

Exod 03-05-18b

We're ready now to resume our study. Hopefully all the buttons are pressed and so on to make sure we're transmitting and recording and so on. It's a good thing we don't have a PA system or I'd be creating feedback and doing all other kinds of unhelpful things.

We looked in our first session this morning at Psalm 78 and saw the significance of the plagues for Israel. They are supposed to remember God's mighty works, are supposed to remember his name and not forget. The encouragement is break this cycle of apathy and indifference leading to disobedience, leading to discipline, which leads to change of mind and repentance and a spurt of growth and acknowledgement of God that results in prosperity and blessing, which then leads to apathy and indifference and the whole thing repeats.

Well, back now in Exodus chapter 10, we have arrived having looked at the first several plagues culminating in the hail and lightning and thunder that were in the end of chapter 9. Then we come to chapter 10, 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 before him and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt and my signs which I have done among them so that you may know that I am the Lord. Ever after they should remember on the basis of these that God is the Lord. So Moses and Aaron go into Pharaoh, thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, how long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go that they may serve me.

Else if you refuse to let my people go, behold tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. They shall cover the face of the earth so that no one will be able to see the earth. They shall eat the residue of what is left which remains to you from the hail and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field.

They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians which neither your fathers nor your father's fathers have seen since the day that they were on the earth to this day. He turned and went out from Pharaoh. 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 know that Egypt is destroyed? So Moses and Aaron were brought back again to Pharaoh. He says go serve the Lord your God. Who are the ones that are going? Moses said this is what old Cecil B. DeMille ripped off.

You know when Charlton Heston goes ranting out of the palace after Yul Brynner finally says you can go and he says we will go with our young, we will go with our old, we will go with our sons, we will go with our daughters, we will go with our flocks, we will go with our herds, we will hold a feast to the Lord. Then he gets some New Testament scriptures and throws them in for good measure and he's just ranting all the way out of the palace. But it's sort of loosely based

on this verse.

Then he said to them the Lord had better be with you when I let you go and your little ones go. Beware for evil is ahead of you. Not so.

And he kind of talks himself out and he says just the men can go serve the Lord. This is what you desired and they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. And so this is basically a refusal because the request is for all the people to leave.

Pharaoh only will let the men go because he figures if I keep the families they'll come back. The Lord said to Moses stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every herb of the land, all that the hail has left. So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night.

When it was morning the east wind brought the locusts and the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe. Previously there had been no such locusts as they nor shall there be such after them.

For they covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. There remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. If you've ever read the Little House on the Prairie series, I think we've referred to this once before when we were studying locusts, Laura Ingalls Wilder lived through a locust plague and wrote about it in those books and it was literally of biblical proportions.

The ground was covered. You could not step anywhere without crushing dozens of locusts. They flew in in a great cloud that darkened the sun.

They thought a storm was coming up. This great bank of darkness that overtook the sky and blocked the sun and they landed and began to eat and they could hear the munching. Even inside their house they could hear the crunching of millions of tiny mandibles eating their crops that were almost ready to be harvested and then they started walking.

The locusts walked as they do with their hind legs across the ground and nothing in their way. They didn't go around anything. When they got to the house they just started walking over the house and there was an open window and they walked over the windowsill and into the house and they had to shut the window and then they went up over the house but they marched in a straight line through the house and I forget which of the books that's in but it's worth reading it is it reminds you of the of the prophet which of our who remembers which of the minor prophets has the locusts in it? Joel? Is it Joel that talks about the plague of locusts? That is another that we I think on the occasion when we were in Joel looking at that passage I actually read the section out of Laura Engel's book on that and the descriptions are virtually identical and that's what happened here they ate every green thing there was not a stub there was not a

twig there was not a leaf there was not a piece of fruit that was not utterly consumed throughout all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste and said I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you therefore please forgive my sin only this once and entreat the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only. So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord and the Lord turned a very strong west wind which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea there remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the children of Israel go. I was looking at the word for frog here in Hebrew which is Zophar Dayim.

It is based on the Hebrew word Zophar which usually comes over in English as a Z. You may recognize it as the name of one of Job's friends, Zophar. His name comes from this and it means to leap. Zophar was a noun that came from this word that was used to talk about a he-goat and Zophar Dayim combines the word with another unused word in the Bible another Hebrew word that means a swamp and so the name for frog is literally swamp leaper.

Zophar Dayim. Well I was you know I was doing this stuff on the frog I thought well that's interesting but not pertinent I won't bring it up which I just did but sometimes when I see a word like that and I think that reminds me of another word that I know and I thought I wonder if this has any relationship to the Greek word or the Latin word actually Zephyr. You've seen the word Z-E-P-H-Y-R and I thought well that's kind of got the same consonants and many times you can trace Romance words Roman you know Greek Latin words all the way back into the Semitic roots.

Our alphabet the letter A goes all the way back to the letter Aleph in the ancient Semitic alphabet. If you look at the old Aleph even before the Aleph that's in the Aramaic alphabet that's used in our texts and go back to the old Hebrew script that's on the inscription the Siloam Tunnel inscription it's an A on its side it looks like an angle with a little mark across it's a letter A on its side well this did not turn out to be the case but what Zephyr does come from Zephyr means a soft gentle breeze and it goes back to a goddess in the pantheon of the ancient Greeks and Romans and Zephyr was a lady she was the goddess of the west wind and so in an odd way I came back around to the same passage because you have here an east wind that brings evil and a west wind that brings good and if you think about the location of Egypt and of Israel later on if you get a wind from the east where has it come from? It's come across Saudi Arabia it has come across the desert and the desert sands have sucked all of the moisture out of it and a dry east wind was always a harbinger and became a symbol of evil of calamity and east wind you'll see this over and over in the Bible if you have a it's not easy to do with a paper concordance but if you have a Bible program a search on the phrase east wind and find all of the places where it bodes ill and then the west wind where is the west wind coming from? It's coming over the waters of the Mediterranean Sea it would have to be in Egypt a little bit of a northwest wind but it comes in and and you have moisture and coolness and benefit coming in from the the sea breeze versus the land breeze so these locusts appear on the wafted in by the east wind it tells

us in verse 13 and so we ask ourselves now if the east wind is coming in from the burning sands of the Saudi Arabian desert where do these locusts come from? well there you go they don't grow in the desert and if it's an east wind look on any map east of Egypt you just got sand dunes and barren wasteland that caravans refuse to travel across God created these locusts in huge swarms to come in and devastate the land they were released by these angels of evil that Psalm 78 talks about remember also in Revelation we looked at chapter 7 who controls the winds you got the four angels at each corner of the compass holding the winds back or allowing the winds to blow so the east wind angel lets loose the east wind the other angels perpetrate these locusts in there and they come the land is utterly devastated then once Pharaoh makes his shallow confession Moses entreats the Lord east wind angel stops up the pipe for the east wind the west wind angel uncorks the west wind and then it blows and it blows all of these locusts not just away but into the sea where they drown and this is a harbinger like to work that word in once in a while a harbinger of things to come it's not the Nile that they're blown into it is the Red Sea they are not blown back into the desert where they cook and dry and become little snacks for the Bedouin they are blown into the Red Sea where they do what drown and a few short weeks into the future it swarms of other kinds of creature are going to be in the midst of the Red Sea and drown so there's a little foreshadowing here of the what is the power of a locust if I turn one locust loose in your yard are you in a panic their power is in their number isn't it they have a limited ability each one to eat a leaf here and there but it is the swarms it's their numerosity that you know ravim in Hebrew means many many ravim and there are many many of these locusts go up over all the land of Egypt rest on all the territory of Egypt if they carpet the ground so that you can't even see the dirt these are just untold multitudes of locusts well what is the problem with the chariots of Pharaoh chasing the Israelites after they depart the land it is their numerosity it is their armor and their ferocity their ability to destroy and they are too numerous you got two million Israelites but they don't have the ability to defend themselves against the numbers and so they are going to be taken care of by the sea as well so Pharaoh called the intriguing Pharaoh's heart is hardened he does not let the children of Israel go verse 21 then the Lord said to Moses stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over all the land of Egypt darkness which may even be felt now this is not the kashak or koshek type of darkness we've studied this word koshek a lot of times when you see a reference to the dawn most notably in Isaiah 14 how thou art fallen from heaven Oh shining one son of koshek and the English translates that son of the dawn or a morning star but koshek is not dawn although the lexicon says it's dawn it's not the lexicon is wrong and I'm right I'm sorry but that's just the way it is if you do a word study anytime you find koshek with reference to dawn it is always accompanied by a verb that says the koshek was rising and they say we'll see this is the dawn rising it's not the dawn rising it's the darkness lifting if you lift the darkness what takes its place light if you lift the koshek and time and again go to all the different passages there are two or three they're a little problematic but the clear ones explain the hard ones koshek in fact I just talked to my brother about this a few weeks ago revisiting that this is not koshek this is another word for darkness and it is not used very often in the Bible because it is a supernatural darkness it is a darkness that can be felt in verse 22 here for some reason I'm not getting my I see I see the problem in

verse 22 Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven you notice he always stretches out his hand toward heaven it's not that there are rays of power coming out of his hand or the rod is a magic wand of some sort that is waved to produce this effect it is hand outstretched toward heaven this is by way of appeal by way of invocation by way of symbolically acknowledging the authority of God in heaven who then delegates the responsibility for this plague to angels who perpetrate the plague at the behest at the request of man and this is a model to keep in mind you know when we say well okay I'm going to try to meditate tomorrow I'm going to stop at lunch when I'm eating my sandwich or going through the drive-thru or whatever I do for lunch I'm going to try to meditate what do I meditate on well think about this here's a here's a suggested meditation think about the picture think about the spatial relationship that goes on during these plagues Moses and Aaron on the ground before Pharaoh he's often right before the people of Egypt and before the Pharaoh and at a time of his own choosing based on the command of God God tells Moses what to do God says here's the next plague Moses has the word of the Lord he obeys he risks his life in standing before Pharaoh you would think you know after six or seven plagues you wouldn't be mr. popular walking into the palace there's a good chance that Pharaoh could say oh no I'm not letting you pronounce anything off with his head don't let the man say anything so he obeys at some personal peril and goes in and pronounces the word of the Lord speaks what God told him to speak then he stretches out his hand the hand with the rod of God that action in and of itself accomplishes nothing it is an act of faith it is an act of response to the word of the Lord believing that when he does so he's not going to be standing there nothing happening and then the soldiers of Egypt coming in and playing him alive that God is going to respond to that act of faith and yet the action itself accomplishes nothing what happens at our salvation the reformed and Calvinist theologians notwithstanding we stretch forth our hand in faith we seize and lay hold of the word of God we believe it to be true and we act in its light and on its basis and then God accomplishes everything Moses and Aaron did not create a single locust they didn't cough up a single frog they didn't produce any swarms or any flies or any hail but they did invoke the power of God by calling on God symbolically with the outstretched hand as a response to God's instruction God instructs us to lay hold of him in faith to lay hold of his mercy and lay hold of his grace we are responsible to act we have responsibility we have accountability we have the option the volitional choice to either exercise faith on this particular day or not when we do that God acts and angels who are ministers of flaming fire sent to do God's bidding do God's bidding on our behalf there are guardian angels there are ministering angels there are national angels they're all different kinds of angels who control the weather who control circumstances who hold our car together when it ought to fall apart I'll never forget one of the first times this really was impressed on my thinking in in modern times was reading have you ever seen this book called God smuggler brother Andrew you ever read that that is an interesting book this is back in the this is 20 30 40 years ago when the Iron Curtain was in full sway and it was not only illegal but punishable by death to bring copies of the scriptures into the Soviet Union and this man known only by his first name Andrew was smuggling Bibles into Russia and into other countries behind the Iron Curtain and was miraculously preserved time and again and this book it's a you can get it in paperback is not very thick but it I warn you if you start reading it you'll not be able to put it

down to you finish because God's protection and preservation of him because he was putting the scriptures into people's hands and it's it gives you a fresh appreciation for what a precious gift it is to own your own copy of the scripture and how dedicated God is to making sure that believers who are hungry have a copy of the scriptures because I think God performed miracles of a biblical proportion in this man's ministry I think he's free to do so and I think he did I don't think Andrew has any reason to not tell the truth but in one case he had a Volkswagen which I can sympathize with and he was traveling along in this Volkswagen Chuck full of Bibles all over the backseat and was stopped by the Russian what do you call the guys in Russia who do we call those guys are always yeah that yeah they're yeah the KGB or one of these agents who were looking around trying to find it his backseat is covered with boxes and stacks and copies of the Bible in plain sight it's got Holy Bible and those funny-looking Russian letters all over it they're not even covered with a blanket he was trying to get through and they found him and they stopped him and they pulled him over and stared at his face show us your papers you know and he's given his papers and stuff and the guy looked over in the backseat here's all these Bibles laying right out Andrew's thinking well let's see I wonder if they're gonna kill me or just lock me up the man hands him back his papers and says this is an order go ahead as though when he looked in the backseat he saw nothing and it was just totally inexplicable on another occasion he's driving that same Volkswagen along and I don't remember all the details of the story but he was he could not stop he had to keep going and he finally got to a place and then his car stopped and no it's actually his car was still running but he was having some kind of a problem and he had a guy look at his car maybe he was afraid it was going to stop or something and the man went to the back and you know what the engines in the back on a Volkswagen he opened up the hood and looked inside and he looked around a little bit he was like me he could look at a Volkswagen and see the air cleaner you know these oil it has an oil bath air cleaner that has oil in it and it collects dust and stuff and he'd been driving all over these country roads taking the back ways to deliver these Bibles well the oil bath air cleaner was full not just partly it was it was completely full like a new package of flour with dirt there was no path for air to go through and of course this thing is clamped over the carburetor and dirt getting down in your engine will destroy your engine and the man turned to brother Andrew he said I'm sorry but this this engine cannot run well he's been running for like hundreds of miles you know the guys were on his tail he was traveling up and down and through these roads and his car was running great he was stopped for some other reason guys let me take a look at your engine went back and he said there's no way this engine can run and so he of course he cleaned it up and but God acted to preserve and protect him but if you are doing the Lord's business God will delegate God will send angels to accomplish his purpose I told you before the stories of the shining path down in South America where they were abusing pastors and they took a pastor out of his congregation and tied him to a chair and strapped dynamite to the chair in the middle of the village square and lit it and everybody stood back to see the execution of this pastor who would not renounce his faith and the dynamite went off there was a huge explosion people are knocked off their feet and they look back and the man is sitting in his chair with his bonds blown off unharmed untouched not even a nosebleed and I think that God does that when he chooses and it is no big thing for him if it's not our time to die

we're not going to die if it is our time there's nothing that can preserve us but the picture here think of the picture man stands on the earth with the Word of God having heard it having decided to obey it having invoked it by stretching out the hand in an act of faith and God operates the universe on that basis and will honor those who honor him we can do the same thing be it a small problem be it a large problem be it a challenge to navigate through prosperity you know we tend to think well our Christianity is a problem-solving thing but one of our harder tests is navigating prosperity how do we keep our focus when everything is great oh Lord give me that test you know let me let me see if I can pass the prosperity test just shower money and opportunity and leisure and stuff on me it is a hard hard test we tend to thrive better in adversity than we do in prosperity regardless of what we face this is the picture if we have the Word of the Lord and we claim it we reach out the hand with the rod that in and of itself accomplishes nothing faith is non-meritorious it is a gift of God that when we reach out in faith there is a response Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days well this should start little small bells ringing in our mind we have the number three and we have darkness we just went through Luke chapter 22 23 and 24 the arrest and the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Lord and we know that from noon until 3 p.m. there was darkness darkness for the space of three hours and this is the ninth plague I will suggest something to you and this is not a fully fleshed out idea but it's something that suggested itself to me and of course I'm happy to just suggest it to you what is the very first miracle that Jesus did wedding feast of Cana water got turned into something red wine which is invoked as a symbol of blood by Jesus at the upper room what is the first plague water turns to blood what is the last thing that happens in Jesus earthly life three hours of darkness what is the last thing that happens before the slaying of the firstborn three days of darkness I would submit to you that there is an analog or a suggestion in all of the plagues frogs have been associated with demons from time immemorial there is this plague of frogs frogs are everywhere and unusually large numbers and it is only the power of God that slays them in place and when when their problem is solved there's death and you think about all of the demonic activity that took place around the time of Christ they don't talk about demon possession the time the Maccabees they don't talk about demons running loose in the after the first generation of the church you don't see the apostles going forth and just casting out demons right left they do physical healing more than anything else but why this intensity of demonic activity right around the time of Christ what happens when Jesus cast out the Legion from the man the garrison demoniac across the Sea of Galilee there is a resulting death of animals right all of the swine go over into the sea and unclean animal of course frogs are unclean animals and there is there is this resulting death in other words the the resolution of the demon problem is is the death of these animals demons go into the swine and swine go over the cliff so you look at the swarms you look at the boils you look at diseases and so on that are all associated with the dominion of darkness the power of Satan the the enslavement in Egypt and you see Jesus with a word remedying and demonstrating his power over these things they were allowed by God why were these afflictions in Israel to begin with if God is the God of Hebrews why were there so many demon possessed people why were there all the lame halt and blind and leprous roaming the environment of Israel in Jesus day it's not an accident God

allowed it God allowed those things God designated those things for that generation so that when Jesus came his superiority over them would be demonstrated and there is an analog in Jesus day and in that great chiasmic structure of human history you have it here at the inception of the nation of Israel you have it at the culmination of times for the nation of Israel and at the end of times for the nation of Israel the 70th week of Daniel revelation 7 and following what do you have you have disease you have plagues you have all of these manifestations of sin and the kingdom of darkness and the power of Satan all manifested culminating ultimately in the return of the Lord who resolves and puts all of that to rest but God allows that God even decrees some of that plaguing just as he does here just as he did in the time of Christ why so that you will know that I am the Lord that's what he tells the nation of Israel so that they may know the Egyptians the unbelievers that I am the Lord if anybody ought to remember that God is God there's a great old gospel song that Jake had sings God is God I know God and he always will be God and to bring that into our practical daily living to remember that God is in his heaven we have access to his grace by faith in which we stand we look at that in Romans 5 1 through 5 and other passages we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand knowing different things trial of our faith works patience and so on that's what we have going on here so we have this thick darkness in verse 22 and this is the word koshek is used of it here and we also have another word that is only found in the book of Job he says may the day of my birth be shrouded in thick darkness and so on a supernatural type of darkness I was going to take you to that word but I don't have time but suffice it to say that if you have a good concordance if you have some strong numbers look up the other word and you'll see that it is only used elsewhere over in Job and perhaps in some accounts in 105 and 78 of these plagues it is a supernatural darkness a darkness which is tangible a darkness which can be felt they couldn't even light a light and get it to go away I've been driving in the middle of the night in darkness like this where it just seems like even your headlights don't shine on anything so then Pharaoh called to Moses verse 24 go serve the Lord only let your flocks and your herds be kept back this is well I'll agree but first he says I'll let the men go then he says well you can only you can sacrifice in the land or you can go but you gotta leave your women and children behind or you can go but you've got to leave your flocks behind knowing that they can't get far without their food source and the Egyptians can't see one another they couldn't rise from their place for three days all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings so he says let your little ones go with you Moses says you must give us sacrifices and burn offerings that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God our livestock shall go with us not a hoof shall be left behind we must take some of them to serve the Lord our God and even we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart he would not let them go Pharaoh said to him get away from me take heed to yourself and see my face no more for in the day you see my face you shall die Moses said you have spoken well I will never see your face again the the mill movie notwithstanding Moses does not see Pharaoh after the slaying of the first born this is the last time they talk face to face I will never see your face again well let us quickly review now I promised I would do this and I'm going to do it let's review how the gods of the Egyptians have been thwarted in these nine plagues the water turned to blood we've talked about Osiris and it's his bloodstream that he of course has no

control over in the frogs we talked about Hecate H-E-K-T she was the frog-headed goddess the emblem of fertility because they were so numerous the swarms gnats and so on Seb S-E-B was the earth god remember they struck the dust of the ground and the dust turned into these swarms that got over them whether they were fleas or chiggers or ticks or it doesn't say what they were they were some sort of biting swarms plague number four the flies this is the Egyptian god you watch it this you know you watch it it sounds like you watch it which is the opposite of no-see-ums but they had these you watch it U-A-T-C-H-I-T was symbolized by the Ich Neumann fly I-C-H-N-E-U-M-O-N this was a symbol of this god it was you see the scarabs and so on in Egypt that are so common this was a fly type of thing number five the death of the livestock this is Apis A-P-I-S very prominently displayed in a lot of the funerary paintings and inscriptions the sacred bull in Egypt was Apis number six the boils they had a god specifically in Egypt that prevented boils his name was Typhon T-Y-P-H-O-N he was the guy you know you wear little St. Typhon medal and you weren't supposed to get boils well he got totally blown away by this one number seven the hail this is the god Shu S-H-U this was the god of the atmosphere controlled the wind and the weather and the clouds and the rain and so on well he Shu couldn't do anything about the hail number eight the locusts this was the god Serapia S-E-R-A-P-I-A he was the protection that the Egyptians just had a pantheon of gods they had as many as that Romans and Greeks and there was a god who was a protector from locusts and his name was Serapia S-E-R-A-P-I-A now we've had darkness well this is one of the strongest and most popular gods in Egypt the god Ra Ra was the Sun God and of course Ra was out to lunch or something for these three days because he couldn't get any light by day or by night and you've got the you know Canum K-H-N-U-M he was the god of the sources of the Nile from which so many of these plagues derived the frogs and the you know the Nile was supposed to be their life-giving water and so on and he got ousted many many of these gods should have been able to do something they could do nothing of course Pharaoh himself was considered to be a deity just like Caesar was supposed to be a god and nine times now he has been helpless and has had to appeal to someone else to get the plagues reversed so you have the eloquent revelation of the fact that is noted in Scripture numbers 33 for talking about the deliverance in Egypt says the Lord has also executed judgments on their gods Exodus 12 12 against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments Exodus 18 11 now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods indeed it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people so we've seen up through these first nine these three sets of three the demonstration of God's power I am the Lord there is none other beside me this is what we're supposed to remember this is what we're supposed to bring away when we meditate Psalm 1 1 & 2 delight ourselves in the law the Lord day and night remember hark back who are we why are we here it's the same God with the same angels and the same purpose in human history whom we serve whom we will one day live with an eternity when we come back next time we're going to start chapter 11 with the death of the firstborn we're going to see a lot of Christology we're going to see a lot of foreshadowing we're going to move smartly through this because hard on the heels of the death of the firstborn is the Exodus proper and that's what we will resume next time but let's close here in a word of prayer father we thank you for the clear pictures that you give us in your word the exhortation and encouragement that we find to live our lives before you to lay up for

ourselves treasure in heaven to remember our heavenly citizenship to acknowledge you and do what we do heartily as unto you we pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us regularly morning noon and night of our opportunity as well as our obligation to live in the light of your word to let it guide our steps to respond to the call the upward call that you have issued to us through Christ Jesus so that our lives will be pleasing in your sight and glorifying to our Savior we pray in his name