Frank W. Nelte

REVELATION 9:7

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

And THE SHAPES of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. (Revelation 9:7 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

Some people try to find a resemblance between the locust and the horse in this verse. But that is not at all what this is intended to convey to us.

THE MISTRANSLATION

The Greek expression translated as "the shapes" in this verse is "ta homoiomata", the plural of the word "homoioma".

The Greek word HOMOIOMA: This word is used six times in the New Testament, and it is used TO EXPRESS ABSTRACT CONCEPTS, rather than things that have a literal shape. Where the Greek word "eikon" refers to "an image" which actually looks like what it is supposed to represent, the Greek word "homoioma" refers to an abstract conceptual representation of something. This word "homoioma" is never used to refer to any one specific person. In the New Testament this word is used to express:

- THE CONCEPT of "the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7)

- THE CONCEPT of "the likeness of his death" (Romans 6:5)

- THE CONCEPT of "the similitude of Adam's transgression" (Romans 5:14)

- THE CONCEPT of "the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3)

- "THE SHAPES (or likenesses) of the locusts like unto horses" (Revelation 9:7).

By comparing locusts to horses Revelation 9:7 is also dealing in abstract terms. It is THE CONCEPT of locusts being like horses that Revelation 9:7 presents to us, and not the actual shape of horses! The comparison is NOT to "what horses look like", but to "a cavalry brigade arrayed in battle formation". The people being spoken about in Revelation 9:7 don't in any way literally look like locusts OR like horses.

"Locusts" is in this passage only a symbolical term, used to represent a certain military power. And the activities of that military power are conceptually compared to a cavalry brigade.

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG TRANSLATION

The translators clearly did not understand the intended meaning of what they were translating. That is why they all translated "homoioma" here as: "shapes, likeness, appearance, looked like", etc. But "the locusts" certainly did not "look like" horses.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

> And CONCEPTUALLY (or IN PRINCIPLE) the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. (Revelation 9:7)

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

Taken in its entirety this verse obviously refers to something that looks neither like locusts nor like horses. If the faces are "like the faces of men", then it is pointless trying to draw comparisons (as some commentators have done) between the heads of locusts and the heads of horses. The mix of locusts and horses and men that is presented in this verse does not look like any image (i.e. eikon) of anything that is known to us. And that is why they are not referred to as "eikon's" but as "homoioma's".

This verse gives us a symbolical representation of that army, but without giving us any clear indications as to what they will actually look like.

IN SUMMARY

This description here in Revelation chapter 9 is intended to be understood as being symbolical. And God does not intend for us to take this description literally. See also the articles on Romans 1:23 and on Genesis 1:26.

Frank W. Nelte