

The antichrist prophecies

by Douglas E. Cox

The great army of Joel 2

In Joel's prophecy, God's people are described under the figure of a plague of locusts. [vs. 25] The locust metaphor alludes to the Israelites in the wilderness. After the Exodus, Moses commissioned representatives from each tribe to survey the land that Israel was to inherit. When they returned after 40 days some of the spies gave an evil report, describing the people dwelling in the land as giants, and themselves as grasshoppers. People who have not entered the saints' promised land are represented in Joel's prophecy by locusts.

They are an immense army. [vs. 2, 23] They may be compared with the 200 million horses & horsemen described in Rev. 9:12-21. They are called the northern army. [vs. 20] Joel refers to them as the heathen who reign over God's people. [vs. 17] Chapter 1 describes the land as having become desolate because of them. They leap on the tops of mountains, [vs. 5] a parallel to the armies of Gog & Magog. [Ezek. 38:8] They run like mighty men; they are "a strong people set in battle array;" they walk every one his own way; they run to and fro in the city (i.e., the holy city, the Church); they run upon the wall; they climb upon houses; they climb the wall like men of war; they enter in at the windows like a thief. People seek entry into Christ's kingdom in various ways, but Jesus said: "I am the door of the sheep" [John 10:7] And, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." [vs. 9]

They are armed with swords, like the armies of Gog and Magog. They are not wounded when they fall upon the sword; this sword is metaphorical, it represents the Scriptures. The setting of the prophecy is the day of the

Lord, like Zech. 14:1. This great army is unique, and it is also described in other prophecies. [Ezek. 38:17] The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and a desolate wilderness behind them. Fire burns before and behind them. Jesus referred to his Gospel as a fire. [Luke 12:49] They make a noise like chariots, a loud clattering sound, like the locusts in Rev. 9:9. They appear like horses and horsemen, a parallel to the 5th & 6th plagues in Rev. 9, Zech. 12 & 14, and Rev. 19. The earth trembles before them; the sun and the moon are dark before them (i.e., the Gospel is obscured). Stars cease to shine before them; the light of the saints is dimmed; stars represent the saints. Joel exhorts them to repent. [vs. 12-13]

The king of Babylon in Isa. 14:4-23

Lucifer in vs. 12 may allude to Satan, who is cast out of Heaven in Rev. 12:11. He seeks to ascend to heaven; he exalts his throne above the stars of God; [vs. 13] he seeks to be like the Most High. [vs. 14] Both are parallels to Paul's "man of sin" who sits in the temple of God [2 Thess. 2:4] He weakens the nations. [vs. 12]

The Assyrian of Isaiah 14:24-27

Isaiah described the arrogant words of Sennacherib king of Assyria in chapter 36. Through Rabshakeh, Sennacherib threatened the Jews and exhorted them not to put their trust in God for deliverance. The Assyrian will be broken on the mountains of Israel, a parallel to Gog & Magog. [Ezek. 39:4] He parallels the little horn of Dan. 7 who makes war with the saints. The conflict in this prophecy is world-wide in scope.

Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38

Ezekiel identifies these invaders with nations from far countries in all directions from Canaan; this depicts great diversity in their beliefs. Today, Christians are scattered among tens of thousands of denominations and sects. The invaders are armed with shields & bucklers; [vs. 4] the invasion parallels the horses and horsemen of the second woe. [Rev. 9:12-21] Their weapons are bows and arrows, spears, swords, clubs. Swords are also

a feature of the army described in Joel 2. Swords represent their words; arrows are “bitter words.” [Psa. 64:3]

They come against “the land that is brought back from the sword,” the Gospel revealed in the New Testament, based on Old Testament prophecy. They come against the mountains of Israel, symbols of God’s blessings, and promises, and prophecies; compare with Ezek. 36:8. They come against the prophets of Israel; they misinterpret the writings of the prophets and of the apostles. Ezekiel shows that the invasion is also the subject of other prophecies, e.g. those of Isaiah, and Joel, and Daniel. [Ezek. 38:17] They come against “the land of unwalled villages.” Jerusalem in Zech. 2:4 is described in similar terms, as “towns without walls.” They all ride upon horses; people with no understanding believe their doctrines. Horses represent those who have no understanding [Psa. 32:9] They seek to take a great spoil, and material gain; they seek “cattle and goods, and silver and gold.”

The little horn of Daniel 7

In Daniel’s prophecy, a little horn rises up among the 10 horns of the 4th beast, which represents the Roman Empire. This little horn is distinct from and separate from the 10 horns of the beast. It has eyes like the eyes of a man, depicting a human viewpoint, and a mouth speaking great things against the Most High. Its look is more stout than its fellows. It makes war with the saints, and overcomes them.

The armies of Zechariah 12-14

Zechariah describes an assault on Jerusalem by armies of horses and horsemen. Again, these horses represent people who lack understanding. [Psa. 32:9] The conflict is world-wide in scope. Jerusalem here is the heavenly city, the Church. Half of the city is taken captive. The invaders turn against one another. [Zech. 14:13] This parallels the armies of Gog and Magog who also fight against one another; “every man’s sword shall be against his brother.” [Ezek. 38:21] They are smitten with blindness, and with a plague. [14:12]

Paul & the man of sin

Paul said that as God, the man of sin sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, a parallel to the king of Babylon. [Isa. 14:14] He “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” [2 Thess. 2:3-4] This alludes to the little horn of Dan. 7, a parallel to the Assyrian (or Sennacherib) in Isa. 14. Paul wrote: “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” [2 Thess. 2:7-10]

The false teachers of 2 Peter 2

These people deny the Lord who bought them; [vs. 1] they lead many astray; [vs. 2] because of false prophets, the way of truth is evil spoken of; [vs. 2] they make merchandise of the saints; [vs. 3] compare with the armies of Gog & Magog, who seek to take a spoil. [Ezek. 38:12] They speak evil of dignities; [vs. 10] they are like “natural brute beasts,” [vs. 12] they speak evil of things they do not understand. [vs. 13] They have forsaken the right way; [vs. 15] they seek rewards like Balaam; [vs. 15] they have turned from the way of righteousness; [vs. 21] they are like clouds carried with a tempest; compare with Gog & Magog, who are “like a cloud covering the land.” [Ezek. 38:9]

The antichrist in the epistles of John

For John, the antichrist is not a single human individual; John refers to an antichrist spirit, one that denies that Jesus is the Christ, compare 2 Peter 2:1. John wrote, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” [1 John 2:22] The spirit of antichrist does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. John wrote: “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist,” [1 John 4:3] The prevalence of antichrist is an indication that we are in the last time. The present age is the “time, times and a half” of Daniel 7:25. There are many antichrists, John said: “even now are there many antichrists whereby we know that it is the last time” [1 John 2:18] John wrote: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” [2 John 1:7]

The first woe Revelation 9:1-11

In the first woe, locusts emerge from the smoke that comes from the bottomless pit. The locusts allude to the Israelites in the wilderness, after they came out of Egypt, who lacked the faith to enter the promised land. [Num. 13:33] The experience of the Israelites in the wilderness, in the New Testament, was for the church's example. [1 Cor. 10:1-11] The *bottomless pit* in Revelation 9:1 is the location of Satan's prison, [Rev. 20:1-3] from which he ascends. [Rev. 11:7]

Pagan superstitions about death, and Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, were introduced into the church in the early centuries AD, and merged with the teaching of the Apostles, by church fathers such as Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 220 AD). Later the idea of *infernal torment* of unbelievers was introduced, notably by Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 AD).

The sun, representing the gospel, is *darkened*, by the teachings about the soul that were imported from Greek philosophy, which obscured the truth of the gospel. The sun clothes the woman in heaven, who represents the church. [Rev. 12:1] Jesus spoke of the righteous who "*shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.*" [Matt. 13:43]

They are not real locusts, but *people* who spread a flawed doctrine about the fate of unbelievers. Five months, or 150 days, was the duration of the flood waters that covered the earth, which destroyed all those not saved in the ark of Noah. In the prophecy, only unbelievers are affected by the torment of the locusts. Their doctrine says that those who do not accept their religious beliefs will suffer unending infernal torment! Rev. 9:6, "*And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them,*" alludes to the doctrine of infernal torment of unbelievers, according to which the souls of men are immortal, so are unable to die.

The locusts are "*like unto horses prepared unto battle.*" [vs. 7] In scripture, people with no understanding are compared with horses. [Psa. 32:9]

Their *faces of men, and hair as the hair of women*, pictures people whose doctrine dishonours Christ. Paul wrote: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" [1 Cor. 11:14] Paul said the head of every man is Christ; and a man praying or prophesying with long hair dishonours Christ. [1 Cor. 11:3-4]

Lion's teeth [vs. 8] picture a very ferocious attitude towards unbelievers.

[2 Tim. 3:1-3]

Breastplates are associated with righteousness. [Eph. 6:14] Their breastplates refute the claim by some that the locusts of the prophecy represent demons; instead they show that the locusts represent mortal humans. *Why would demons need breastplates?* The locusts' breastplates of iron defend them from truth, and reason. Cruel hearts are hard to reach.

"And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." The wings of the locusts may represent their interpretations of prophecy. Horses and chariots rushing to battle would make a loud, clattering sound, as chariot wheels rolled over stony ground. Their controversies generate lots of noise!

"On their heads were as it were crowns like gold." Their *crowns like gold* suggest halos, shining circles above the heads of saints or medieval monarchs in religious paintings.

"And they had tails like unto scorpions." [vs. 10] Scorpions are mentioned in connection with chastisement and punishment in scripture. Solomon's son Rehoboam said to the people of Israel, "My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." [1 Kings 12:11]

Their *tails* represent "a prophet that teaches lies." Isaiah said, "the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail." [Isa. 9:15] The doctrine of the locusts distorts the gospel of Christ. Centuries of tradition and superstition have established the concept of unending infernal torment of unbelievers as biblical truth in the minds of many. Those views are not easily discarded.

Their king is *Abaddon*, which means destroyer, Job 26:6. These doctrines about the fate of unbelievers are common to both Muslims and Christians. It is the doctrine that "torments." The effect of the locust plague is that it tends to destroy the church, and obscures the gospel. It paints God as a cruel monster, a fiend. The name *Apollyon* probably alludes to *Apollo Parnopius*, the Greek god of plagues. (*Parnopius* means "grasshopper.") Apollo was also a pagan god of prophecy.

The second woe in Revelation 9:12-21

This prophecy focuses on antichrist at a personal level; many Christians need to overcome "the antichrist within." Even the apostle Peter was called

Satan by Jesus. Horses & horsemen parallel Joel 2, Ezek. 38, Zech. 12 & 14. They have breastplates of fire, brimstone, and hyacinth. Compare with Gog & Magog who are clothed with all sorts of armour. They have serpents for tails, symbolic of prophets who teach lies; compare 2 Peter 2:1. They have heads of lions; compare with “natural brute beasts” in 2 Peter 2:12. Lions’ heads signify carnal human nature; “beheaded” in Rev. 20:4 depicts conversion that follows repentance. Jeremiah wrote, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” [Jer. 17:9]

Gog and Magog in Revelation 20

John’s prophecy interprets Ezekiel 38. The hordes of Gog and Magog are deceived people who compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city; both figures represent the Church. They are people whose reign with Christ has ended; who correspond to the third of the stars who fall to the earth in Rev. 12, being drawn by the tail of the dragon.