

Proverbs 30:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

Analysis

The locusts have no king (אֵין לָאֶרְבֶּה, melekh ein la'arbeh)—אֶרְבֶּה (arbeh, 'locust') has no מֶלֶךְ (melekh, 'king'). Unlike bees with queens or ants with organized hierarchy, locusts lack centralized leadership.

Yet go they forth all of them by bands (וַיֵּצֵא חֲצֹצֶת כָּלֹ, vayyetze chotzet kullo)—yet they יָצָא (yatza, 'go forth') חֲצֹצֶת (chotzet, 'in ranks, in military formation') כָּל (kol, 'all'). Without a king, they achieve remarkable coordination. Joel 2:7-8 describes their disciplined advance: 'They shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks.' The lesson: discipline and order don't require hierarchical control. The church, though lacking earthly king, moves forward under Christ's headship through shared commitment to divine purpose.

Historical Context

Locust swarms devastated ancient Near Eastern agriculture, sometimes covering hundreds of square miles. Joel 1-2 describes a locust plague as type of the Day of the LORD. Despite their small size and lack of leadership structure, locusts' coordinated movements could darken the sky (Exodus 10:15) and strip entire regions bare.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can Christians achieve unity and coordinated mission without heavy-handed hierarchical control?
2. What does locust-like discipline require—and how is it cultivated without a 'king'?
3. Where has your lack of external structure revealed whether you have internal discipline and commitment?

Interlinear Text

הָלֹא־מֶלֶךְ	אֵין	הַלְּאֲרָבִים	וַיֵּצֵאוּ	חֲנִיכֵיהֶם	כָּלֵהֶם
have no king	H369	The locusts	yet go they forth	all of them by bands	H3605
H4428		H697	H3318	H2686	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 105:34 (Parallel theme): He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillers, and that without number,

Joel 2:25 (Parallel theme): And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

Joel 1:4 (Parallel theme): That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.