

The parable of the locust of the prophet Joel

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Introduction

It is absurd the number of sermons, articles, books and exhibitions that describe the vision of the locusts, announced by the prophet Joel, as legions of demons that attack against the patrimony of non-tithe believers.

A simple search on the Internet returns countless articles and books [1] stating categorically that locusts are legions of demons that act directly on people's assets, destroying houses, cars, clothes, groceries, salaries, etc. That these demons cause disasters in cars, airplanes, sink ships, tear down buildings, kill people, destroy nations, families, churches, weddings and homes.

That is right, what does the parable of the locusts announced by Joel, represent? Are locusts' demons?

The parable

“What remained of the caterpillar, the locust ate it, what remained of the locust, the locust ate it and what remained of the locust, the aphid ate it.” (Joel 1: 4)

Before analyzing the text, I want to reassure the reader that the figures of the caterpillar, the grasshopper, the locust and the aphid, which make up the parable of the prophet Joel, are not demons. Any approach, in this sense, aims to deceive the unwary by making the layman and neophyte an easy prey for unscrupulous men or, at the very least, ignorant of biblical truth.

The parable that the prophet Joel announced had a specific audience: the Jews, before the dispersion. When Joel announces the message of God to the elders and inhabitants of the land, he did not aim at humanity, as if he were talking about the planet earth, before, the message was aimed at the Jewish leaders and the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, that is, the Jews. (Joel 1: 2)

To broaden the scope of prophecy, to speak to the Gentiles or even to speak to the members of the Church of Christ, is to twist the message of the prophet Joel, because the target audience of the message are the Israelites, as can be seen from the last sentence from the verse: ‘... or, in your fathers’ days’, a way of referring to the previous generations of the children of Israel.

“Hear this, you elders and listen, all the inhabitants of the earth: Did this happen in your days or, in your parents’ days?” (Joel 1: 2)

The Israelites should relay the message of the prophet Joel, about the locusts, to their children and the children to their children, so that the message would reach future generations. (Joel 1: 3)

Moreover, what are the locusts in the parable? The answer is found in verse 6: a powerful and numerous foreign nation!

“For a powerful nation without number has risen against my land; their teeth are dandelions and they have the jaws of an old lion.” (Joel 1: 6)

The prophet Jeremiah, too, alluded to the foreign invasion, using other figures:

“Because I will visit you with four kinds of evils, says the Lord: with a sword to kill and with dogs, to drag them, with birds of the sky and with animals of the earth, to devour and destroy them.” (Jer 15: 3)

The prophet Moses already predicted the invasion of foreign nations:

“The LORD will raise up against you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth, which flies like an eagle, a nation whose language you will not understand; Fierce-faced nation, which will not respect the old man’s face, nor pity the young man; And he will eat the fruit of your animals and the fruit of your land, until you are destroyed; and he will not leave you grain, must, nor oil, nor the calves of your cows, nor of your sheep, until he has consumed you. ” (Deut 28: 49-51)

The prophet Joel makes the same prediction, however, composes a parable to facilitate the announcement of future events, from parents to children. How could anyone forget a parable that features locusts, which devour everything in front of him or her?

The Chaldean invasion is compared to the destruction caused by locusts, as they would invade the cities of Israel, which resembled Eden, of which, after the Babylonian invasion, only desolation would remain.

“Day of darkness and darkness; day of clouds and dense darkness, like the morning spread over the mountains; great and powerful people, which there never was, since ancient times, nor after them for years to come, from generation to generation. Before him, a fire consumes and behind him a blazing flame; the land before him is like the Garden of Eden, but behind him a desolate desert; yes, nothing will escape you. ” (Joel 2: 2-3)

The parable of the locusts served the purpose of illustrating the predicted by Moses, because the nation that would invade Israel would devour everything that the animals and the field produced. There would be no grain, must, oil or animal offspring, due to foreign invasion.

The vine and the fig tree are figures that refer to the two houses of the sons of Jacob: Judah and Israel, so that the prophecy and parable represent, only and exclusively, the children of Israel. To put men, or Gentiles, or the church, as objects of the locusts' action, is a fantasy of the head of an ill-informed person.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah compared the stranger nations to wild beasts of the field, instead of using the figure of the locusts:

“You, all the animals of the field, all the animals of the woods, come and eat” (Is 56: 9);

“Therefore, a lion from the forest struck them, a wolf from the deserts will plague them; a leopard watches over its cities; whoever comes out of them will be shattered; because their transgressions increase, their apostasies multiplied.” (Jer 5: 6)

The damage described by the action of locusts, refers to the great evils resulting from the war with foreign nations and not to legions of demons. It is an unprecedented lie to say that each type of grasshopper represents legions of demons,

who act on the lives of men.

Anyone who says that the grasshopper is a kind of legion of demons, who acts in the life of those who do not obey God, is a liar.

God cursed the earth because of Adam's disobedience and, finally, determined that man would eat the sweat on his face (Gen. 3: 17-19). That divine determination falls on the just and the unjust! Another curse that fell on humanity, Jews and Gentiles, was death, by which all men are alienated from the glory of God.

Nevertheless, despite the curse resulting from Adam's offense, luck is cast on the lap of all his descendants, without distinction of righteous and unjust "because time and chance affect everyone, indistinctly" (Prov 9:11). Everyone who works in this life has the right to eat, because the law of sowing is the same for everyone: just and unjust.

To say that the cutter locust acts on the life of infidels is a fallacy. To say that part of what an infidel gains from his work, belongs to demons is scabrous, because the land and its fullness belong to the Lord.

Using Isaiah 55, verse 2, to talk about finances, testifies against the truth of Scripture. When Isaiah asks the people, about spending what they earned with work on what is not bread, he was not talking about cigarettes, drinks, entertainment, medicine, etc. God was rebuking the people for spending what he acquired on sacrifices, offerings that did not please God (Isa 1: 11-12; Isa 66: 3).

What God is pleased with, and which truly satisfies man, is that he will listen to the word of God, because, 'to answer is better than to sacrifice'. (1 Sam 15:22) However, the children of Israel were given to sacrifices, that is, they spent the fruit of labor on what they could not satisfy!

“But Samuel said, ‘Does the LORD have so much pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the word of the LORD? Behold, obeying is better than sacrificing, and serving it better than sheep fat. ’ (1 Sam 15:22)

It is absurd to say that the destructive locust refers to natural calamities, disasters, bad weather, etc., but to apply John 10, verse 10, in which the thief came, if not to kill, steal and destroy, as being the action of the devil , it is bad reading with ulterior motives. To say that the legion of demons, which the destructive locust represents, are murderers who do what John 10 says, verse 10; it’s nefarious.

The thief Jesus said came to kill, steal and destroy does not refer to the devil, but to the leaders of Israel, who came before Him. Israel’s leaders were thieves and robbers, for they acted before Jesus came, because of what the prophets foretold:

“Is this house, which is called by my name, a cave of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, myself, have seen this, saith the LORD. ” (Jer 7:11);

“All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.” (John 10: 8);

“The thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10);

“And he said to them, it is written, my house will be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves”. (Mt 21:13)

The conclusion of the speakers who use the parable of the locusts is even stranger when it proposes a way to overcome the locusts: to be a tither!

Whereas the locusts represented the Chaldean nation, which

invaded Jerusalem in 586 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar II – Babylonian emperor – invaded the Kingdom of Judah, destroying both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, and deporting Jews to Mesopotamia, how to overcome these ‘locusts’, if the Chaldeans are extinct?

In addition to saying that the locusts in Joel’s parable are various kinds of demons, many speakers say that the only way to beat them is through faithfulness in tithes and offerings! Untruth!

The children of Israel suffered the invasion of foreign nations, because they did not rest the land, according to the word of the Lord, and not because they were not tithers, as we read:

“And I will scatter you among the nations, and draw the sword behind you; your land will be desolate and your cities will be deserted. Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths, all the days of its desolation and you will be in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and play on its Saturdays. He will rest every day of desolation, because he did not rest on your Sabbaths, when habitable in it” (Lev 26:33 -35).

It is because of not having rested the earth that God established Daniel’s 70 weeks, as recorded in the Book of Chronicles:

“That the word of the LORD might be fulfilled by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land is pleased with its Sabbaths; all the days of desolation rested, until the seventy years were fulfilled.” (2 Chr 36:21).

Malachi’s complaint about bringing all tithes to the treasury is long after the Babylonian deportation (Mal 3:10). The prophet Malachi was a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah, in the period after exile, when the walls of Jerusalem were already rebuilt, around 445 BC.

The Bible is clear:

“As a bird wanders, as a swallow does flying, so the curse without a cause will not come”. (Pr 26: 2)

Was the curse befallen the children of Israel by the action of demons? Not! Demons are cursed by nature, but they are not the cause of curses on humanity. The cause of the curse that befell the children of Israel was disobedience to the precepts of God, delivered by Moses. The Babylonian invasion only occurred because of Israel's disobedience and not by the action of demons!

To the children of Israel, God proposed blessings and curses and the motto for receiving them was, respectively, obedience and disobedience. The cause of the curse was disobedience, because without a curse there will be no curse.

In addition, who instituted the curse? God Himself!

“It will be, however, that if you do not listen to the voice of the Lord your God. so as not to be careful to keep all his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today, then all these curses will come upon you and will overtake you: Damn you in the city and damn you in the country. Damn your basket and your kneader. Cursed is the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land and the offspring of your cows and your sheep. Cursed you will be when you enter and cursed you will be when you leave. The LORD will send a curse on you; confusion and defeat in everything you put your hand to do; until you are destroyed and until you suddenly perish, because of the wickedness of your works, for which you left me. ” (Deut 28: 15-20)

It is certain that, without cause, there is no curse!

Financial contribution to a given institution does not free anyone from demons, curses, evil eye, etc. Such messages are deceitful to link the simple ones. It is not because you do

not have knowledge that you has not be penalized:

“The warned see evil and hide; but the simple ones pass and suffer the penalty.” (Pr 27:12)

Claiming ignorance before God does not free anyone from the consequences. Hence the need for man to be attentive to the voice of God.

However, there are those who hear the word of God, however, decide to walk according to what their deceitful heart proposes, thinking that they will have peace. Great mistake, because the Lord’s blessing is for those who listen to his word.

“And it may happen that, when someone hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart, saying: I will have peace, even if I walk according to the opinion of my heart; to add to the thirst, the drinking.” (Deut 29:19)

The apostle Paul to the Corinthians expresses the lesson that the believer in Christ Jesus draws from what was saying the parable of the locusts:

“And these things were done to us in figure, lest we covet bad things, as they did.” (1 Cor 10: 6).

For those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, there is no longer condemnation, and what we read from the children of Israel is so that we do not make the same mistakes. If there is no condemnation for someone who is a new creature, it is certain that he is hiding with Christ in God; therefore, he does not have to be afraid of demons, curses, etc.

Whoever is in Christ the evil one does not touch, for he is hiding with Christ, in God?

“We know that everyone who is born of God does not sin; but what is generated of God keeps itself, and the evil one does not touch it. ” (1 John 5:18);

“Because you are already dead and your life is hidden with Christ, in God.” (Col 3: 3)

All believers in Christ has been blesseding with all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1: 3), so there is no need to fear the action of demons.

The only curse that can reach a believer is to let himself be deceived by men who, with cunning, deceitfully deceive themselves, moving away from the truth of the gospel (Eph 4:14; 2 Pet 2: 20-21),

Therefore, in relation to all things, he is more than a winner, and no creature can separate him from the love of God, who is in Christ.

“But in all these things, we are more than winners, by the one who loved us. Because I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor the present, nor the future, nor the height, nor the depth, nor any other creature, can separate us of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8: 37-39)