

ESCHATOLOGY (101) (Russia)

Ezekiel 39:1-2 - God is against Russia. Verse 2 makes it clear that God is the One who has caused Russia to come against Israel. Notice the geographic origination is from the “remote parts of the north.”

Ezekiel 39:3 - God, through His own direct judgments, will have weakened Russia so greatly that before she can use her weapons against Israel, they have been taken out of her hand. Dr. Walvoord makes an interesting observation regarding bows and arrows: “Though bows and arrows are usually characterized as primitive weapons, they actually have played a part in modern warfare and were used extensively, for instance, in Vietnam. Because an arrow going through the air did not give away the location of the one who shot the arrow, it therefore was good for use in jungle situations” (*Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, p. 196).

Ezekiel 39:4-5 - Apparently, by the time Russia and her allies reach the mountain areas of Israel, she will be so weakened by God that those who even made it to the land will die in the mountains and fields. Birds and wild animals will literally eat the bodies. This once powerful nation and army that mocked God will end up being food for birds and wild animals. The end of verse 5 states that this most assuredly will happen because God has spoken and decreed it.

Ezekiel 39:6 - God will also do one other thing; He will go to Russia and inflict a judgment on those who live securely in the land. Dr. Walvoord says this is a “special judgment” of God upon “the land from which the Russian army troops came” (*Ibid.*, p. 196). Russia, at this time in the Great Tribulation, will be totally doomed.

Ezekiel 39:7-8 - Verse 7 informs us that God’s devastating judgment against Russia is something that establishes several things: **1)** It establishes that God is Holy. Notice that three times in verse 7 this word “holy” is repeated. **The critical point of this is that God’s judgment declares His holiness.** This principle of establishing God’s holiness through judgment is something that is to actually be demonstrated in God’s local church. Notice Paul’s words to the Corinthians— I Corinthians 5:5-8, 13. Clearly judgments make a statement about God’s holiness. From an individual perspective, the same is true in our own lives (I Corinthians 11:31). We may assume, from this text in Ezekiel, that in order for our lives to make a statement for God’s holiness, we must ferociously judge ourselves and anything sinful and eliminate it. When God demolishes Russia, His holy name will be known and when we demolish evil in our own lives, His holy name will be seen and known. **2)** It establishes that God is with Israel, which is critical at this part of the Tribulation. When God pours out His wrath on Russia and her allies, nations of the world will instantly realize God is closely connected to Israel. The sad reality of the theological world is that few realize this point. The demonic “Replacement Theology” teaches that God is no longer interested in Israel, but has replaced her with the Church.

Ezekiel 39:9-10 - One of the results of this devastating judgment is that there will be so many weapons collected and accumulated by those living in Israel that they will be able to use them for fuel for seven years. There will be so much wood taken from these weapons that for the space of seven years there will be no need to cut wood from the fields or forests in the land of Israel. This certainly implies the size of the army which God destroys is massive.

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This prediction is specific in that wood from the weapons will be used for fuel, which indicates that this passage is to be interpreted literally and not figuratively.

This will be incredible spoil. This also seems to imply that the types of weapons described are literal (38:4-5; 39:3, 9), because in order for there to be enough wood to be able to burn fuel for seven years, much burnable material is required. Trying to suggest that this refers to tanks or airplanes is not an interpretation this passage will support. The material collected is wood, which means a non-cutting of timber in the land of Israel (39:10).

Now one thing that has caused some controversy from verse 9 is the statement that this burning of material will last seven years. Since the prophecy clearly states that Israel will be in a time of peace (38:8, 11), and since Daniel's prophecy only allows for a time of peace for Israel during the first 3½ years of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27), we must conclude that this prophecy concerning Russia occurs near the end of the first 3½ years. **Now the controversy is this—since these events occur near the 3½ years point and since the text specifically says the wood will be burned for 7 years, how do we account for the final 3½ years in which the wood is burned?**

The most logical solution to this problem is that for the first 3½ years of the Millennium, in which Jesus Christ is reigning as King over Israel, this material will still provide fuel for those living in the land.

In the early days of the fulfillment of a prophecy such as Isaiah 65:18-25, this fuel will still be available. During the Millennium, life will basically exist as we know it. As Dr. Walvoord said, "The problem of fuel lasting seven years, however, is not a real prophetic problem because even after the Lord returns they will still need fuel for fires in the millennial kingdom as life goes on" (*Ibid.*, p. 197).

The fuel that will be used for the final 3½ years of the Great Tribulation and the first 3½ years of the Millennium will be fuel supplied by God because of the destruction of Russia. The actual fulfillment of this prophecy occurs 3½ years prior to Christ's return and 3½ years after Christ's return.

Ezekiel 39:11-16 - These verses graphically describe what will happen to the bodies of the Russians who attacked Israel and are destroyed by God:

- 1) Many Russians will be buried in the land of Israel. 39:11a
- 2) Many Russians will be buried on the east side of the sea. 39:11b
Probably east of the Dead Sea, modern day Jordan. Thousands of bodies transported there.
- 3) There will be so many bodies that they will literally stop those trying to travel. 39:11c
On the east side of the Dead Sea, there is a major transportation artery known as the Kings Highway. Apparently, there will be so many dead bodies that it will literally stop travel in this area. Those who travel will be stopped by the multitude of dead bodies. (For a good study of the roads in Israel see *Moody Atlas of the Bible*, pp. 64-69.)
- 4) There will be a renaming of the area. 39:11d
The word "Hamon" literally means multitude or hordes. The name of the burial ground will be the "valley of the multitude or hordes of Gog." What Russia will be remembered for is her burial ground.

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5) It will take seven months to bury the bodies. 39:12

This, in itself, is a staggering thought, but combined with the next point it becomes even more staggering.

6) It will take all the people seven months to bury the bodies. 39:13a

There are so many bodies that all of Israel works seven months as a team just to bury them. When one considers that even right now there are several million Jews in the Promised Land, before God has drawn Israel back, one realizes that the number of people who will be destroyed is staggering.

7) It will be publicized that the people of Israel are doing this burial work. 39:13d

The entire world will be speaking of the fact that Russia and her allies swept down from the north to attack Israel and God, Himself, intervened and stopped Russia and destroyed her and now Israel is spending her time burying the bodies of those who wanted to bury Israel. When this testimony is given, God will be glorified. God will be glorified even by massive executions and massive burials. People will realize that you do not tamper with God's people for if you do you receive severe judgment of God.

8) There will be a continued search for dead bodies. 39:14-16

According to verse 14, at the end of the seven months, there will be an employment of certain people whose job it will be to hunt for more bodies. Travelers who move through the land and spot a body will be required to mark it so grave diggers and dead body handlers may see it and take it back to Hamon-gog for burial. Apparently there will be so many employed to do this that they will establish a new city called Hamonah, which means multitude or hordes.

Ezekiel 39:17-20 - These verses are important because God specifically warns against the evil that will eventually happen to Russia. The natural roles of animals and people will be reversed. Normally it is people who track down and slaughter and sacrifice animals for food. However, when this judgment occurs, it will be the animals that will eat a sacrificed group of dead bodies for food. Notice from **verse 17** that it is God who calls these birds and animals to His dining hall to partake of something He has sacrificed for them.

Verses 18-19 reveal that these birds and beasts will eat the flesh and drink the blood of the entire Russian army and her allies. There will be so much carnage for the birds and animals that it is as if they were eating rams, lambs, goats and bulls. They will be gorged on an abundance of human flesh that includes its leadership. It is predicted that Russia will eventually become food for animals. (When we read a text like this and then read passages such as Matthew 10:29 or Luke 12:6, it is only logical that we interpret them literally. God not only knows each animal and bird intimately, but He provides its food.)

One cannot help but observe that a primary topic pertaining to Russia is food shortages. In the end Russia will be the food source for birds and animals. Those in Russia need to hear the Gospel. If one believes on Jesus Christ, one never has to worry about this judgment.