

## ESCHATOLOGY (94) (Russia)

...Gesenius, whose *Hebrew Lexicon* has never been superseded, says that "Gog" is "undoubtedly the Russians." He declared that "Rosh" was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus mountains, dwelling in the neighborhood of the Volga, and he held that in this name and tribe we have the first trace in history of the "Russ" or Russian nation. Gesenius also identified "Meshech" as Moscow, the capital of modern Russia in Europe. "Tubal" he identified as Tobolsk, the earliest province of Asiatic Russia to be colonized, and, also, the name of the city wherein Peter the Great built the old fortress after the pattern of the Kremlin at Moscow. Moscow bespeaks Russian in Europe, and Tobolsk bespeaks Russia in Asia.

...The Biblical and Theological Dictionary. Therein do we read: "Magog signifies the country or people, and Gog the king of that country; the general name of the northern nations of Europe and Asia or the districts north of the Caucasus of Mount Taurus."

Thus the identification of Rosh as modern Russia would seem to be well authenticated and generally accepted."

(Cited from, J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pp. 326-328.)

As we previously stated, **the most graphic scriptural account of prophecy about Russia is Ezekiel 38-39**. However, there are other references in Scripture that pertain to this same military force:

- 1) Daniel 11:40 - This is clearly a reference to the same events described in Ezekiel.
- 2) Joel 2:1-27 - This is a reference to the same episode (i.e. 2:20).

In all of these passages a prevailing eschatological theme is that when these events occur, the coming of the Lord is very near - Ezekiel 39:25-29; Daniel 9:24; Joel 3:14-17.

### Analysis of Ezekiel 38-39

**Ezekiel 38:1** - Ezekiel 38:1 makes it clear that this prophecy comes directly from God. What this ultimately means is that God will do exactly what He has predicted He will do and this is the way His prophetic plan will unfold. For Russia and nations connected with her, the news is not good. In view of the depth of the prophecy, it is also news that will not change. The wise thing for Russians to do is to believe on Jesus Christ now.

**Ezekiel 38:2-9** - These verses describe the fact that many nations will link themselves to Russia. These nations are identified as Meshech and Tubal (38:2); Persia, Cush and Put (38:5); Gomer and Togarmah (38:6), plus some others. The problem for the student today is trying to determine the specific location of these nations who will link themselves with Russia at the time this prophecy is fulfilled. Some link Meshech and Tubal so closely with Gog and Magog that they count them all as one nation; therefore, Russia is one nation which includes places known as Gog, Magog, Meshech and Tubal. These forces move with at least five other nations which include Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and Togarmah (38:5-6).

## ESCHATOLOGY (95) (Russia)

On the map we have drawn, we place Meschech and Tubal where most scholars place them. However, as Dr. Gesenius observed, since the chief prince rules over all of the places named in verse 2, it is very possible that “Rosh” could be understood as Russia, “Meshech” could be understood as Moscow and “Tubal” could be understood as Tobolsk, which are key cities in Russia. If we take the terms to refer to places where it has been determined this lineage lived, then modern day Turkey will soon unite with Russia and become intimately connected with her, governed by her and destined for doom.

Some of the other nations specifically named in verses 5-6 are relatively easy to identify and some are extremely difficult. For example, Persia is easily located and identified, for it is modern day Iran. A quick check of any map indicates that Iran could easily link itself with Russia in the north and sweep down against Israel from the northeast. Cush is difficult to locate, but has been identified as being a country near Egypt, west of the Nile river. Put is also uncertain, but many place it in Africa. Actually some scholars place Put south of Cush and others place it north of Cush. Either way, we get a general idea of where these two are located.

Dr. Walvoord brings out an important point when he says that these powers could easily travel by sea (across the Mediterranean) to join forces with the north (*Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, p. 152). Since Gomer has generally been identified as that land in Asia Minor, and since Beth-Togarmah has been identified as land close to Armenia, it is very possible that such a crossing of the Mediterranean will take place. As Dr. Walvoord says, “When all the facts are put together, it indicates that linguistically, geographically, and theologically, the identity of the invading nations is sufficiently clear to identify them as a great force coming from the north” (*Ibid.*, p. 192).

One other fact needs to be pointed out—Russia extends more than six thousand miles east to west. Therefore **any** reference to a nation to the “far north” of Israel, by pure geographical facts alone, must include and refer to Russia. The words translated “north quarters,” or “north parts,” or “remote parts of the north” (38:6, 15; 39:2) is a Hebrew word that means the extreme or farthest regions of the north (Gesenius, pp. 368-369). By virtue of the fact that Russia runs thousands of miles east to west, this prophecy is specifically aimed at her.

Now the essence of the prophecy in Ezekiel 38:4 is that God is going to Personally bring Russia and other nations against Israel. This will be a massive army from the north, and will feature Russia and other countries with many troops of peoples (38:6). The armies will be prepared and armed for battle. But the amazing reality of this is, as Dr. Charles Dyer observed, Gog’s attack on Israel will actually be orchestrated by God” (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 1300). All people need to stand in fear and awe of God. When the final script is written, God will have used the godless and the godly for His sovereign purposes. It is very wise to think this way—Proverbs 16:4.

Verse 7 is a specific warning to Israel to be on guard against Russia. Ezekiel’s warning is that Israel needs to be prepared for a day when Russia will come against her.

## ESCHATOLOGY (96) (Russia)

In verses 8-9, we get a glimpse as to what the situation will be like when Russia attacks Israel:

- 1) This prophecy will be fulfilled many days after Ezekiel gave it. 38:8a
- 2) This prophecy will be fulfilled in the latter years, the end times. 38:8b
- 3) This prophecy will be fulfilled when many Jews have returned to Israel from many nations. 38:8c
- 4) This prophecy will be fulfilled when Israel is inhabiting desolate mountains of Israel. 38:8d
- 5) This prophecy will be fulfilled when Israel is dwelling safely in her land. 38:8e

According to verse 9, when these conditions are in order, Russia and her allies will sweep into Israel like a storm. Her numbers of people will be so impressive that it will appear to be like a cloud covering all the Promised Land.

Before moving forward into the specific prophecy, we make the following observations:

- 1) It has been many days since Ezekiel made this prophecy, approximately 2500 years.
- 2) Jews are continuing to return to the Promised Land from several nations at a record rate.
- 3) There is an unprecedented level of peace emphasis on things pertaining to the Middle East.
- 4) There is a rapid expansion in Russia of Muslims devoted to Islam, making alliances with powers like Iran more possible than at any other time in history.

**Ezekiel 38:10-13** - These key verses inform us of precisely what Russia will do:

- 1) Russia will mentally devise an evil plan. 38:10

The evil plan is to disregard the significance of Israel and purpose to conquer her and destroy her. **Make no mistake about this point; to think in a derogatory way against Israel is evil thinking in God's estimation.** There are many times when Russia will appear to be Israel's friend, but the truth of the Bible is she is her enemy! Dr. C. I. Scofield observed: "Russia and the northern powers have long been persecutors of dispersed Israel, and it is congruous both with divine justice and with the covenants of God that destruction should fall in connection with the attempt to exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem" (*New Scofield Reference Bible*, NASV, p. 1167).

- 2) Russia will attack when Israel appears to be relatively safe and peaceful. 38:11, 14

The description of life in Israel just prior to Russia's attack is one of security, peace and safety. Obviously, at this time, Israel does not have her defenses up and is enjoying a time of rest from military turmoil that normally plagues her, which means the Antichrist has calmed things down for her. We may expect to see more and more peace talks taking place and that some form of temporal peace will be worked out for Israel, just prior to Russia's vicious attack.

## ESCHATOLOGY (97) (Russia)

3) Russia will attack when Israel is prosperous. 38:12

“Cattle” and “goods” were two key items of economic prosperity during Ezekiel’s day.

When Russia attacks Israel, she will be flourishing economically. Many Jews are going to move back to Israel and the commerce and prosperity of those living in that land will be noticed by godless nations of the world.

Since our belief is that these events occur about half-way through the Great Tribulation, we conclude that even though much of the world has suffered the seal judgments of God (Revelation 6:1-17—especially note verses 1-8), Israel has been somewhat protected and continues to blossom. When we consider that Russia has food shortages now and realize this will get much worse during the Tribulation, we may easily see how she could begin to think in terms of attacking and looting Israel, a place to the south that is thriving. What we may expect to see is that Israel will prosper and Russia will become less and less prosperous.

4) Russia will have communication with and the support of other nations. 38:13

Sheba and Dedan have generally been identified by students of prophecy as Arabs. For example, Dr. John Walvoord and Dr. Charles Ryrie both identify these as being Arabs (*Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, pp. 193-194; *Ryrie Study Bible*, NASV, note 38:13, p. 1324).

This verse suggests that when Russia begins her move against Israel, some Arab countries will take a real interest in this move and want to know her plans. They will be particularly interested to know whether or not Russia is going to demolish Israel and take away her wealth. The implication is that they want that wealth too and more than likely will become Russia’s allies. Prophetically speaking then we may expect the Arabs to enter into some peace negotiations with Israel and to initially appear to be in peace with her until these events unfold and then Arab nations will turn against her. Brother (Ishmael) will be against brother (Isaac). As Russia moves from the north, many Arab nations will join with her.

One other point is worth noting from this verse. It is known that Sheba and Tarshish are two places that will honor God and Israel during the Millennium (Isaiah 60:6, 9-14). This would seem to suggest that there will be those Arab people who will not turn against Israel during the Tribulation. These will be allowed to enter the Kingdom at the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46). It is clearly known by dispensational students of Scripture that the central issue that determines who enters the Kingdom and who doesn’t is the treatment of the Jew during the Tribulation (Matthew 24:21; 25:40). We may assume that a few Arabs will learn of Russia’s evil plan to destroy Israel and will actually reach out to help and minister to the Jews. It will be this act that will enable those Arabs to enter the Kingdom. This is good news for those who live in Sheba (southwest Arabia) or Tarshish (possibly Lebanon or Spain). However, for Dedan (Persian Gulf region), the news is not good for she is destined for judgment and doom (Ezekiel 25:13; Jeremiah 25:23 (vv. 12-27)). These people hear the same news—Russia is attacking Israel—but respond differently to it. Some seek to honor God and some don’t and pay the price.

