

Ezekiel 37-39 • Chapter Study

INTRO

I had hoped to get thru ch. 37 last Wed but was too gabby and only made it thru ch. 36 – so we need to pick it up at ch. 37.

Let's review so we know what's happening.

“Previously at CC's Mid Week study . . .”

Ch. 33 marks the turning pt. in Ezekiel's prophetic work among the Jewish exiles in Babylon.

For 8 yrs he announced Jerusalem's doom & God's judgment of the rebellious Jews back home.

Both he & his fellow prophet Jeremiah who was In Jerusalem were ignored = & the long foretold judgment fell like a hammer.

It's there in ch. 33 that the message finally reaches the Jewish exiles that Jerusalem has fallen.

And Ezekiel's message moves from announcing doom to declaring Israel's glorious future restoration.

Now – as we saw 1st wk, & need to be reminded of, prophecy in the Bible isn't just a fore-telling w/a **single** future fulfillment.

Prophecy foretells patterns that are partial fulfillments; each of which give us a picture of what the grand climax will look like.

Prophecy has been likened to looking at a mountain range from a distance.

The peaks are similar & look close together.

But as you get closer, you realize they're separated by quite a distance.

And if you're hiking those mountains – all you see is the **next** one.

When you **reach** the peak or pass, you realize there's **another** beyond it.

So Ezekiel foretells Israel's glorious gathering back into her land in the last days.

And while that's the grand climax these chs pt to, Israel's return to the land under the Persians, several decades after Ezekiel's time provides a picture of what the last days fulfillment will look like.

In ch. 36 – God announces how He will bless the physical LAND of Israel and cause it to turn from a desolate wilderness into a garden.

That happened when the Jewish exiles returned from Babylon and rebuilt their nation.

The land was largely abandoned, so the cultivated fields went wild, streams & creeks blocked up and turned whole sections into swamps.

The wild animals returned & the land reverted to an unproductive wilderness.

When the exiles returned, they rebuilt their cities & towns, cleared the streams, drained the swamps, cut back the growth and replanted their fields.

It took a while but they eventually reasserted their occupation of the land – especially up in the north in Galilee which became a super-fertile region that grew the bulk of Israel's food.

In fact, the population of Galilee soared.

The Greeks came through under the lead of Alexander & took control of the area.

When Alexander died, the Greek Empire was divided up between his 4 generals.

Israel became something of a political football – being the buffer zone between the Seleucids who ruled

Syria to the North & the Ptolemy's who ruled Egypt in the South.

Now – what follows is a *highly simplified summary* of what happened after this.

The Jews finally had enough of others deciding their fate; so a family nick-named the **Maccabees** rose up & declared Jewish independence.

The Maccabees produced a short-lived line of kings called the **Hasmoneans**, who got caught up in the intrigues of the Roman Republic btwn Julius Caesar & Pompey, and later btwn the Parthians and the Romans.

They sided with the Parthians, which proved to be the wrong side, and so ended up being occupied by the victorious Romans – who installed one of their puppet kings – Herod.

While **most** of the regions Rome conquered enjoyed the benefits of Roman rule, the Jews did not.

And eventually they rebelled in the mid 1st C.

The rebellion was at first successful and the Romans were booted out of Israel.

But they returned, in force and over the next 3 yrs leveled the country.

It was during this time that because of the massive siege works they made, most of the trees were cut down.

When the Jews rebelled again a century later; the Romans finally had enough & sought to eradicate their presence for the land.

They renamed Israel Palestine, Jerusalem was renamed Aelia Capitolina after the huge temple to Jupiter they built there.

And Jews were forbidden on pain of death to live in the land.

This led to the great diaspora – the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world.

And that's the way things remained for the next 1800 years!

But then, in the late 19th C a movement was born in Europe to see the Jews restored to their land.

The father of the movement that came to be called Zionism was Theodore Herzl – An Austrian journalist.

Many Jews in Europe knew the anti-Semitism they'd known for generations wouldn't end & the only solution for the future of the Jewish people was their own national homeland.

Jews began quietly moving back to Palestine; which was an Arab backwater.

It was governed by Syria & was occupied by the poorest of the Arabs.

So the Jews who moved there were able to buy land on the cheap.

The Roman devastation of the landscape had altered the ecology.

What wasn't an arid desert was a swampy, malaria infested bog.

But the Jews formed communes called kibbutzes; pooled their labor and began to work the land.

They cleared the water ways, drained the swamps, irrigated the fields, started cottage industries & soon the land began to bloom again.

More Jews returned. More communities prospered.

Then WWII happened & the world was made to witness the horrors of Nazis Final Solution.

The images of the Holocaust victims shocked the world & international support for a Jewish homeland skyrocketed.

Again – this is a highly simplified summary of events, but in May 1948, Jewish leaders declared themselves a free & independent state.

It didn't take long for the UN to recognize Israel against the protest of some of its members.

And the Arab nations on her borders immediately attacked to snuff out Israel's fledgling existence.

But – miraculously, she hung on and survived.

Israel has since gone on to prosper as Jews from all over the world have immigrated here.

Which is what ch. 37 foretells . . .

Ch. 37 • Israel Regathered Into Her Land Under God

Up till now God's been **telling** Ezekiel what to **say** to the people; it was a **verbal** message.

Now the prophet has a **vision**. This was something he **saw**.

¹ The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of bones. ² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry.

This vision wasn't something that happened in a flash; it was a long encounter.

Ezekiel was taken to a valley **covered** w/scattered bones.

He walked around & realized there were bones **everywhere**. **Long dead** bones; all dry & brittle.

Whoever they'd belonged to, they've been dead a long time.

³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know."

Always a good reply when posed a tough question.

According to human reason & ability No! These bones **couldn't** live.

But Ezekiel knew this was a vision God intended to inspire him with.

AND – God had just told him Israel **would be** restored – so, faith means these bones **could** live.

⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord." ' "

God tells the prophet to announce HIS Word to the bones – they **WILL** live.

But notice **HOW** they come to life. It's a **process**.

The bones reassemble, are attached w/sinew, tissue, skin, & breath.

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them.

Bodies – many of them – but **no life yet**.

⁹ Also He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ’ ” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Now the meaning of what Ezekiel saw becomes clear -

¹¹ Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken *it* and performed *it*,” says the Lord.’ ”

For gens, ever since the Jews were banned from the land by the Romans in the 2nd C, they’ve wandered the Earth, settling down in enclaves & ghettos here & there.

In a few *rare* circumstances they’ve been accepted & thrived, but *most* of their history & experience has been *prejudice, bigotry, anti-Semitism, racism, persecution, pogroms, hatred & abuse*.

One of the reasons the Nazis *were able to* pull off the Holocaust was because it was just a more virulent form of anti-Semitism that had existed in Europe & west Asia for hundreds of years.

But God promises the day would come when He would bring the remnant of the Jews up out of all the places of torment they’ve known for gens & regather them in their own land – forming them into a nation once again.

¹⁵ Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁶ “As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.’ ¹⁷ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

¹⁸ “And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?’ — ¹⁹ say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.” ’ ²⁰ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

That stick was a picture of a *ruler’s scepter*.

Under David’s grandson *Rehoboam*, Israel split into 2 kingdoms: Israel & Judah.

While the Tribe of *Judah* ruled the S, the lead tribe in the N was *Ephraim*.

Then the 2 kingdoms went into *separate exiles*.

God says when He reconstitutes the nation; they will be 1 people, under 1 ruler.

Their days as a split people are done.

²¹ “Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²² and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be 2 nations, nor shall they ever be divided into 2 kingdoms again. ²³ They shall not defile themselves

anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

This was **partially fulfilled** in the 1st return under the Persians in the 5th C. BC.

But the problem is – while they **did** have a **kind of king**, he **wasn't the real ruler** of Israel.

He was just a governor under the Persian masters.

It wasn't until the Maccabees broke away from the Syrian Greeks that Israel became an independent nation.

And while the Maccabees ruled, they weren't **legitimate** kings.

As their line weakened, the door was opened to the Edomites & the Herods came in to become non-Jewish kings.

Then the Romans arrived & placed **their** rulers in charge.

The pt is that while Israel **was** regathered in into their land in the 5th C BC, it was w/o a **proper** king.

So this has to be looking to something **yet future**.

It does. It looks to the day when Jesus, the son of David, comes to rule as King over His people.

But notice it will be when the Jews have been gathered **frm all over the world** back into their land.

Which didn't happen until 1948.

²⁴ “David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them.

This speaks of a time of conscious, whole-hearted faith in God

Due in large part because they're ruled by a good & godly king.

²⁵ Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever.

As we saw 1st wk—this may be a ref to the **literal, actual David** who returns w/Christ & is given the kingship of Israel – which would certainly be fitting.

Or it may simply be a ref to the Messiah as the **Son** of David.

David certainly foreshadowed Jesus & Jesus fulfills & completes all the promise of David's reign.

My personal take is that this is **David**.

A couple passages say when Jesus returns, He comes w/the saints.

Other passages say **we** will rule & reign w/Him for a thousand years.

Rule what? Probably a portion of the Millennial Earth.

Remember the parable Jesus told of the guy who was given some of his master wealth & was told to put it to work? He **earned** 10 more talents of silver.

His **reward** was to be made **ruler** of 10 **cities**.

That may hint at how God will decide what our sphere of work & responsibility will be in the Millennial kingdom.

If that's the case, **who** ought to get to govern Jerusalem? David!

The one who captured the city in the first place & made it the capital of the kingdom.

It's greatest & godliest king.

²⁶ Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷ My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ²⁸ The nations also will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” ’ ”

When the Jews returned in the 5th C. BC, one of the first things they did was rebuild the temple.

In trying to win the Jews favor, Herod the Great remodeled this humble temple & made it into a glorious piece of architecture.

But it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD & there's been no temple since.

God says that when He regathers His people; to their land, His presence will abide with them and a **permanent sanctuary** will be built.

This obviously looks to the future.

Summary so Far

Together, chs. 36 & 7 say that after a long time away from the land, when all hope of revival seems past, w/the mountains barren & the valleys dead,

God will regather the Jews from the nations back into their land.

The forests will grow, the flowers blossom, & the fields produce bumper crops.

Though hedged in by enemies, Israel will be safe & secure, enjoying great prosperity.

You don't need to be a Bible scholar to know the eerie fulfillment of this prophecy.

After being a desolate wilderness for **1800 yrs**, the modern State of Israel was reborn in May 1948.

Its existence is nothing less than a miracle!

As I sahdred Sunday . . .

Israel is 1/20th the size of CA w/a population of 8 million.

It's surrounded by ½ billion Muslims in 22 nations, most of which hate her & want to see her driven into the sea.

Despite all this against her, tiny Israel is a world center of **innovation & technology**.

Microsoft, IBM, Intel, & Sun Microsystems all have their major research & production facilities in Israel.

Most of the latest chip designs owe their innovations to Israeli labs.

Israel is a major food **exporter**, sending many tons of fruit, vegetables & flowers to Europe.

Farmers from all over the world travel to Israel to learn new food production techniques.

The joke in Israel is that the new national bird is the **crane**, because you see them all over the skyline of their major cities, there's so much **building** going on.

As we come to ch. 38 now, keep in mind that the ch. & verse division were added hundreds of years later.

Ezekiel's prophecy went on. The **vision** of the valley of bones he had turns to a **message** . . .

¹ Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.

The names mentioned here are people who occupied a geographic region.

Those regions lie in modern nations, with names different from what we find here.

All we need to do to know what modern nations are being referred to is to find out where these people lived.

The ancient Greek Father of History **Herodotus**, along w/the Jewish historian **Josephus** & the Roman historian **Pliny** tell us where these people lived.

Magog was the land of the Scythians, the ethnic ancestors of the Russians.

The Rosh, Meshech & Tubal were all major tribes of these people, who left their mark on the regions where they lived.

It’s frn the **Rosh** that we get the name **Russia**.

The **Meshech** are the **Muscovi** who gave their name to the capital of Russia – **Moscow**.

And the **Tubal** lived in E Magog w/their central city being **Tobolsk**.

Leading this campaign is a guy named **Gog**, described here as a **prince**.

We get no help on who this guy is from his name.

We simply don’t know what the word “Gog” means.

Most likely, God just calls him “Gog” because he leads Magog.

All we need to know is that he’s the ruler.

So, since Magog is Russia, **calling** this guy “Gog” is like calling him “**The Russian**.”

Okay, remember the scene

Ch. 37 > Ezekiel is standing in once dry desolate land that’s become a lush & fertile valley packed w/people, HIS people, who used to be long dead bones but have been brought back to life.

God then tells Ezekiel to face north & take a posture against Gog. Saying to him . . .

⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.

Little force or large? Large – a great company.

The **words** Ezekiel uses to describe this army are provocative.

The word he uses for **army** refers to a **great force of men fully equipped for war**.

This isn’t a little raiding party.

It’s an army bent on conquest, fully prepared w/the latest equipment.

The word **horses** is an **unusual** word; not the typical word for horse used at that time.

It literally meant “leaper” & in some other passages is used of **birds**.

It pictures something that takes flight.

“Horsemen” refers to a team of horses attached to a vehicle.

It’s the word that was used for the ancient cavalry & for the large siege weapons pulled by teams of horses.

It’s interesting that modern mechanized mobile units are still called a *cavalry*.

The rest of terms are all vaguely indicative of *military hardware* but aren’t the *usual* words for these things.

It’s as though Ezekiel picked words that would convey the *idea* of warfare but wanted to communicate that it would be warfare *on a scale different* from his day.

With a little imagination it’s not difficult to see an allusion to a modern military force

With aircraft, mechanized infantry & cavalry units & a vast force.

Magog isn’t the only invader. They have allies . . .

⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.

Persia is of course modern Iran.

Ethiopia in Hebrew is *Cush*, one of the grandsons of Noah by his son Ham.

History tells us Cush settled between the 2nd & 3rd cataract of the Nile.

This modern day North Sudan.

Libya in Hebrew is Put, a brother of Cush who settled N Africa, east of Egypt = Modern Libya.

Gomer settled in W Anatolia while *Togarmah* settled in E Anatolia.

Anatolia is the modern nation of Turkey.

Note that both Gomer & Togarmah are described as having “*troops*.”

The word means *bands – groups*.

The descendants of both Gomer & Togarmah were dozens of tribes that settled all across Asia Minor.

Today they make up the nations of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Chechnya, & NE Iran.

They join in a military alliance led by Gog, the Russian ruler.

⁷ “Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. ⁸ After many days you will be visited.

After a long time – it will be their time.

In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword *and* gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. ⁹ You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.”

This alliance will mobilize and attempt an invasion of Israel in the last days – the very days set up by chs. 36-7.

The Jews have been gathered from all over the world back into their land which is prospering greatly.

This invasion is a sneak attack. It seems to be a time of peace & safety.

Israel *thinks* the threat level is low.

¹⁰ ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On that day it shall come to pass *that* thoughts will arise in your [Gog’s] mind, and you will make an evil plan: ¹¹ You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’ — ¹² to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places *that are again* inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.

Here’s the real reason why Gog invades Israel – for *economic gain*.

As we saw Sunday, while this invasion will likely be conducted under the cover of some kind of justifiable excuse, like Israel’s attack of Iran’s nuclear facilities –

The REAL reason is sheer greed.

But what would Russia want from Israel?

Over the years many commentators have suggested all kinds of things.

The Dead Sea Valley is super rich in minerals, chief among them is *potash* which is crucial for both fertilizer & munitions.

Some evangelical Christians have read this and some references to tar mentioned in Genesis and concluded there must be oil in Israel so they’ve invested billions in oil exploration in Israel, to some limited success.

But for sure what HAS BEEN discovered recently in Israel as huge *natural gas* fields.

Natural gas is one of Russia chief sources of income, but it’s a resource that’s running out.

For that reason, Russia has kept control of the pipelines shipping natural gas from Central Asia to the West.

In Aug 2008, *Georgia* tried to take control of the gas pipelines that ran through their country, so the Russians invaded to take over.

Over the last few years, Israel has discovered 2 massive natural gas fields they’ve called *Tamar & Leviathan*.

Just last month they found a smaller, but still large field called *Karish*.

Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia has made his ambitions for Russia quite clear.

He longs to see Russia become *the* world’s dominant political super-power, w/himself as its ruler.

Energy is the name of the game, & right now, the Middle East is the world’s main oil supplier.

So Russia has worked hard to woo the nations of the Middle East.

Those nations, except of Israel, are all Muslim, & as such sworn to see Palestine reclaimed for Islam.

While Russia maintains a *public* posture of mild indifference to Israel, behind the scenes, they form alliances w/the Islamists, provide training for them and arm them.

The weapons used by Hamas, Hezb’allah, Syria, Iran, & the other radical jihadists all come from Russia.

Russia’s economy is so bad they depend on selling their resources in exchange for hard currency.

So they sell weapons, timber, oil & natural gas.

They’re now about out of timber, having sold most of it to China, & their oil & gas resources are getting

thin.

The writing's on the wall. Putin knows he needs to do something soon to supply Russia with a source of income.

Those natural gas fields in Israel look mighty tempting.

And he knows nations like Iran, Sudan, & Libya are just itching to get rid of Israel.

As I mentioned Sunday, Gomer & Togarmah = **Turkey** is the single hitch, the lone hiccup here.

But as recent events there show – Turkey is rapidly moving toward the Islamist camp.

V. 13 introduces some new players . . .

¹³ Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?' ”

These guys aren't part of the alliance that attacks Israel.

They seem to **oppose** it by saying the invasion isn't legit.

So – who's referred to here?

Sheba & Dedan were grandsons of Abraham by his 3rd wife, Keturah.

They settled the **Arabian peninsula** along w/the descendants of Ishmael.

These are the people classically known as “**Arabs.**”

The merchants of Tarshish & all their young lions is less easily determined.

According to ancient sources, **Tarshish** was an island that provided an abundance of tin.

And for that reason, some scholars think it's **England**.

The ancient word for England, “**Britannia**” means “**Land of tin.**”

So this may be a reference to England & her “young lions” may pt to the US & Canada.

What we have here is Saudi Arabia along w/England & North America, standing on the sidelines as this invasion begins, asking what's going on.

As I mentioned Sunday, who else isn't part of this alliance we might expect to be?

Where's Egypt?

After all, Egypt has been the lead nation in a couple of the earlier wars w/Israel.

But the Camp David Accords have brought a peace between the 2 that been mutually beneficial.

And now, Egypt's embroiled in it's own drama that's taken it out of interaction with others.

Where's Jordan?

Jordan shares a long border with Israel, but has been beat up pretty bad in previous wars.

So they too have a mutually beneficial peace with Israel.

And now, Israel is planning on running pipelines to Jordan for some of the natural gas.

Pipelines, by the way they've also offered to **Egypt!**

Where's Saudi Arabia?

The birthplace of modern radical Islam!

If there was **any** nation we'd expect to attack Israel **for religious reason** it's SA.

But they're aligned w/the West **against** this alliance. Why?

Because even more than they hate Israel, they hate Iran.

SA is the HW for Sunni Islam while Iran is the center of Shiite Islam.

Both are major oil exporters – so competitors.

Also, SA knows Russia would LOVE to get in bed w/them so they could gain access to their oil.

That's why SA has kept a tentative relationship with the US and buys it's military hardware from the west rather than Russia.

Where's Syria?

Syria's in its own death throes.

But did you see the report from **this weekend?**

Both Syria & Iran **issued warnings** to the US & Europe that any attack on Syria on reports Syria used chemical weapons would result in **their** launching strategic level weapons at Israel!

And Russia bolstered that claim by giving a strong warning to the West to leave its ally Syria alone.

Israel has already flown bombing missions on targets **in Syria** when intelligence reports said dangerous weapons were being passed to Hezb'allah in Lebanon.

It's fascinating that this prophecy, given 2500 yrs ago, so perfectly aligns with the world's current political situation.

And, provocatively – for the first time in history!

Simply put—at no other time in history have the people & nations been aligned to fulfill this prophecy.

¹⁴ “Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you [Gog] not know *it*? ¹⁵ Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.”

While Gog and his allies conspire to invade Israel, God allows it all to unfold as they plan – to a point – because He has a purpose for it all.

This last day's ruler of Russia, whoever he is—Putin or someone else—thinks he's so clever & is mindless in regard to God.

But he is in fact, just a player in a drama God wrote long time ago.

He's no puppet. God's not pulling his strings.

He does what he does because he wills to do it.

But God knew ahead of time he would & installed guard rails to make sure Gog stays within the scope of God's plan for His people.

God says in v. 16 all this happens so that the world will know He's at work.

It's going to be especially evident **to Israel** that God is real & protecting them.

It's what happens here w/this invasion that begins the work of them turning in faith to Him.

¹⁷ Thus says the Lord God: “Are *you* he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?”

This verse is difficult to translate & even more difficult to interpret.

But it seems as though God is saying when what’s foretold here finally comes to pass,
Because this is a passage that has garnered so much attention for such a long time,
People will **realize** they’re **seeing** prophecy fulfilled.

¹⁸ “And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” says the Lord God, “*that* My fury will show in My face.

That’s a scary image!

¹⁹ For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, ²⁰ so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.’

In other words – global upheaval!

Is literally EVERY wall on Earth going to topple?

We probably ought to take this **figuratively**.

The entire planet will be effected by what happens when God moves against this attacking alliance.

No barrier will be able to keep God out.

As I mentioned Sunday, look at how the global economy has effected when 2 towers fell in NY on 9/11.

Imagine what kind of global trauma will ensue when Russia & Iran are virtually wiped out.

But there’s more . . .

²¹ I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,” says the Lord God. “Every man’s sword will be against his brother. ²² And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

You Bible students – In Romans 13, who does Paul say God gives the power of the sword to?

Civil govt.!

That phrase at the beginning of v. 21 = “I will call for a sword” means God will use some nation as the agent of His judgment on this invading alliance – just as He brought the sword of Babylon against Jerusalem earlier in Ezekiel.

WHO possess the military capacity to challenge Russia & Iran?

Who has the ability to target this invading army?

The US naval fleets in the Persian Gulf & Med.

But what happens if the US launches cruise missiles at the Russians?

It's war! And they might escalate & launch strategic nukes on our mainland, which we'd reciprocate.

Listen – I know this is all highly tentative; just supposition.

But it does provide a possible explanation for why the US is left out of Last Days prophecy.

What between the Rapture & a nuclear exchange with Russia, there's little left to matter in the end times.

And what's interesting is that if this did indeed occur, it removes Russia from the field too.

That would leave the political power centers of Europe and China as the 2 final end times players – exactly as the Bible foretells.

Take a close look at how God describes the destruction of the invasion -

And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

After saying in v. 21 every man's sword will be against another, *this* judgment is described.

The sword isn't a literal metal blade – it's warfare on a whole different level.

It's not difficult to understand Ezekiel using ancient words to describe nuclear weapons.

²³ Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I *am* the Lord.” ’

Ch. 39

¹ “And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; ² and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. ³ Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. ⁴ You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who *are* with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. ⁵ You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken,” says the Lord God.

The invading army is wiped out – but there's more . . .

⁶ “And I will send fire on Magog [Russia] and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I *am* the Lord.

The coastlands might refer to Iran, Libya & Turkey who do have some important cities on their coastlines.

But it may also refer to those young lions of the merchants of Tarshish who settled their trade & commercial centers on the coast.

Yes, this may be an oblique ref to the US who's set in opposition to Magog/Russia here in v. 6.

⁷ So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I *am* the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ Surely it is coming, and it shall be done,” says the Lord God. “This *is* the day of which I have spoken.

What happens both to Israel & the world at this point proves a turning pt in history.

It will be manifestly evident that what Ezekiel has foretold has come to pass.

Such fulfilled prophecy will confront the world with the reality of God and of His favor for Israel.

That they even exist after this attack is a miracle that cannot be gainsaid.

And while this proves the turning pt for the Jews to turn **TO** God, it will be the fulcrum around which the **rest** of the world turns **away** frn Him.

That they go frn here to unbelief puts them squarely in a spiritual place of deception that is ripe for a character like the antichrist.

⁹ “Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for 7 years. ¹⁰ They will not take wood from the field nor cut down *any* from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them,” says the Lord God.

While Godf came to pillage Israel, it is in fact the invader who’ll be pillaged.

The resources they bring will fuel Israel energy needs for the next 7 years.

Because an unburied dead body defiles the land, all of Israel will mobilize to bury the invaders.

It takes them 7 mos.

¹¹ “It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹² For 7 months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified,” says the Lord God. ¹⁴ “They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of 7 months they will make a search. ¹⁵ The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man’s bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹⁶ The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land.” ’

While Israel is employed in this massive national work – the rest of the world will look on and have that crisis time of being confronted with the reality of God.

This seems to be the period of global crisis the world pauses to assess how to proceed.

Do they turn to God or what?

It’s probably during this time that the antichrist begins his career.

¹⁷ “And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, ‘Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field:

“Assemble yourselves and come; Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood.

¹⁸ You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

¹⁹ You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you.

²⁰ You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war,” says the Lord God.

The birds will help dispose of the bodies during the 7 months they’re buried.

²¹ “I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. ²² So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward. ²³ The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. ²⁴ According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them.” ’

Not long ago, a Muslim scholar wrote a book on Eze. 38-39 from a Muslim perspective.

He claims Gog is the president of the US and Magog is the US, and that the attack here is a Us & Israeli led invasion of some Muslim nation.

It was a best-seller in several nations of the ME.

The author spiritualizes all the names and references and totally disregards history to make it fit a Muslim-perspective.

But here’s why such a book may actually be a boon.

Millions of Muslims are now aware of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

So, what happens when Russia & Iran are wiped out?

They’ll have to re-interpret Ezekiel 38-9 in light of that, and will realize the God is FOR Israel.

²⁵ “Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name— ²⁶ after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid. ²⁷ When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, ²⁸ then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. ²⁹ And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord God.”

This is it: The era of Israel shame & judgment is past.

Now comes the glorious age of their restoration & the fulfillment of all God’s promises.