

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS ON EZEKIEL 38-39 – THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG¹

There is one other battle/war/event that we haven't addressed yet. It is the events that are described in Ezekiel 38-39. As mentioned above, not all scholars agree as to when that prophesied event will occur. Some feel the events described there will occur at the beginning of the tribulation, others in the middle, and a few, possibly, even think it will take place at the end of the tribulation. While we cannot go into great depth at this time regarding those chapters and the events described there, a few brief comments and quotes are certainly in order here.

Shelton: “*‘And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth and all thine army...’* (Ezek. 38:1-4a). In Ezekiel 39:2, God declares that He will bring a mighty army to ‘the mountains of Israel’ and will also ‘turn them back.’ With God’s hooks in its jaws, this army will invade the land of Israel and will experience its greatest military defeat... [1] **WHO LEADS THE INVASION?** ...Most students of Bible prophecy are convinced that verse 2 is a reference to the land of Russia...In Genesis 10, the generations of Noah are listed. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 10:1). Notice that among the sons of Japheth are mentioned ‘*Magog...Tubal, and Meshech*’ (Gen. 10:2). Scofield is accurate in stating, ‘From Magog are descended the ancient Sythians, or Tartars, whose descendants predominate in the modern Russia.’ Meshech and Tubal were also progenitors of those peoples who moved in a northward direction and, in turn, became the fathers of those who later established what we know today as Russia. It is believed that the city of Moscow derived its name from Meshech and Tobolsk received its name from Tubal...

“The Russian Bear will not be alone in its effort to devour the little nation of Israel, for its allies are presented in verses 5 and 6: ‘*Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.*’ It is interesting to note that the first nation mentioned which will unite its forces with Russia in this attempt to destroy Israel is Persia. The name Persia was changed in 1932 to Iran.”²

Pentecost adds: “From the prophecy in Ezekiel it is learned that there will be a great confederacy, known as the northern confederacy under the leadership of one who arises in the land of Magog—Russia. Allied with Russia will be Iran (Persia) certain Arab states (Put or Ethiopia), Germany, and some Asiatic peoples known as Togarmah, which may include an extensive coalition of Asiatic powers. That this is not an exhaustive list is seen from Ezekiel 38:6, ‘*and many people with thee.*’”³

“**WHY IS THERE AN ATTACK?** ...Part of the answer is a common **hatred for the Jews**. There have always been men on the scene like Haman, who would have slain all of the Jews in Medo-Persia if God had not intervened...But more than a hatred for Jews enters into the picture before us. May I suggest that **hunger for material gain** will also excite Russia and its allies. In Ezekiel 38:12, it is written that this great army will come ‘*to take a spoil.*’ Israel is the ‘gateway to three continents.’...But beyond the actual worth of Israel is the fact that the day may come when **the oil of the Middle East** will be available only to those nations that position themselves against Israel...

“**WHEN WILL IT OCCUR?** Our third question is, ‘When will Russia come against Israel?’ Obviously, the invasion of **Ezekiel 38 could not take place until a nation called ‘Israel’ existed...**In the past, liberal theologians have scoffed at this prophecy by citing that Russia would have great difficulty destroying a nation that did not exist. It is true that since 605 B.C. the Jews have been unable to claim the land of Israel as their own (except briefly during the days of the Maccabean revolt)...For 2600 years, the Jews have not been in their own land, or if they were, it did not belong to them...The question of liberal theologians was, ‘**How could Russia come against a nation that did not exist?**’ Imagine the confusion in liberal circles when in 1948 the United Nations created a home for Jews in the land of Palestine. On May 14th of that year, British control came to an end; and for the first time in 2600 years, the Jews were in their own land ruling their own affairs. Of course, God said

¹ This is simply a brief excerpt taken from my Introductory Notes on Daniel. -Mike Edwards

² Shelton, pp. 45-46

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, “*Things to Come*” (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1958, 1973), p. 331

it would happen. [!] Consider for a moment...Ezekiel 37: *'Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel'* (vv. 11-12). One of the most significant prophetic developments of our day has been the return of the Jews from all over the world to the land of Israel. They have returned from no less than 120 nations, speaking at least 83 different languages. I grant you that they are returning, for the most part, in unbelief. That is, they are not aware of the truths of Ezekiel 37 and 38, nor are they willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, but the day will come when the scales will fall from their eyes. They will see that God caused them to come together (Ezek. 37:7) as the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision came together... [So] 'When will the invasion [by Gog & Magog] occur?' Obviously it could not occur until Israel is a nation. That miracle has now taken place...It should also be noted that **the invasion out of the north cannot take place until Israel is 'at rest.'** 'And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates' (Ezek. 38:11)...

"There are those who believe the next major prophetic event will be the destruction of the armies of Russia against the mountains of Israel [i.e. that this battle occurs at the beginning of the tribulation period]. They believe this must happen before Antichrist will be revealed in the world...But there are several events that must precede the invasion of Israel by the northern confederacy. In proper sequence, they are:

- The Rapture of the Church
- The coming of Antichrist
- The signing of his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27)
- The Jews' belief that their long-awaited Christ is ruling over them, that they are actually living in Kingdom days
- The establishment of Israel as 'the land of unwalled villages...at rest...dwelling safely' (Ezek. 38:11)

Shelton summarizes: "It is obvious that Israel is not dwelling safely today. It is not the land of '*unwalled villages*' ...The invasion of Israel cannot take place today because Israel is not at peace. Israel is not at peace because the covenant of Daniel 9:27 has not been signed. The covenant has not been signed because Antichrist has not yet been revealed, and Antichrist has not been revealed because the Church has not been raptured. Certainly, the coming of Christ for His Bride is near."⁴

"WHAT IS THE RESULT?" ...'What will be the results of the invasion?' ...we read: *'And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel'* (Ezek. 38:18-19). God will begin His judgment on the northern armies by sending an earthquake. Notice, '*a great shaking*' This will, no doubt, create such panic within the ranks that '*every man's sword shall be against his brother*' (Ezek. 38:21b). To add to the confusion and destruction, we read: *'And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone'* (Ezek. 38:22). It is interesting to compare God's judgment upon Egypt prior to the Exodus with His judgment in Ezekiel 38. '*so there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail...*' (Ex. 9:24). When fire and ice come out of Heaven at the same time, you can be sure God is at work! Ezekiel 38 concludes with these words: *'Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord'* (Ezek. 38:23)."

⁴ Shelton, pp. 47-51