

The Visions of Ezekiel

Lesson 30

Ezekiel's Fifty-seventh Assignment from the LORD

The LORD had promised to protect Israel in the chronology of this twelfth vision. He had also promised to cleanse her of her sin and bring her back to spiritual life in a right relationship with Him which she had forfeited when she rejected Him as her long-expected Messiah. In this chronology, we now come to two battles.

Most in the world have heard of a battle that will occur in the end times call Armageddon. Incorrectly, most also believe that the battle of Armageddon will be worldwide - it will not. It will occur only in the valley of Megiddo, east of the Mediterranean Sea and west of the Sea of Galilee. It is called Armageddon because from the hill of Megiddo, the whole valley can be seen. In fact, the word *Arm* means *the mountain of* and the word *mageddon* means *the place of the troops*. However, the first battle in this last part of vision twelve does not occur in the valley of Megiddo; it will occur in the valley of *Hamon-gog* where the city of *Hamonah* sits.

The name *Hamon-gog* means *the horde of Gog* or *the multitude of Gog*. The story will tell us that this battle will occur beyond the *East Sea*. The Scripture names the *Mediterranean Sea* as the *West or Western Sea* in Numbers 34:6. But the Scripture calls the *Dead Sea* the *East or Eastern Sea* in Joel 2:20 and Ezekiel 47:18. Because of the Ezekiel reference that we will study in vision 13, we can safely say that the *battle of Gog* will occur beyond the *Dead Sea*, at least seventy-five miles from the location of the valley of Megiddo, where the battle of Armageddon will occur.

The battle of Armageddon will occur for the purpose of ending the rule of the Gentiles, defeating the power of the satanic trio and introducing the arrival of the King of kings. The battle of Gog will occur for the purpose of adding tribulation to the Israelites who need to be sanctified, exposing the enemies of the Israelites who need to be slaughtered and luring the adversaries of Israel who need to be situated in certain location.

The battle in Hammon-gog will be first, the battle in Armageddon will be second and a third battle will follow after that. We start with the way of the sanctification of Israel by the calling out of Gog and his hordes for the first battle and then we will see an invitation sent out to the second battle.

7. The Way of the Sanctified of Israel (38:1-39:29)
 - a) The First Battle Announced (38:1-39:16)
 - (1) God's Purpose Concerning Gog (38:1-25)
 - (a) Gog and His Hordes (38:1-7)
 - (i) The Introduction of the Prince (38:1-3)

38:1 And the word of the LORD came to me saying, 38:2 "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him 38:3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.

Israel must be sanctified; she must be cleansed from her rejection of her long-awaited Messiah. She had not rejected Him at the time of the transmission of this prophecy, but she would about five hundred years into her future. After rejecting her Messiah, the LORD would give her years to express her rejection while His Gospel penetrated the Gentile nations of the world. But still, a day would come when she must be sanctified, leading to her acceptance of the LORD. The world is still waiting for that day.

In the LORD's master plan, the first battle is announced that will cause Israel to take a good look at the LORD and open up to Him to allow Him to give her a new heart that will replace her heart of stone that we see within her today. For the battle, the LORD will call a prince from the north with all his multitude of patrons and allies to attack Israel. Here we see introduced "*Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal...*" and God's purpose concerning Gog.

Gog will be the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. As a reminder, we have already discussed in this study that when the word *prince* is used in Ezekiel, in our minds today, we would think of him as the king or president over the people. To date, we have not met this Gog; we do not know who he is but we do know that he will be born in the land that was given to the family of Magog after the Tower of Babel event, ninety-eight years after the exodus from Noah's Ark following the first and only world-wide flood. Magog was the grandson of Noah, the second son of Japheth (Genesis 10:2; 1 Chronicles 1:5). When the descendants of Noah were scattered into the world at the Tower of Babel incident, the family of Magog, who could not communicate with any of the other families because of the new language barrier miraculously instilled by the LORD, moved to what we identify today as southern Siberia. In ancient days the people from that area were called Scythians. They were a family of nomadic warriors who exerted their forceful power from Central Asia to the northern area of the Black Sea. The records record the actions of the Scythians for us in the world history books but it was the Jewish historian by the name of Josephus who identified the Magogites as the Scythians in his book of Antiquities.⁶⁵

Meshech was also a son of Japheth and after the Tower of Babel his family settled in what we call Armenia today. The Greek historian Herodotus, who wrote his account just one hundred years after this prophecy was given to Ezekiel, identified this family living near the south Caucasus region of Eurasia.⁶⁶ It is a nation of its own today, but in the past it was part of the Soviet Republic. One interesting point about the Armenian land of Meshech today is its major religion is Christianity! But with the influence of Islam in the area, that will surely change by the time they will be called to join their king, Gog.

Tubal, whom we always see coupled with Meshech in the Scripture except in Isaiah 66:19 and Psalms 120:5, was also a son of Japheth. Josephus identified Tubal with the Iberians and Cappadocians who were cave dwellers situated in the southern range of the Caucasus mountains on the east side of the Black Sea.⁶⁷

We must not miss the point that Gog was the prince (king) of Rosh. For this reference we are dumbfounded. To say with certainty that Rosh means Russia as many great and marvelous commentators have discussed is just not possible. Where did the name Russia come from? Will that give a clue? According to the *Etymology Dictionary Online*, the word Russia came into the English language in the 1530s AD derived from the Medieval Latin *Russi* which came from the Arabic *Rus* to indicate a group of Swedish merchant warriors who populated the area around Kiev in the 9th Century AD. Another interesting point is that this Swedish group was called *Ruotsi* by the Finnish. That name means *the land of the rowers*, from the Old Norse word *roor* which means *steering oar*. What is the point of this dissection of the history of the word *Russia*?

The point of dissecting the word Russia is this, neither it, nor its ancestral heritage was recorded anywhere in literature at the time of the delivery of vision twelve. The word *Rosh*, as recorded in this text did exist in the Hebrew and it simply meant *the head of*. The Hebrew reader of Ezekiel's day would have read and understood the first part of 38:2 to say, "Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of *the head of* Meshech and Tubal." But, we have the advantage of having 2,500 years since the delivery of this part of the vision and off to the north of Israel sits a powerful country whose name has a heritage in the word that began as the word *Rosh* in the Hebrew in 585 BC and has made its way to the name *Russia* in the 1530s AD. What we must not forget is that this is a prophecy from the LORD Who knows everything from the beginning to the end. Did not this same LORD name Cyrus the Great to be the name of the man who would release the exiles in the book of Isaiah? Did not Isaiah pronounce his name correctly as the man about 150 years before he was born? Why could the LORD not name this country 2,000 years before it

⁶⁵ Antiquities Book I, Chapter vi, Paragraph 1

⁶⁶ Herodotus Book III, Chapter 94

⁶⁷ Antiquities Book I, Chapter vi, Paragraph 1

came into being and why could the LORD not name Gog as the exact name of the king of Russia who will one day be called by the LORD to attack Israel? After all, this is all prophecy yet to be fulfilled. After all, these are the words of the LORD who knows all from the alpha to the omega. Therefore, when a king of Russia appears whose name, in some language means *Gog*, get ready! The time is near. Russia, the world's largest country containing Europe's longest river, its largest lake and its deepest lake and the world's lowest temperatures outside the North and South poles, is most definitely the head of the nations sitting directly north of Israel.

(ii) The Warning to the Prince (38:4)

38:4 "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords;

The LORD had a warning for Gog and his men, *"I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out...."* Gog will not have a choice in this matter. The LORD will make him desire this battle plan to annex the peaceful nation of Israel. The LORD will turn Gog's eyes to Israel. The LORD will put hooks in his jaws to drag Gog there if necessary. Be aware, some commentators explain this verse to mean that the LORD will turn Gog away from Israel but that is not the case. This verse is a warning to Gog that the LORD will turn him to a desire for Israel.

(iii) The Cronies of the Prince (38:5-6)

38:5 Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 38:6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.

Gog and his countries will not be alone in his desire for taking Israel, Persia, Ethiopia, Put, Gomer and Beth-togarmah. Even the remotest parts to the north will want to join Gog in his campaign. Notice that these are all the countries which are not part of the Revived Roman Empire that will be in power in that day consisting of Britain, France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Syria and Egypt.

Gomer was the grandson of Japheth, Noah's son. His brothers were Ashkenaz and Riphath (Genesis 10:3). His uncle, Meshech, had settled in today's Armenia and Gomer had populated the southern part of the area. Beth-togarmah, which in Hebrew means *the door to all bone*, was situated in modern Gurun, Turkey. It is a small area now and because of the way it is referred to in Scripture, it will still be a small but important group of people who must be included in the troops coming from the north because they live in the middle of all the other countries that will be joining Gog in the campaign. Even today, Beth-togarmah is rather remote in its location but nevertheless it will be included in the mass of people joining Gog.

Persia is modern day Iran and Ethiopia and Put are two countries on the African continent. Ethiopia sits south of Egypt; Put sits west of Egypt. Neither were part of the Roman Empire. Neither will be part of the Revived Roman Empire in the future.

(iv) The Instruction to the Prince (38:7)

38:7 "Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them.

The instruction to Gog the prince is this. Get ready! Gather your troops. "... *be a guard for them*," which means, *place them in your ranks*. The armies of Gog have been named by their specific countries and villages. From the north, east and south, allied armies will join with Gog to attempt to take Israel. They are evil in their intent. They do not love the LORD. Therefore, the LORD will use them to come against Israel to cause her to look to her only hope - Him.

(b) Gog and His Timing (38:8)

38:8 "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.

When will the LORD call Gog? What will be the timing of his attack on Israel? "*After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land....*" Focus on the words "*in the latter years*." Those years have not come yet, even in our day. With the advent of the New Testament books we can clearly understand that the "*latter years*" means the last days of Israel's tribulation. We have already discovered in Ezekiel that the LORD promises to call all of the Jewish people who were scattered all over the world to return to the Promised Land in the latter days. That call will be precipitated by a peace treaty not covered in Ezekiel but called for by his counterpart prophet in Babylon – Daniel (Daniel 9:26-27).

(c) Gog and His Greatness (38:9)

38:9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you."

How will Gog make his journey toward the Promised Land? In his greatness, he will call for the order to move out in a moment and head out "*like a storm*." Until just recently in the history of the world, storms would seem to appear out of nowhere, do their damage and leave as quickly as they arrived. Gog will make his decision to move in just that manner. He will make his plan one day and immediately head toward Israel.

(d) Gog and His Plan (38:10-12)

38:10 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, 38:11 and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, 38:12 to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.'

Here we see Gog's plan. Israel, to his south, seems unprotected. It seems unsecured. It seems to be an easy prey. It seems to be fairly wealthy. It seems to be a good target.

(e) Gog and His Allies (38:13)

38:13 "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'"

Now Sheba and Dedan were and are still tribal areas in what we call Saudi Arabia today. Those tribes grew from two great grandsons of Ham through his son, Cush. However, in the later years of Abraham's life, he sent his sons born with his second wife, Keturah, to live in those areas. Their descendants are still there today. It is interesting because those descendants sit between the countries of Ethiopia and Iran who will have joined Gog in his efforts, but Sheba and Dedan will not. Rather, they will have a question for Gog about his intentions with Israel. Does Gog intend to plunder and steal from Israel? The answer is most definitely, yes. They will not join Gog.

We also see that the "*merchants of Tarshish*" will ask the same question. Tarshish was the name of a Phoenician port, not in Phoenicia, but in Spain. It was a destination port for Tyre's Phoenician ships on the far western side of the Mediterranean Sea. From Tarshish to Tyre, the ships serviced all of Spain, Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Asia Minor, and around to Phoenicia and the city of Tyre. Tyre also had a ship route

to the south around the southern Mediterranean to service Israel, Philistia, Egypt, Libya and North Africa. But Tyre was the center harbor for all the legs of the sea trade route. Here the LORD speaks of the merchants from that far off city of Tarshish. In a roundabout way, they will be asking Gog if he intends to rob Israel rather than purchase the goods they have to sell. The answer is most definitely, yes. They will not join Gog.

(f) Gog and His Knowledge (38:14)

38:14 "Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?'

We must follow the train of thought by the LORD in this entire vision to understand this verse. The LORD promised Israel He would protect her when He gathered her from where she had been scattered in the world. When she arrived in Israel, He would see to it that she would be secure. Gog will look at Israel and see no visual signs of protection and security and determine that Israel is vulnerable and an easy prey. The LORD asks Gog, "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?" The answer is no, Gog will not know it. Israel looks unsecured. He will not know that Israel has a promise from the Protector of protectors, the Warrior of warriors and the Defender of defenders – GOD! Israel may look weak, and she may be weak, but He is strong. Gog will not have a chance of accomplishing his intended task.

(g) Gog and His Attack (38:15-16)

(i) The Move of the Soldiers (38:15)

38:15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army;

Because of his mindset, in his foolishness, Gog will move toward Israel with all his hordes, but the LORD will not let him be successful.

(ii) The Target of the Slaughter (38:16a)

38:16a and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land.

The target of Gog's horde is the LORD's people, Israel. He intends to cover her quickly and slaughter her.

(iii) The Knowledge of the Sanctified (38:16b)

38:16b It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog."

Now we see that the latter days will be the "*last days*" as confirmed in the rest of the Scriptures of the Bible. It is the LORD Who will bring Gog toward Israel. It is the LORD Who will defeat Gog in the sight of Israel. The prophecy has been spoken. Nothing can stop it. When Gog is a child, the end of his life has already been scripted. He will be the king of Rosh and he will attempt to destroy Israel. But, the LORD will win that battle. When that happens, the nations of the world will take notice of the LORD Whom the majority hate to this day and into the future. Gog's defeat will be a sanctification for the LORD. That moment of sanctification will perfect the regeneration of the LORD's intended work in the *whole nation of Israel*.

(h) Gog and His History (38:17-23)

(i) Foretold (38:17)

38:17 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them?'

The LORD has already mentioned the name of Gog through one prophet of Israel – Ezekiel. The LORD will mention his name again through another prophet of Israel who will not write his record for 670 years after the delivery of this vision 12 – John, in his record in the Revelation. Almost two thousand years have passed since John's vision and Gog has not arrived yet. In the future, when he does arrive, this question will be asked of him, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel...?" Those two prophets were Ezekiel and John.

(ii) Fury (38:18)

38:18 "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "that My fury will mount up in My anger.

Gog will not have a chance to hurt Israel. His fate is written in eternity from the days of Ezekiel and John. On the day when he comes to make his turn to move into Israel, from the east side of the Jordan River, in the country we call Jordan today, the fury of the LORD will strike Gog and his hordes down to the ground.

(iii) Fall (38:19-20)

38:19 "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 38:20 "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground.

Ah! We have an earthquake on the day of the death of evil Gog. In the Revelation, in the middle of the tribulation of Israel, the LORD tells us the following. "And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood" (Revelation 12:15). Then later in the Revelation, the LORD interpreted the meaning of the *water* that was poured toward Israel by this evil force. "And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw were the harlot sits, are people and multitudes and nations and tongues'" (Revelation 17:15). The *Great Harlot* of the Revelation is a religion that controls the people. It will be Islam. By looking at the nations who will be joining Gog in this attempt, we see that most of them are whole heartedly Islamic already today. Even the Christian country of Armenia is Christian in name only; it is quickly being overrun with Muslims today.

In the Revelation, when the evil dragon attempts to run over Israel like a storm, the LORD will open the earth to swallow up the water/multitudes of people attempting to attack His nation. "But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth" (Revelation 12:16). It just so happened that John foretold the quake in Revelation 11:13 when the two witnesses rose from the dead and ascended into the clouds. At that point in the future a great earthquake will destroy ten percent of the buildings in Jerusalem and 7,000 people (not Israelites) will die in the quake. Because of the testimony of the two witnesses and the miracle of their resurrection and the protection from this foe, Israel will finally believe in the Messiah they had long before cast away.

(iv) Flash (38:21)

38:21 "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother.

In the distraction by God, the men of Gog will fire their arms indiscriminately. Friendly fire, as we call it today, will kill many of Gog's own warriors.

(v) Flood (38:22)

38:22 "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.

At that same time, the LORD will bring disease and death due to the torrential and horrid conditions at the time of the earthquake. Rain and hailstones will fall. Fires will erupt from the misfires of the armament. In the location where this disaster will occur, soon to be identified in this vision, sulfur naturally will lie on the ground. When the earthquake begins, hot gases will rise from deep in the ground and combust the sulfur which is called *brimstone* in the Bible. The fumes of brimstone are deadly!

(vi) Fact (38:23)

38:23 "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD."

Here we arrive at this fact. The whole ordeal with Gog is for one purpose, to magnify, sanctify and proclaim the name of the LORD to all the nations of the world. In that day, the people of the nations of the world may still hate the LORD but they will surely know Who He Is – the great I Am.