

SERMON TITLE: "Hail, Locusts, Darkness"

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Exodus 9:13 – 10:29

15th in a series on the Book of Exodus

1. As with the first six plagues, this third group of plagues is marked by intensification. How do we see this intensification (compared with both the earlier plagues and one another):
 - a. In the way the plagues are announced? (Notice the repeated use of the phrase "such as never has been seen" or the like; and also, note the reactions of Pharaoh's servants!)
 - b. In the character of the plagues themselves? (What is different about this set of plagues than the earlier ones?)
 - c. In the way that Pharaoh responds to each of them?
2. In 9:14, the LORD says through Moses, "This time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth." What happens as Pharaoh comes to know that there is none like the LORD in all the earth? Why is it important for Pharaoh (and other kings, princes, and leaders) to know this?
3. In 9:16, the LORD says through Moses, "By now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." This is interesting! First, what does the fact that God himself raised up Pharaoh tell us about all human authorities, even evil ones? (See Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; but Acts 5:29; Matt 22:21.) How is it comforting for us to know this? (See Ps. 18:27-30.)
4. Second, with regard to proclaiming the LORD's name: it may indeed be the privilege of God's people to "call upon the name of the LORD" and to enjoy the blessings of his steadfast love and faithfulness. But it is for all the world to hear the LORD's name proclaimed and their duty to acknowledge him as the Living and True God. "Name" here is more than simply that by which we address the LORD in our worship and prayers; it is also his *reputation* in all the world, i.e., all that is summoned to mind when we consider his mighty acts and glorious character. Think about how often Scripture emphasizes the importance of God's name. How are we to proclaim his name in all the earth (see Ps. 8:1, 9 and 9:2, 10)? And perhaps just as importantly, how must we be careful that his name not be blasphemed on our account (see Ex. 20:7; Rom. 2:24)?
5. In 10:1, the LORD says through Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and 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 that I am the LORD." Not just that Pharaoh may know, but that YOU may know, *and* that you may then tell your children that THEY may know! Why is transmission of the remembrance of God's mighty works down through the generations so important? Consider as you think about this that God is to be known and remembered as the One who brings both righteous judgment and gracious deliverance!