was walking in darkness, but he was being drawn to the light of the world that is Jesus Christ.

And as Jesus proclaims in John's Gospel, I am the light of the world. Whosoever believes in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Jesus also says in John 12, I have come into the world as light, so that whosoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

You know, my friend, Jesus came into this world so that he will not only call you from the darkness of sin into the light of salvation.

[26 : 42] Jesus came into this world so that you will come from the darkness of salvation, the marvelous light of salvation.

And as you know, the only way to be called and to come from the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of salvation is by Jesus experiencing and enduring our darkness as our substitute.

And of course, that's what happened on the cross. You come to Calvary with me, just for a moment. Come to Calvary because we're told there that from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, from midday to 3 p.m., when the light of the sun would be at its highest and its hottest, it's then that Calvary was

plunged, just like Egypt, plunged into darkness.

And as you know, the Bible, in the Bible, light is always a symbol of God's joy. Darkness is a symbol of God's judgment. Darkness is a symbol of God's judgment.

And that's what's happening at the cross. You want to know what happened at Calvary? Jesus is being judged. Jesus is bearing our sin. Jesus is encountering our judgment.

[28 : 03] He's enduring our punishment. He's experiencing our hell. Jesus is encountering our judgment. He's experiencing our punishment.

He's enduring our hell. You know, that's why there was darkness at Calvary. And that's why Jesus often described hell as outer darkness.

Outer darkness. It's like this darkness that enveloped Egypt. It's pitch darkness. Thick darkness. Deep darkness.

Literally, the phrase that's used in Exodus 10 is gloomy darkness. Gloomy darkness. And interestingly, when you read the New Testament, both Peter and Jude, that's how they describe hell.

They describe it as gloomy darkness. The outer darkness. The thick darkness. The deep darkness. And that's the darkness that shrouded the cross of Calvary.

[29 : 12] As Jesus, as he encountered our judgment, he endured our punishment. He experienced our hell.

As hell descended into the soul of Jesus. And, you know, although we'll never be able to fully fathom the depths of darkness and dereliction and even the death of Jesus.

You know what? Jesus encountered and experienced and endured on the cross in our place. The Gospels remind us that in these moments of silence, our salvation was accomplished.

Accomplished and applied. In those moments of silence. In those moments of silence, our salvation was accomplished and applied. And, you know, my unconverted friend.

You know, Exodus 10 is directing you straight to Calvary this morning. Whether you're here or at home this morning, the Lord is calling you to come. Come from the darkness of sin into the light of salvation.

[30 : 17] Come. Come. And, you know, the thing is, and I want to be clear with you. Give me your attention for two seconds. In order to come from the darkness of sin into the light of salvation, you don't need to be a better person to come.

You don't need to know more in order to come. You don't need a Bible verse in order to come. You don't need a Damascus Road experience. You don't need bright lights or a voice from heaven to come.

No, the Bible says you come as you are. As you are right here, right now, in the seat you are sitting in. You just come as you are.

You need to come, as the Bible says, humbly and wholeheartedly. You need to come in submission and surrender. You need to come with confession of sin and commitment to the Savior.

You need to come to Jesus because he and he alone is the light of the world. He and he alone is the light of the world. But my friend, whatever you do, whatever you do, don't stay where you are.

[31 : 34] Don't stay in the darkness of sin. Don't stay in the darkness of sin that will lead you to the outer darkness of hell. Don't be like Pharaoh, stubbornly refusing and resisting and rejecting the Lord.

No, no, no. Don't stay in the darkness. You come into the light. You come into the marvelous light because Jesus is saying to you this morning, I am the light of the world.

Whosoever believes in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. You don't stay in the darkness of sin.

Come. Come to Jesus, the light of the world. And you know, I was thinking about this hymn. All week long it's been in my mind and I wasn't going to mention it.

But it's the closing verse of this hymn and I wrote it down just this morning. Where it says, the closing verse says, Come from darkness into light. Come let Jesus make you right.

[32 : 43] Come receive his life tonight or now. Be in time. Be in time. It was a hymn written by the 19th century preacher Charles Mason.

And I'll read it to you because he stresses the shortness of time and the length of eternity. And I've said it to you before. I've mentioned this hymn before where he says, Life at best is very brief.

Like the falling of a leaf. Like the binding of a sheaf. Be in time. Be in time. Fleeting days are telling fast. That the die will soon be cast.

And the fatal line be passed. Be in time. Be in time. If in sin you longer wait. You may find no open gate. And your cry be just too late.

Be in time. Be in time. Fairest flowers soon decay. Youth and beauty pass away. Oh you have not long to stay. Be in time. Be in time.

[33 : 49] While God's spirit bids you come. Sinner do not longer roam. Lest you seal your hopeless doom. Be in time. Be in time.

Time is swiftly gliding by. Death and judgment draweth nigh. To the arms of Jesus fly. Be in time. Be in time.

Oh I pray you count the cost. Ere the fatal line be crossed. And your soul in hell be lost. Be in time. Be in time.

Sinner heed the warning voice. Make the Lord your final choice. Then all heaven will rejoice. Be in time. Be in time.

Last verse. Come from darkness into light. Come let Jesus make you light. Come receive his life tonight.

[34 : 49] Be in time. Oh be in time. Be in time my friend. Don't stay where you are.

In the darkness of sin. Come. Come as you are. Into the marvelous light. Of salvation. Because Jesus is calling you.

Because he alone. Is the light. Of the world. Be in time. Be in time. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God. How often we are reminded. That life at best.

Is very brief. Like the falling of a leaf. Like the binding. Of a sheaf. Help us we pray. Or to be in time.

[35 : 48] Lord we know. That the Lord one who is speaking to us. And Lord we pray. That we would all listen. That we would be attentive to thy voice. That we would submit and surrender.

That we would not harden our heart to Jesus. But come to him. On bended knee. Saying like the publican. God be merciful to me a sinner.

O Lord hear us then we pray. Bless thy truth to us we ask. Work in our midst. For we plead in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. Now we're going to bring our service to a conclusion.

This morning. By singing the words of Psalm 105. Psalm 105. It's in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 105. It's on page 139.

Psalm 105 from verse 23. And we're singing down to the verse marked 38. Now we've sung this psalm before.

[37 : 01] It's a psalm that recounts the history of God's people. The Israelites. And these verses we're singing about. We count the history of the plagues in Egypt.

Then Israel came down into Egypt to stay. In Ham's land to sojourn for many a day. The Lord caused his people to prosper and grow. And so they were seen as a threat to their foe.

He turned the Egyptians against Israel. And caused them to plot his own servants to kill. Then Moses and Aaron his chosen he sent. Performing his wonders.

To Egypt they went. And we'll sing down to the verse marked 38 of Psalm 105. And we'll stand to sing if you're able. To God's praise. Then Israel came down into Egypt to stay.

In Ham's land to sojourn for many a day. The Lord caused his people to prosper and grow.

[38 : 15] And so they were seen as a threat to their foe. He turned the Egyptians against Israel.

And caused them to plot his own servants to kill. Then Moses and Aaron his chosen he sent.

Performing his wonders. To Egypt they went. Because the Egyptians despised his command.

He sent utter darkness to cover the land. Their waters and rivers be turned into blood.

The fish of the Nile were destroyed by the Lord. Their land tingled frost which invaded their roots.

[39 : 51] And his words warmed up. And his words warmed up. Of flies and of lands fell their holes. The rain became hail and the lightning was flashed.

He struck down their minds. And their victories were smashed. He struck down their minds. And their victories were smashed. He spoke of the locusts and grass of earth's cave.

And every green thing was consumed as by flame.

And then he took vengeance on all the firstborn. The first fruits of manhood of Egypt were gone.

He brought Israel up. He brought Israel up. Bearing silver and gold. Their tribes all marched forward.

[41 : 14] Oh, steadfast and gold. Then Egypt was joyful to see them depart.

For terror of them had laid hold of their heart.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.