

EXODUS

Chapter 10

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

Then the LORD said to 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, 2 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.” 3 So Moses and Aaron went in to 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. 4 For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, 5 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, 6 and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. 7 Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” 8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?” 9 Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.” 10 But he said to them, “The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind.[a] 11 No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence. 12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. 14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. 15 They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. 16 Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17 Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me.” 18 So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the LORD. 19 And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

10:2 *tell in the hearing of your son...grandson.* The memory of God’s redemptive acts is to be kept alive by reciting them to our descendants (see 12:26–27; 13:8, 14–15; Dt 4:9; Ps 77:11–20; 78:4–6, 43–53; 105:26–38; 106:7–12; 114:1–3; 135:8–9; 136:10–15). (CSB)

Israelite children were taught the story and lessons of the exodus. Parents were obligated to teach the mighty works of God to their children. (TLSB)

10:3 *How long.* The Lord demanded homage from Pharaoh, not just the worship of the Israelites. (TLSB)

10:4 *I will bring locusts.* In March or April the prevailing east winds (see v. 13) would bring in hordes of migratory locusts at their immature and most voracious stage. As also today, locust plagues were greatly feared in ancient times and became a powerful symbol of divine judgment (see Joel 1:4–7; 2:1–11; Am 7:1–3). (CSB)

Swarms as never seen before in Egypt; the exceptional destruction showed that God was judging the people (cf Am 7:1–3). (TLSB)

10:7 *How long ... ?* The pharaoh's officials ironically echo the phrase used by Moses in v. 3. (CSB)

snare. Lethal trap for animals; figurative expression for ultimate destruction. (TLSB)

Let the men go. Another compromise was considered. (TLSB)

Egypt is ruined. Human rebellion and disobedience bring death and destruction in their wake. (CSB)

10:8 *serve.* Worship. (TLSB)

But which ones?... Bargaining to prevent the loss of slaves. (TLSB)

10:9 *must hold a feast.* A sacrificial feast to the Lord. Moses would not compromise. (TLSB)

10:10 *The LORD be with you.* Not a blessing but a threat. Pharaoh took a divine prerogative by supposing that the Israelites were his slave people and as such were Egyptian property. (TLSB)

10:11 *go, the men.* From the pharaoh's standpoint, (1) the women and children should remain behind as hostages, and (2) it was typically only the men who participated fully in worship. (CSB)

This concession was not serious. The women and children would be held as hostages against the return of the men. (TLSB)

10:13 *east wind.* The wind blew a day and a night, evidence that the locusts came from a great distance, proving to the Egyptians that the omnipotence of Yahweh extended beyond the borders of Egypt. (TLSB)

10:14 *never been before, nor ... again.* A miracle of magnitude. Cf Jl 1:1–4; Rv 9:3–10. (TLSB)

10:15 *darkened.* A dense army, annihilating any vegetation that had remained after the hail. (CSB)

10:17 *remove this death.* Locusts would bring utter ruin to Egypt's agriculture. (TLSB)

10:19 *the LORD turned the wind.* The forces of nature are compelled to obey his sovereign will (see 14:21; Mt 8:23–27). (CSB)

By means of a strong west wind, the Lord cast the locusts into the Red Sea so that they would perish. (TLSB)

not a single locut – Yet another miracle. (TLSB)

10:1–20 Pharaoh seeks compromise and even forgiveness, but his pride still refuses to bend to the will of God. Sinners of the worst description are to be admonished by the Law, even if there is little hope of amendment. God strengthened Moses' faith by saying that the hardening of Pharaoh was according to His

divine will so that the signs would confirm to Israel and all successive generations that the Lord is God (cf 7:3–5). Pharaoh’s confession was only a pious platitude, but for us the gift of confession is beautiful—the Holy Spirit moves us to agree with God that we sin and deserve punishment, and for the sake of Christ, we receive the gift of absolution. • My God and my Lord, I know that when I confess my sins to You, You are faithful and just and will cleanse me from all my unrighteousness for the sake of Your Son, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived. 24 Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.” 25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.” 27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.” 29 Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

10:21 *there may be darkness over the land Egypt.* Like the third and sixth plagues, this ninth plague was unannounced to Pharaoh. It was possibly caused by the arrival of an unusually severe khamsin, the blinding sandstorm that blows in from the desert each year in the early spring. The darkness was an insult to the sun-god Ra (or Re), one of the chief deities of Egypt. (CSB)

Possibly, God caused a great, swelling sandstorm so that the sky was darkened (except where the Israelites lived). The Egyptians’ sun god (Ra) could not grant them light. (TLSB)

10:24 Yet another attempt at compromise. Pharaoh sensed that the conflict was ultimate and not just about a onetime trip for a worship festival. (TLSB)

10:26 Moses was firm. The Lord would not negotiate with Pharaoh. (TLSB)

10:28 Pharaoh declares that he will never again grant Moses an audience. (CSB)

The day you see my face. During a plague of darkness, these words are somewhat ironic. (CSB)

you shall die. Pharaoh fell into such vengeful wrath that he sent Moses away under threat. Pharaoh’s murderous intent would return against him in the last plague. (TLSB)

10:29 *I will not see your face again.* Ironic statement during a plague of darkness! This marks a decisive turning point; the last blow would be followed by the release of the people. When people drive God’s Word from their midst, He gives them over to their own delusions. (TLSB)

10:21–29 The plague of darkness removes any ability to move freely, as was possible with the first several plagues. Sinners mock God’s Word and in so doing deceive themselves. The Egyptians would soon be exposed to the destroyer and the death of the firstborn as a testimony that the Lord is patient and slow to anger, but at the proper time, judgment will come. Thanks be to God that by the vicarious sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are His children through Holy Baptism, forgiven, cleansed, and protected from the final judgment. • O Lord, do not look upon me with condemnation. But look at the righteous face of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, my Mediator, High Priest, and Savior. O Father, be gracious and merciful for His sake. Amen. (TLSB)