

Locusts

On Tuesday we drove for three hours through locust ravaged Victoria. Reports claim locusts now cover an area the size of Spain. They are in plague proportions on a wide front stretching from Albury to Mildura, to the South Australia Riverina and as far south as Portland and Shepparton. As they eat out one area they migrate south. Chris Adriaansen, director of Australian Plague Locust Commission, said "the adult locusts are in such good condition they are laying eggs, moving and then laying again."

Farmers face financial losses in the millions of dollars. The Lamattina family from Wemen lost more than \$500,000 of carrot production in one day to locusts. Gordon Berg, Victoria's Plague Locust Commissioner, told The Age that farmers had described "something like 8000 hectares of canola basically vanishing in a day." Nic Watson from Berriwillock said locusts had devastated his crop of oats that was to be used as sheep feed. Nic said that there were so many locusts that "you can actually hear them eating!"



Photo: Jason South

In the Mallee on Sunday evening we were offered deep fried locust at the Underbool fellowship's BBQ. According to Leviticus 11:22 locust are edible: *"Of them you may eat: the locust of any kind, the bald locust of any kind, the cricket of any kind, and the grasshopper of any kind."* But I'm not John Baptist! The Bible speaks of locusts which "devour the land" 2 Chronicles 7:13.

Revelation chapter 9 describes a horrific judgement by locusts. Don Fleming writes: "Worse than the destruction by the forces of nature is the suffering brought by the forces of demons. These demonic forces are pictured as a strange and terrifying army of locusts. Though uncontrollable by any human power, they are not independent of the rule of God who determines the extent of their activity (9:1-3).

"The demons do not harm plant life (as ordinary locusts do), but harm people – though not God's people. They torment the ungodly with severe pain, rather like scorpions, but do not kill them. The vision shows how the ungodly become so tormented in mind and body by satanic forces that they wish to die, but they cannot. Just as a plague of locusts lasts for only a limited period, so does this attack by the forces of evil (4-6).

"God's aim is not merely to send his judgments upon the world, but to show people the seriousness of their sins so that they might repent and be saved. But no matter how severe his judgments, they continue in their sins (20-21)." Like the Egyptians in Moses' day people today seldom turn to God in the face of tragedy.