

God's sword in prophecy

by Douglas E. Cox

In Scripture, fire and God's sword each represent the word of God. Jesus said his word will not pass away.

Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, & Luke 21:33

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

In the garden of Eden the tree of life was guarded by Cherubims brandishing a flaming sword, when Adam and Eve were expelled.

Genesis 3:22-24

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Like the flaming sword that restricted man's access to Eden and the tree of life, the holy scriptures control access to the Gospel, the knowledge of God, and salvation.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Lord is Israel's shield, and sword.

Deuteronomy 33:29

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

God's sword is a metaphor. Swords represent words that wound, such as strong reproof, or judgment. In the following verses, words intended to cause harm are called "swords."

Psalm 55:21

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

Psalm 59:7

Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?

Isaiah referred to his prophetic message as a sharp sword.

Isaiah 49:2

And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

Paul said the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:16-18

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Who is threatened with God's sword?

All flesh

Isaiah said God will plead with all flesh, with fire and with his sword, which is his Word.

Isaiah 66:16

For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many.

Jeremiah also spoke of God's sword as universal:

Jeremiah 12:12

The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the Lord shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.

God's enemies

Deuteronomy 32:41-42

If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

God's sword falls on Idumea. It is "bathed in heaven."

Isaiah 34:5-6

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Those who use swords against others

Revelation 13:10

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

This saying refers to two kinds of sword, and two kinds of death; the first is literal, the last is spiritual and metaphorical. The first sword is also symbolic of deadly weapons of all kinds.

Similarly when Jesus said, "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," the first sword is a literal one; the last is spiritual and metaphorical.

Matthew 26:51-52

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

In the judgment men will no longer lift up swords against each other, and war will be abolished.

Micah 4:1-4

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and

rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

Israel

Ezekiel said a sword is drawn out after the survivors of Israel.

Ezekiel 5:12

A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

Ezekiel 21:3

And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

The hordes of Gog and Magog

The sword called for against the hosts of Gog and Magog is God's Word, which they misinterpret. Mountains are symbolic of God's promises and prophecies.

Ezekiel 38:21

And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother.

God's shepherd

Zechariah 13:7

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Jesus applied this scripture to himself. He is the Shepherd of the saints.

Mark 14:27

And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

The remnant in Rev. 19:21

In Revelation, John described a sword going forth from Christ's mouth:

Revelation 1:16

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Jesus threatened the false teachers in the church at Pergamos with the sword of his mouth.

Revelation 2:16

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Christ will smite the nations with the sword of his mouth.

Revelation 19:15

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The following verse refers to the *remnant*, which is a word that often applies to the saints.

Revelation 19:21

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.