

“Downgrading For Armageddon”

(Does the Bible suggest a weapons downgrade in the last days?)

One of the issues that has puzzled Bible students over the years, is why end times battles are described in terms of ancient warfare. Ezekiel, for instance, describes the invading armies of Magog as being, *“horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords”* (38:4). John, similarly, described the military forces at Armageddon as, *“horses and... those who sit on them,”* (Rev.19:18). Were these descriptions the best that the authors could do, given the day and age they lived in? Or were they technically correct? Will last day battles be fought by men on horseback with swords?

As one who believes implicitly in what’s called, ‘the plenary-verbal inspiration of Scripture,’ (that every word in the Bible is inspired), I find the latter view most attractive. But if so, that raises a question: *will there be a significant weapons downgrade in the last days?* Will new weapons will be traded for older, more conventional armaments? And if so, why? Why would governments of the day secure the latest that their borrowed cash can buy, and then revert to traditional forms of combat technology in the future? There are a number of possible scenarios which may explain this. We will explore each one briefly to show that a weapons downgrade is a possibility that should not be ruled out of Bible interpretation. Let us begin with...

Disturbances in Creation

We’ve all become more aware of solar activity over the last few years. Sunspots and solar flares are being brought increasingly to our attention as we approach a new cycle of ‘space weather’ in 2013. NASA’s Solar Dynamics Observatory, orbiting the earth on a five year mission studies the effects of solar activity on our planet, showing that this is a very hot topic for scientific minds. When solar storms rage, the effects on the earth can be dramatic – especially in terms of technology. In 1859, the most severe solar storm ever recorded (called, The Carrington Event) disrupted telegraph systems in North America and Europe between 28th August and 2nd September of that year. Powerful electrical currents snapped wires, caused fires, and electrocuted operators, while auroras appeared in places where they are not usually seen. More recently, in March 1989 a solar radiation storm knocked out the Quebec power grid, causing a blackout to over six million Canadians. *“As well as causing blackouts, solar storms can fry satellite electronics, which we rely on more and more for communication, navigation and weather forecasts.”*¹ According to one source, the main effects of a solar superstorm would include:

- Radio and TV blackouts
- Mobile phone tower failures

- Astronauts and satellites being at risk
- Power grid failures
- Networks being offline
- Phantom currents in power lines
- Hardware damage
- Banking systems being down
- Exploding gas lines

*“Travel would come to a standstill as planes would be unable to navigate and power grid failures could leave people in the dark for weeks or even months.”² Put simply, a significant solar event³ could knock us back to the days of historical weapons with little difficulty. Is it just a coincidence that the Bible records unprecedented solar activity taking place in the Tribulation, when some of these wars are predicted? *“Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.”* (Rev.16:8; see also 8:12). Disturbances in creation are a possible cause for such a weapons downgrade. Then consider...*

‘The Electric Blanket’

Similar to the effects of a solarstorm are the man-made weapons generating electromagnetic pulses. *“During the Persian Gulf War, General Schwarzkopf asked President Bush for permission to explode an electromagnetic pulse device high in the heavens. Such a device would have instantly cut off all communication between Saddam Hussein and his troops....Such a device, known to military strategists as an ‘electric blanket,’ sounds like something out of a James Bond movie, but it could easily be used against North America. A satellite carrying a nuclear warhead crossing over America at the height of 450 kilometres (279 miles) would explode, sending out an electronic pulse of enormous energy harmless to humans but fatal to our delicate electronic machines, which are designed to operate with miniscule amounts of energy. In one billionth of a second, all communication would be cut off. Transmissions to cars and trucks and machinery would grind to a halt as their electrical systems fried; radio and television stations would blink off the air. Planes would crash, missile systems would fail, the President and Commander-in-Chief would be unable to communicate with his military forces. Everything that relied on electricity would stop functioning. Military strategists have predicted that in the event of a nuclear war, this is how the enemy will terminate all electrical transmission.”⁴ According to one national paper, *“The U.S. used a similar strategy, with more primitive weapons, in the Kosovo war.... Cruise missiles showered miles of thin carbon fibres over electrical facilities, creating massive short circuits that shut down power supplies.”⁵ If such weapons were used extensively – or even just in key locations – those armies would be reduced to the type of armaments spoken of in Scripture. Another possible explanation ⁶.**

Please note: we are not attempting to scare our readers by mentioning such things as the above - just trying to answer the question, 'is a weapons downgrade in the last days a possibility?' I believe we have already shown it is. But let us go on and see one other factor which may have a bearing on this subject.

Terrain Requirements

It is no great revelation that the Middle East (where the Bible's battles will be fought) includes deserts and mountainous terrain. Such landscapes pose their own challenges for any army, as the allied forces in Gulf War I found out. Bulloch and Morris explained this in their book, 'Saddam's War': *"Other difficulties surfaced as more forces moved into the Arabian peninsula. Most stemmed from the fact that since the end of the Second World War in 1945, United States planning had been based on the idea of fighting in Europe. There, huge numbers of troops and vast amounts of equipment could be stored ready for any emergency, so that the shortcomings of the air- and sea-lift capacities encountered in Operation Desert Shield would not have mattered. Other problems were due to the equipment being used. Designed primarily as static defences to stop an attack by Warsaw Pact forces from eastern Europe in a developed environment, possibly in winter, the army's heavy tanks and guns were not ideal for the kind of offensive operations which might have to be launched. There was little special equipment for desert conditions, so helicopters had to have make-shift filters to avoid sand, and even then to be given quick services every couple of hours; computers often had to be wrapped in cold cloths to maintain performance, and specially adapted and air-conditioned hangars had to be erected for immediate-readiness strike aircraft...[Tanks] had their own problems of overheating in desert conditions, and were used mainly as dug in, hull-down defence positions during the Gulf War."*⁷ It is stating the obvious to say that ancient weapons know no such problems! In fact, some are at a distinct advantage – especially in mountains. This was the case in Afghanistan: *"The role of the mule and horse in Afghan fighting was recognised by the CIA in the 1980s when the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan...the CIA also supplied the Mujahidin with thousands of mules, imported from Tennessee...Afghan stallions are the most highly prized beasts. But for the poorer soldiers the slow-moving donkey is hardier, more able to cross rivers and can transport up to two artillery shells per animal across lines to supply soldiers cut off without ammunition... The sight of the rugged Afghan horsemen leading cavalry charges across the bleak Central Asian steppes is legendary."*⁸ Similar testimonies abound in other areas, including Pakistan: *"The mules are a critical link for operations in the mountainous northern regions and Kashmir, where they also serve at the glacial battle-front of Siachen. A mule can carry up to 160 lb and walk 18 miles without resting."*⁹ This strikes me as being another possible explanation for a weapons downgrade in the last days.

Conclusion

There are, of course, many other factors not listed here which could be taken into consideration. For instance, Cyber warfare or problems with 'peak oil' could make their

own contributions to the end times battle-field. Deliberate choice of religious weapons, like the sword, could make another. But we have already said enough to show the plausibility for a weapons downgrade in the last days to fulfil Bible prophecy to the very letter. Let no one doubt God's Word as being true because it uses such terminology. As someone has said, *'The Bible is not only up to date – it's ahead of time'*. When all is said and done, God's Word is sharper than any two edged-sword in the hands of Israel's enemies (Heb.4:12). We would urge every one of our readers to read it, honour it, and put their trust in its message today.

- Jon Ikin, 2013

¹ *New Scientist*, 4 February 2012, p14

² *How It Works*, Issue 25, p67

³ "Solar physicists classify flares as B, C, M, or X...the strongest X-class flare in more than four years [taking place] on February 14, 2011."³ - *Astronomy*, May 2011, p28

⁴ *"Beginning of the End"*, John Hagee, p90-91

⁵ *Daily Mail*, 20 January 2003, *"The Lightning Bomb"*

⁶ It is worth considering that such localised Electro Magnetic Pulses (EMP) would allow other places in the world to continue their technological advancement – something that other Scriptures could be held to teach (EG Daniel 12:4; Rev.13:16-18).

⁷ *Saddam's War* by John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, p.171-172

⁸ *The Times*, 9 November, 2001, *"Low-Tech Mule Essential Weapon In Hi-Tech War."*

⁹ *The Daily Telegraph* 7 November 2005, *"Mules Provide Constant Hope For Villages Cut Off By Quake."*