

The Visions of Ezekiel

Lesson 31

(2) God's Plan Concerning Gog (39:1-6)

(a) To Move Gog's Army (39:1-2)

39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal; 39:2 and I will turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north and bring you against the mountains of Israel.

We come now to God's plan concerning Gog. It will be his plan to move Gog's army and his hordes to the mountains of Israel. It is the LORD's promise and plan.

(b) To Kill Gog's Artillery (39:3-5)

39:3 "I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. 39:4 "You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. 39:5 "You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord GOD.

All artillery and armament that Gog brings to strike Israel will be destroyed. Every warrior with Gog will be killed. Everybody will be devoured by the birds and beasts. It is the LORD's promise and plan.

(c) To Burn Gog's Allies (39:6)

39:6 "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD.

All of Gog's army and allies that join him from other nations, from the coastlands in the north, will die when the earthquake belches up the fire from the depths of the earth.

(3) God's Purpose Concerning Gog (39:7-8)

(a) To Clean Up His Name (38:7-8)

39:7 "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 39:8 "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord GOD. "That is the day of which I have spoken.

God's purpose concerning Gog and his hordes has now been revealed. First, God uses Gog to clean up His Holy name. To *profane* means to *pollute or defile*. Nations upon nations of the world through all generations have profaned the name of the LORD. It is especially true today. But no longer. Those who say there is no God will know that there is a God and He is the Holy one of Israel. Nations may still hate the LORD in the day of the destruction of Gog but they had better get ready because the LORD has promised at this point in this vision that He is coming again. He will not come for the battle with Gog; that battle will be to get the world's attention that God is God and no one has more power than He. But He is coming. In this verse the LORD promises that the day of Gog's battle is coming and "*it shall be done.*" It is the LORD's promise and plan.

(b) To Clean Up the Land (39:9-16)

(i) To Burn with Fire (39:9-10)

39:9 "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn them, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of them. **39:10** "They will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them," declares the Lord GOD.

Second, the LORD will use Gog to clean up the land by burning all the debris with fire. A survey of the armament that will be left on the ground reveals that after the death of all the warriors of Gog, there will be enough fuel to provide energy for the land of Israel for seven years. And because of that, no fuel will be harvested or purchased to run the generators, to make the electricity, to heat the houses, to cook the meals or to run the vehicles – Gog will have brought enough to supply the needs of the whole house of Israel for seven years if need be.

(ii) To Clear the Land (39:11-13)

39:11 "On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. **39:12** "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. **39:13** "Even all the people of the land will bury them; and it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself," declares the Lord GOD.

War brings death. Death brings dead bodies. Dead bodies must be buried, even if there is nothing left but the bones. For seven months the burying process will go on. On the Jewish calendar that will amount to 207 days. The whole *house of Israel* will bury these bones, "...all the people of the land will bury them"

Notice the LORD continues to say, "...it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself...." It will be to Israel's "renown." What does the LORD mean by this statement? The LORD spoke through two other prophets to explain exactly what He meant. Speaking through Jeremiah concerning this time in Israel's journey, the LORD says the following.

It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it. *Jeremiah 33:9*

Speaking through Zephaniah about this same time in Israel's journey, the LORD says the following.

Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, I will save the lame and gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. *Zephaniah 3:19*

The word *renown* in English comes from the Old French *renon* which means to *make famous*. As the LORD says through Zephaniah, mentioned above, Israel's shame will be turned into praise and *made famous in all the earth*. When the LORD God protects Israel from the attack of Gog, the world will know it was the LORD. In the electronic world that we live in, who knows what advances in the ability of instant viewing will be available when this battle takes place in the future. It is safe to say, the world will not only know it is the LORD, they will see and hear that it is the LORD. The *whole house of Israel* is famous today, not in a positive way, but in a hated way. But in the future, the world will change its mind about Israel. Israel will be famous in a good way.

(iii) To Inspect the Land (39:14)

39:14 "They will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search.

After the people spend seven months burying bones, a large committee will be set in place to search for bones that still need to be buried.

(iv) To Mark the Land (39:15)

39:15 "As those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog.

Once bones are found by this committee, they will be clearly marked for the grave diggers to bury them. Where will they bury all these bones? "... in the valley of Hamon-gog." As stated in the introduction to this lesson, the name *Hamon-gog* means *the horde of Gog* or *the multitude of Gog*. The name tells us that all the bones of all the armies of Gog will be buried together in one place.

(v) To Name the Land (39:16)

39:16 "And even the name of the city will be Hamonah. So they will cleanse the land."

Attached to the cemetery of the *hordes of Gog* will be a city named *Hamonah*. The name means *his hordes* or *his multitudes*.

Now we come to the last sentence in this verse. "So they will cleanse the land." This sentence is the end of the story, the final statement concerning the *battle of Gog*. Israel will cleanse her land and wait for the next event in the chronology of her history.

b) The Second Battle Anticipated (39:17-29)

(1) The Exclamation (39:17-20)

(a) Come Ye Bird and Beast (39:17a)

39:17a "As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field,

We see in this verse the LORD looking ahead, after the *battle of Gog*, to the next battle. Here he is announcing through Ezekiel the anticipation of the second battle that will occur during the time of Israel's tribulation. The LORD introduces it with an exclamation, a call, to all the birds and beasts of the field. "Speak to every kind ..." the LORD says to Ezekiel. He has told Ezekiel about the *battle with Gog* and now He is telling him about the next event. The LORD makes the call for the bird and beast to come as we will see.

(b) Assemble for the Great Feast (39:17b)

39:17b "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood.

The next event will be a great sacrifice for the birds and the beasts. A great supper for them to "eat flesh and drink blood." On top of that, it will be the LORD's sacrifice. He will personally make the sacrifice and it will occur "on the mountains of Israel." Obviously, the hungry beasts will already be near on the land surrounding where this next battle will occur. I am reminded of a time when a herd of cows was being slaughtered on a ranch nearby. One evening we counted the cows. Each had a tag in the ear. Each had a number. The next morning, we counted again. One was missing. We knew the number of the cow that was missing. We searched and found nothing but the fresh bones of that cow nearby. The hide and bones were basically all that were left. Not much except a little for the birds to do their picking. The

beasts that ate through the night did a quick job in just a few hours. It will take days for the birds to clean the rest. Birds from miles away will be needed to clean the remains in this second battle.

(c) Eat There the Mighty and the Least (39:18-19)

39:18 "You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as though they were rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

39:19 "So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. **39:20** "You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war," declares the Lord GOD.

John, in the Revelation, records the call from the LORD to the birds who will be the invited guests at the great sacrifice of the LORD to eat the mighty and the least.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. *Revelation 19:17-21*

(2) The Execution (39:21)

39:21 "And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. **39:22** "And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward.

Who will be the recipients of the execution? It will be "...*all the nations....*" Then, we see that the LORD will set His "*glory among the nations.*" What is the LORD's glory? We talk about it often, but do we understand it? It collectively means *the abundance, wealth, treasure, honor, dignity, splendor, brightness, majesty, and goodness* of the LORD. Frankly, most nations of the world, even today, do not acknowledge the glory of the LORD at all, but they will on that day.

At this point, we see for the first time in Scripture the seed of thought concerning a second battle. It will be the second battle during the time of Israel's tribulation which will later be named Armageddon. We have through Ezekiel all that the LORD wanted these exiles to know in 585 BC about this future battle. Therefore, He will explain His reasoning.

(3) The Explanation (39:23-28)

(a) The Reason for the Exile (39:23)

39:23 "The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword.

The LORD now gives the explanation as to why He sent the *whole house of Israel* into exile under the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. It was because Israel "*acted treacherously against*" the LORD. Israel sinned against God. Not once. Not accidentally. But, repeatedly through the centuries.

Then the LORD tells us that He hid His face from Israel's exiles. In the Scripture, when the LORD sets His face against someone or a nation, it always means He is about to strike that person or nation with His judgment. Because of their sin against the LORD, He brought the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires

against the people of Northern and Southern Kingdoms to kill them in His judgment. He showed His face to them and they could not live. In the Scripture, no one can see the face of the LORD God and live. That story is borne out in the story of Moses being hidden in the cleft of the rock on Mount Sinai when the LORD allowed him to only see His back, but not His face. Even the sight of the LORD's back changed the countenance of Moses' face thereafter. To see His face always brings death to the physical body in Scripture. But, as we have discovered, all those from the north and south who were taken into exile did not see the LORD's face or receive His judgment because they were not guilty of treacherous acts against the LORD. Therefore, they were saved from the LORD's wrath by His removing them from the Promised Land and returning them later. Then, the tribes of Israel will never be removed from the Promised Land again. For that, we see the reason for the exiles. Furthermore, the Israelites killed in the Promised Land were adversaries of the LORD and fell by the sword, but not by the face of the LORD. He hid His face from them. He did not protect them. The LORD allowed them to be killed by the swords of Assyria and Babylon, the two major nations of the world at the time.

(b) The Reason for the Reprimand (39:24)

39:24 "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and I hid My face from them.*"**

Then we come to the reason for the reprimand of the LORD on the two kingdoms. It was "*according to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions.*" While this does not detail the uncleanness and transgressions of the Israelites alleged by the LORD, He has made it extremely clear in the previous visions through Ezekiel that Israel's uncleanness and transgressions were her idolatry with other gods and her sin with trusting in other countries instead of trusting in Him alone. The reprimand was for Israel's flagrant unfaithfulness to her LORD.

(c) The Reason for the Reward (39:25)

39:25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.

But not all Israel was judged. A remnant of the faithful was saved as exiles to produce generations after generations to come who will be rewarded at the time of the LORD's Second Coming. That is the reason for the future reward granted from the LORD. It was the promise of the LORD through the years from the days of the events in Genesis and it will be fulfilled by Him in the day of His return.

(d) The Reason for the Return (39:26)

39:26 "They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid.

What is the reason for the return of the LORD? To fulfill His promise. Yes, Israel does not deserve what she will receive. Yes, she has disgraced the LORD by being unfaithful to Him as recorded in the pages of the Old Testament and for rejecting Him as recorded in the New Testament. But the LORD will not turn away from His promise to Israel. She will finally live one day totally secure on the Promised Land and never be fearful again. That time will come when He comes.

(e) The Reason for the Remnant (39:27)

39:27 "When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations.

To fulfill the LORD's promise, He had to have a remnant of Israel saved during the days of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires attacks. Those saved will be for the purpose of passing on life to the Israelites of the future. For that to occur, the exiles will need to be sanctified for the future after 585 BC.

(f) The Reason for the Refugee (39:28)

39:28 "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer.

For now, in 585 BC, the exiles can only trust that the LORD will keep His promise as to the reason they were saved as refugees. It was for the purpose of keeping His promise. The Israelites were scattered to the nations for the world so that one day, in the distant future from the giving of this prophecy, those refugees would be gathered back to the Promised Land to live there with the LORD as their King. Not one person with Israel's blood will live outside the Promised Land when the LORD returns.

(g) The Reason for the Redeemed (39:29)

39:29 "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

Then, in the future, after the battle of Gog and after the second battle that will result in the great supper of the LORD, with the Israelites gathered from all the nations of the world, He will no longer hide His face from them when He returns at His Second Coming. No longer will His face bring judgment. At that time, they will be able to look at the face of the LORD without fear because the LORD "will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel." Here we have the reason for the redeemed of Israel. Finally, Israel will have a new heart of flesh for the LORD and she will have a new spirit within her concerning Him. It was in this same vision that the LORD gave through Ezekiel concerning Israel the following promise.

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (36:26-27).