

A Discourse (memra)

*Concerning the end, final consummation, judgment, and punishment;
on the people of Gog and Magog; and about the Antichrist.*

Saint Ephrem

Translated from the text in Edmund Beck, ed., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III* (CSCO 320; Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1972), 60-71; see also 79-94 for Beck's translation. The text is based on two manuscripts: (1) Codex Vaticanus Sir. 566, and (2) Codex Dublinensis (Trinity College) B 5.19. Editio princeps: Thomas Josephus Lamy, ed., *Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones* (4 vols.; Mechliniae: H. Dessain, 1882-1902), 3:187-212.

O SON who by His grace humbled Himself
And who was pleased to make Himself a human being;
Who willingly experienced death
At the top of the wood(en cross) on Golgotha:
Grant me, my Lord, (the ability) to speak about
The struggles which will take place in the created order;
For peoples will fall upon each other
And nations will destroy one another,
Evil will fortify itself on the earth
And iniquity will increase throughout creation.
Righteous rulers will perish
And lawless ones will arise on the earth.
Then a judgment will arise,
And a weighing on the scale for those humans:
The side (containing) the wicked will sink down;
And that for the elect will rise up.
Then spiritual entities will go forth
And destroy the ends of the created order.
It will happen, my brethren, just as it is written:
A plague in a number of places,
And a famine will occur in the created order;
Terrible struggles and conflicts.
Dust will be saturated with blood;
The created order will be polluted from iniquity.
Regions will be ravaged,
And cities will be consumed by Sheol;
Nation will rise up against nation
And kingdom against kingdom.
Lawlessness will be sovereign on earth
And the defiled will pursue after the saints.
People will openly apostatize
And augment the left side;
The righteous ones will suffer indignities
From those who belong to the side of the sinners.
It is due to this, my beloved ones
That the final age has arrived.
Lo, we have observed the signs,
Just as Christ inscribed for us:
Rulers will arise, one against another;

There will be suffering on earth;
Nations will contend with nations
And armies will fall upon one another.
When the Nile, the river of Egypt,
Overflows (and) floods part of the land,
Certain regions will prepare themselves
Against the country of the Romans.
Nations will contend with nations,
And a kingdom with a kingdom.
They will depart, moving from one land to another;
Those Romans who are put to flight.
And the Assyrians will gain authority
Over the region of the Romans.
The fruit of their loins they will subjugate
And they will also ravish their women;
They will be sowing and also reaping
They will plant fruits in the ground;
They will acquire vast riches
And hoard treasures underground.
But just as the Nile, the river of Egypt
Recedes again from what it flooded;
So too will Assyria recede
Back to their own country.
For the Romans once again will be found
In their ancestral land (i.e., the Assyrians').
Then evil will increase on the earth
And the land will be defiled with fornication.
The cry of the persecuted and the wretched
Will rise up to heaven.
Then a judgment will arise
To cast them out of the land.
The holy covenant will complain;
A cry will rise up to heaven.
A people will emerge from the wilderness,
The progeny of Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah;
Who hold fast to the covenant with Abraham,
The husband of Sarah and Hagar.
Set in motion, he (Ishmael) comes in the name of the ram,
The herald of the Son of Destruction.
A sign will appear in the heavens,
The one our Lord spoke of in His gospel:
Luminaries will shine among the stars
And the light of His face will gleam.
Rulers will quake and tremble;
The forces arrayed by them will fall.
The peoples of the earth will be terrified
When they behold the sign set in the heavens.
They will prepare for battle and come together,
All peoples and nationalities.
They will wage war there
And the ground will be drenched with blood.
The nations will suffer defeat there,
A marauding nation will prevail.
The marauders will fly over the landscape,
Across plains and over the peaks of mountains.

They will take women and children as captives,
 Also men both elderly and young.
 The best of the males will be destroyed;
 The most desirable women will be removed.
 With strong spears and lances
 They will impale elderly men.
 They will separate a son from his father,
 A daughter from the side of her mother;
 They will separate a brother from his brethren,
 A sister from the side of her sisters.
 They will slay the bridegroom in his bedroom
 And expel the bride from her bridal chamber.
 They will take a wife away from her husband,
 And slaughter her as if she were a sheep;
 They will cast an infant away from its mother
 And drive the mother into captivity.
 The child will scream out on the ground:
 Its mother hears, but what can she do?
 For it will be trampled by the hooves
 Of horses, camels, and infantry!
 She (tries to) turn toward it, (but) they will not allow her;
 The child remains within the wild (?).
 They separate children from their mother
 As the soul (is separated) from the body.
 She watches while they divide them up,
 Her beloved ones (taken from) the embrace of her bosom;
 Two of her children to two (different) masters,
 Her own self to still another master;
 She has been allocated, and her children with her;
 For they are now slaves to robbers.
 Her children cry out with laments,
 Their eyes burning with tears;
 She turns toward her beloved ones,
 The milk flowing forth from her breast:
 'Farewell, my beloved ones!
 May God go with you!
 The one who accompanied Joseph
 In (his) servitude among foreigners:
 May He accompany you, my children
 Into the captivity where you are going!
 'Farewell, our mother!
 May God go with you!
 The one who accompanied Sarah
 Into the palace of Abimelech the Gadarite:
 May He accompany your own self
 Until the Day of Resurrection!
 The son will stand and watch while his father
 Is sold into slavery.
 The eyes of both of them will burn with tears
 While they groan, one in front of the other.
 A brother will watch while his brother
 Is killed and cast down on the ground,
 Whereas he they drive off into captivity
 In order to serve among foreigners as a slave.
 They even put to death mothers

Who are holding their children to their breasts.
Bitter is the sound of the infants
Who are groaning to satisfy their desire (for milk).
They will prepare roads in the mountains,
Highways in the middle of the plains;
They will maraud until the very ends of the created order.
They will establish rule over the urban centers.
The provinces will suffer destruction,
And they will multiply corpses on the earth.
All peoples will be brought low
Before the marauder nation.
And once the peoples have endured much on earth
And hope that now peace has arrived,
They (the Ishmaelites) start exacting tribute
And everyone will be fearful of them.
Lawlessness will intensify on the earth
And even obscure the clouds;
Wickedness will enclose the created order
And waft up like smoke to the heavens.
Then since wickedness will be rampant upon the earth,
The Lord's wrath will then stir up
Kings and mighty armies.
For when He seeks to expunge it from earth,
He sends out humans against humans
To annihilate one another.
Truly at that time He will summon
The kings and mighty armies
Who are behind those gates
Which Alexander fashioned.
Many rulers and peoples
Remain behind the gates.
They look toward heaven
And call on the name of God,
That the Lord send His sign
From within His heaven of glory
And the Divine Voice
Summon them who are by those gates;
So that they suddenly break down and collapse
At the command of the Divinity.
Numerous armies issue forth,
As many as the stars which cannot be counted.
As multitudinous as the sand by the sea,
And exceeding (the number of) the stars in the sky.
A full span was consumed
From the lower crossbar;
And from the upper crossbar
Another full span was consumed
On account of the great quantity of their sharp spears
With which they lacerated it. They issued forth,
Moving, spilling forth from there;
Kings and large armies
And every people and language group
Emerging from (behind) those gates.
Gog and Magog and Nūl and Agag,
Kings and mighty armies!

Togarmah and Ashkenaz and Daypar,
 Pūlayē with Lūbayē.
 Amzartayē and Garmēdō',
 Talab with helmet-covered heads,
 Azmurtayē and Kūshayē,
 Hunayē and Parzayē,
 Dīqlayē and Tūbalayē,
 Mūshkayē with Kūshayē.
 Allied to and coming with them
 Were both the Medes and the Persians,
 Armenians and Turks
 And Namrūhayē and Mūshhayē;
 The descendants of Ke'wan and Serug;
 The progeny of Yaqtan and the Mahūnayē;
 Numerous armies and nations
 Whose number cannot be calculated.
 They will burst forth and flood the earth,
 Shaking the walls of the created order.
 A dust cloud will rise up over the earth,
 Obscuring the sun above
 And covering creation
 With clouds and dark fogs,
 In accordance with what Ezekiel prophesied,
 The son of Buzi in his prophecy.
 For when the Huns come forth
 To wage war and to do battle,
 They will take hold of pregnant women
 And heap fire on top of them;
 They will come closer and mutter incantations over them,
 While roasting their children inside them!
 Splitting them open, they extract their fetuses
 When they are finished cooking inside of them.
 They draw near: then place them in basins,
 And pour water over them
 And dissolve their corpses there
 In those enchanted waters.
 They immediately take their swords
 And their bows with their spears
 And dip them in those waters
 For their arrows and their weapons.
 Every weapon to which are applied
 Those magical potions
 Appears as if there are hundreds, even thousands
 Of cavalymen who wield them.
 Moreover those hundreds of horsemen
 Who set out (and) traverse the whole of the earth
 Appear as if they are accompanied
 By six thousand myriads.
 If one of them should fall off during battle
 While engaging in the fight,
 Wherever he extends his hand
 Suddenly a knife emerges!
 They eat the flesh of children
 And also drink the blood of women.
 Clothed in tanned skins,

They mount the winds and tempests;
 And rapidly, in the blink of an eye,
 They lay waste to cities,
 Topple their walls to the ground,
 And destroy the strong citadels.
 Moving quickly, they bind the swift
 And slaughter the vigorous men.
 They are quicker in motion
 Than winds and tempests.
 Whenever news of them is heard on earth (to wit)
 'The Huns have set out (and) are coming!'
 They blanket the whole of creation.
 Because they are sorcerers,
 They fly between heaven and earth.
 Their chariots are like the winds,
 And their swords and their lances
 Are like terrifying bolts of lightning.
 Holding straps in their hands
 And two or three horses,
 Each one of them leads with him
 Some fifty or sixty men,
 Traveling behind and in front of him
 Like winds and tempests.
 The sound of the battle-cry of just one of them
 Is like the roaring of lions.
 Indeed dread of the Huns
 Will overpower the entire earth;
 They will cover the whole earth
 Like the waters during the days of Noah,
 And they will overwhelm the edges of the created order:
 There is no one who can withstand them.
 These are the 'numerous peoples'
 About whom Ezekiel spoke
 Who will cover the whole earth
 As if they were clouds.
 'Fish will shudder before them,
 (As will) the birds of the sky
 And wild beasts and vermin of the earth
 And every species in creation;
 High mountains will be thrust down
 And fortified towers will collapse,
 Even the walls of the cities.'
 On the earth will be a wasteland.
 For Ezekiel has prophesied
 That it will come to pass in the End of Days:
 They will burst out (and) come up from the land
 And cover the created order;
 Gog and Magog will prepare itself
 And arrive at the 'hill country of Israel.'
 Between the sea and Jerusalem
 He will place his encampment.
 Riders will fly off, descending
 Upon Egypt and opposite India;
 Leading away so many captives they cannot be numbered.
 People and riches,

Cattle and property
Which have now become his prey.
Then Righteousness will summon
Michael, the one who is leader of the host,
To come down (and) destroy his encampment
Just as (he destroyed) the encampment of Sennacherib.
The angel, receiving the command, will draw
The terrible and powerful sword,
And departing, he will destroy his force
In the twinkling of an eye!
Righteousness will pick up and hurl
Stones of fire upon the encampment.
The slain on the ground will be as numerous
As the (particles of) sand which cannot be counted;
People and pack-animals will perish,
The entire encampment will be consumed.
The blaze will extend
Unto the sea and to the islands.
The bow will swerve from the hands
Of Gog, the wicked ruler;
Also his arrows (will drop) from his left hand:
His entire encampment will be consumed.
The inhabitants of Judaea will go out
And loot his whole encampment.
They will collect and pick up armament:
Lances, arrows, and bows.
For seven years within a fire
They will burn them, as it is written:
'They will not need to gather
Wood from the field or thickets.'
Seven years they will throw in the fire
Shields and clubs,
Arrows, spears, and bows.
They will prove sufficient for fueling the fire for seven years.
Then the Lord will bring in His peace,
Which attests His glorification among the heavens.
And once more the empire of the Romans
Will spring up and flourish in its place.
It will possess the earth and its extremities,
And no one will exist who opposes it.
And when iniquity has become rife on earth
And has polluted the whole of creation,
Then a judgment will arise
Which will entirely obliterate the people.
The Son of Destruction, the Evil One,
Will emerge and come upon the earth.
A deceiver of humanity,
An instigator of trouble over the whole earth.
On the day when he comes to it,
(when) the Son of Destruction arrives on earth,
The created order will be thrown into commotion,
And terror will engulf the earth.
The sun will become dark in its place,
And the stars will fall from the height;
All the luminaries will be quenched,

Darkness will cover the created order.
 The earth with its inhabitants will shake,
 And mountains and heights will quake;
 Springs and fountains will dry up,
 And the waves in the sea will abate
 And the fish therein grow still.
 Rulers will stop rendering judgment
 And priests will tremble in the sanctuary
 And military power will collapse.
 Confusion will be on the earth
 And all human powers will be paralyzed,
 For the Evil One will be ready.
 He will come to and enter Jerusalem.
 He will rebuild and establish himself in Zion,
 And will make himself to be God
 And enter into the sanctuary to take a seat
 In accordance with what the Apostle wrote to us.
 The Jews will take pride in him;
 They will prepare themselves and come to him.
 And he moreover will blaspheme when he says:
 'I, even I, am the Father and the Son!
 The First and the Last!
 There is no other god apart from me!'

But at that time ten thousand Jews will denounce him:
 They will answer him in truth:
 'You are a deceiver for (all) creatures!
 For the one whom our ancestors restrained
 At the top of the wood(en cross) on Golgotha
 Is (actually) the redeemer of (all) creatures,
 And he was raised up to the One Who sent him!'

Then the Evil One will be enraged
 And he will issue a command regarding those who denounced him
 That they should immediately die by the sword,
 And everyone will be too afraid to renounce him.
 Then he will begin to display
 Wonders through deception
 In the heavens and on the earth,
 Within the sea and on the dry land.
 He will summon the rain and it will fall;
 He will command the seed and it will sprout
 However he will not actually perform (miracles);
 He will be employing magic.
 He will command the waves and they will cease,
 And the winds will be obedient to him.
 He will suspend fruits on the trees
 And cause water to gush from the ground.
 He will address the leprous and they will become clean,
 (Speak to) the blind, and they will see light,
 He will call to the deaf and they will hear him,
 (Address) even the mute and they will speak.
 He will effect all the wonders
 Which Our Lord performed within the created order,
 Except that he will not be able to resurrect the dead,
 For he will not have authority over (the) spirits (of the dead).
 Lightening-flashes will be his messengers,

And are the sign of his advent;
 Demons are his armies
 And the commanders of the devils are his pupils;
 He will dispatch the heads of his legions
 To distant lands
 Where they will display marvelous powers and healings
 And mislead the whole of creation.
 Behold, the Apostle has penned a warning for us
 In his epistle to the Thessalonians:
 'Let no word or no letter
 Trouble you that is not from us.
 For the rebellion comes first,
 Also the Man of Sin
 And he will exalt himself over God,
 Making himself to be God.'
 And when the Accursed One comes
 And displays his mighty works and wonders,
 The nations will gather together and come
 As (if) they were going to see God.
 Groups and nations will join him,
 And every person will renounce their deity;
 Everyone will say of him to their fellow
 That they should acknowledge him, the Son of Destruction!
 Peoples will fall upon one another,
 Slaying each other with swords.
 The elect will flee from his presence
 To the peaks of mountains and hills,
 And there will be calamity on earth
 Unlike any that came before.
 Fear will fall upon all people
 And they will be overcome with terror.
 Children will renounce their father
 And follow after the Evil One;
 Priests will abandon their altars
 To serve as his heralds.
 People will flee to cemeteries
 And hide themselves among the dead,
 Pronouncing the good fortune of the deceased
 Who had avoided the calamity:
 'Blessed are you for you were borne away (to the grave)
 And hence you escaped from the afflictions!
 But as for us, woe is us! For when we die,
 Vultures will serve as escort for us!'
 And if the days of that time were not shortened,
 The elect would never survive
 The calamities and afflictions.
 For Our Lord revealed (and) disclosed to us
 In his Gospel when He said:
 'Those days will be shortened
 For the sake of the elect and the saints.'
 And when he has harassed the whole of creation,
 (When) the Son of Destruction (has bent it) to his will,
 Enoch and Elijah will be sent
 That they might persuade the Evil One.
 With a gentle question

The saints will come before him,
 In order to expose the Son of Destruction
 Before the assemblies surrounding him:
 'If you are indeed God,
 Tell us what we ask of you:
 Where is the place that you have hidden
 The elders Elijah and Enoch?'
 The Evil One will respond and say
 To the saints at that time:
 'When I wish (it), they are in the height(s),
 Or again should I choose, they are within the sea;
 For I have authority over habitations,
 Since there is no other god apart from me
 And I can make anything
 On earth (and) also in heaven!'

They will answer
 The Son of Destruction as follows:
 'If you are truly God,
 Call out to the deceased so that they will rise!
 For it is written within the books
 Of the prophets and the apostles
 That when the Messiah reveals Himself,
 He will resurrect the dead from the graves.
 If you cannot show us this (sign),
 Then the One who was crucified is greater than you!
 For he roused and resurrected those who were dead,
 And was exalted in great splendor.'
 Then the Evil One will become enraged
 With the saints at that time;
 He will draw his terrible sword
 And sever the necks of the righteous ones.
 But Gabriel will arise (and) descend
 (With) Michael (as) military commanders;
 They will resurrect those saints
 While the Evil One stands confused with his servants.
 They will approach and seize that Accursed One
 And the Lord will rebuke (him) from heaven;
 Then He will destroy the Accursed One
 And all of his forces.
 Angels will suddenly approach
 And cast him into Gehenna,
 And all of those who believed in him
 Will be thrust into the flame(s).
 Then the Lord will come from above
 In splendor and with a company of His angels,
 And between earth and heaven
 A throne-chariot will be fixed there.
 He will admonish the sea and it will dry up;
 The fish within it will perish.
 He will dissolve the heavens and the earth,
 And there will be (only) darkness and gloom.
 He will dispatch fire upon the earth,
 And it will burn there for forty <days>
 Purifying it of iniquity
 And of pollution and of sins.

A great throne will be adorned
And the Son will be seated on the right;
Seats will be positioned
For the twelve apostles of the Son;
And couches will be decorated for the martyrs
And a royal chamber for the righteous ones.
The Watchers will blow trumpets
And the dead will arise from the dust;
Fiery entities will suddenly go forth
And assemble all the descendants of Adam.
They will gather the wheat in a storehouse
And throw the straw into the fire;
The good will go forth into the Kingdom,
And the bad will remain in Gehenna;
The righteous will fly up to the height,
And the sinners will burn in fire.
The martyrs will float to the couch;
The wicked will go out into darkness.
And Christ will reign forever,
He will be sovereign over each generation.
To Him be the glory, and His mercy is over us
For all time, amen, amen!

Finis