

“The Final War”
Ezekiel 38-39

- INTRO. - ILL. - In June of 1967 the world was astounded, as in Six Days, the small nation of Israel demolished and devastated the combined land and air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, recapturing the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Old City of Jerusalem.
- The War that shook the world -- the unbelievable war -- the incredible victory -- was reminiscent of the miraculous Victory of the United States at Midway during World War II, when in five fateful minutes the U.S. fleet – (vastly outnumbered by the Japanese vessels five to one) -- destroyed and sank Japan's four premier aircraft carriers, changed the course of the War, and blunted Japan's aggression in the Pacific.
- Similarly, in the Six Day War, against seemingly hopeless odds, in less than three hours the Israeli air force destroyed three hundred Egyptian aircraft on the ground, losing only 3-4 planes in the process.
- When Jordan entered the war, the Israelis attacked with a vengeance. To many, it was like the "day of the Lord" in Biblical prophecy. Quickly, the West Bank was seized from Jordanian forces, and the Old City of Jerusalem, from which Jews had been expelled during the time of Emperor Haitian in 135 A.D., once again fell into Jewish hands.
- After having been exiled from Jerusalem for some 1832 years, it seemed like a dream come true. Once again Jewish feet trod on the holy places of Zion! The enemies of Israel were vanquished in six days! Who could believe it? Surely the hand of the Almighty was evident in this spectacular victory and momentous epic event!
- One of the most memorable pictures ever, was the picture of Israeli soldiers at the foot of the Western Wall of the Temple mount right after it had been recaptured.
- As you probably know, the restoration of Israel (as a nation) is the single greatest event in modern times (as far as Bible prophecy goes). Israel is the center of God's end-times plan. Those who study Bible prophecy know that the primary concern is what is happening in the Middle East.
- And biblically, we know that the next major event (apart from the Rapture of the church) will be the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and the Antichrist, and that will usher the world into the period of history known as the Tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel.
- The times of the Gentiles will end, and God's redemptive plan will shift back to Israel. And (as we have seen in our study of Revelation) the Bible

sheds much light on this intense period of human history.

- But because we have been looking at the Battle of Armageddon (in Rev. 19:17ff) tonight I want us to go to Ezekiel 37-39.
- This prophecy, (recorded in these three chapters), is one of the most incredible prophecies in all of Scripture. It is amazing because Ezekiel wrote this 700 years before Christ's birth. And he spoke of Apocalyptic events that would occur right before the second coming of Christ.
- Now, Ezek. 38-39 mention an alliance of nations with strange names like: Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, and Togarmah. Who are these nations that will come against Israel? We're going to look at that tonight.
- Pastor Stan Coffey calls this, "The Last Jihad." Of course, "Jihad" means "holy war." In the Koran it's presented as a declaration of war against all non-Muslims. It's the effort to bring all the world into the Muslim faith by whatever means are necessary to bring them into this faith.
- So, in the early days of Islam, Muhammad, the prophet, (its founder), had two ways that he brought people into the Muslim religion. One of the ways was that he converted people. The other way was he conquered people.
- ILL. - It's like when the Taliban took over in Afghanistan. Islam was already the predominant

religion there, but when the Taliban took over they took away the human rights and (more or less) declared that everybody who lived in Afghanistan had to come under the rule of Islam, (and their interpretation of the rule of Islam).

- This is jihad. Jihad is what ISIS has declared against the United States and many other countries in the west. They are trying to bring us under submission to the laws of Islam, using any means that they can employ to do that -- and they feel they are justified in doing that by whatever means that they need to use (including violence).
- Now, the Bible talks about a last jihad that's coming in the future. Of course, the ultimate goal of jihad is to recapture Jerusalem for Islam. And at the very end of the 7-year Tribulation period, there is going to be that great alliance of nations coming to destroy Israel.
- Now, the first thing I need to deal with (here) is the fact that Ezek. 37-39 have been interpreted in many different ways. Especially the war (in chs. 38-39) have been seen in a variety of ways.
- *Some* people believe that this war has already taken place -- but the reason we know (that the war that's described here) is *not* a war that has already been fought, is because the events mentioned in these two chapters have never occurred at any time in history.

- Never has there been such a warfare recorded in ancient biblical history or in any period of modern history. These things have never come to pass. This political coalition that's mentioned here, with these armies or these countries, has never come against Israel in the way this is described. This is something that is still yet to come.
- Others have seen Ezek. 38-39 as describing more than one war. In fact, a popular notion among Bible prophecy preachers, is to see one war at the beginning of the Tribulation (which results in the peace treaty being signed) and another one at the end of the Tribulation (which is the Battle of Armageddon).
- But do me a favor. Sit down and read Ezek. 38-39 at one time. See if it sounds to you like it is speaking of one thing or more than one thing. I think you will have to conclude that these chapters are describing one single war.
- Now, if that is the case, then this *must* be addressing the Battle of Armageddon for one primary reason. I want to jump to the end of this for a moment and see this (before we go through it in detail).
- Ezek. 39:22 – Here's what it says, “And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward.” The result of this war will bring about the conversion of Israel – and that is clearly tied with the events of the Second Coming of Christ in glory (including the Battle of Armageddon and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom).
- So I believe that sets the context for these three chapters (and it connects with what we see in Rev. 19:17ff). So (with that in mind) let's examine this amazing prophecy.
- And remember, when Ezekiel wrote this, Israel was *not* even a nation. Israel was under foreign domination, and yet the prophet describes a time when Israel would be back in her land, as she is, (in fact), today.
- And this leads us to Ezek. 37, which describes the restoration of Israel. Now, I'm *not* going spend a *lot* of time on this chapter tonight, because I want to get to chps. 38-39. But let's at least look at it briefly because it sets the stage for the rest.
- Chapter 37 of Ezekiel is that great chapter on the vision of the valley of dry bones. It is a prediction that Israel, (which had been overtaken by her enemies, had been dispersed into all the world), essentially would become a valley of dry bones.
- Then God brought them back into the land and the dry bones were brought together and they became a living nation once again, one of the few ancient

nations of the world ever to be revived once it was conquered.

- Look with me at 37:1-2, “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. And He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, *there were* very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, *they were* very dry.”
- The “valley” is a metaphor referring to the world in which the nation of Israel had been dispersed. Look at v. 12, “Therefore prophesy, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.”’”
- The “dryness” of the bones is an analogy of a dead nation that only God can resurrect. Look at v. 3, “And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, Thou knowest.”
- When Ezekiel wrote these words, it seemed impossible for the nation of Israel to be restored. They were, (at that time), being carried away as captives into Babylon.
- Well, go on to v. 4, “Again He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O

dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.’ Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.’”

- Now, this pictures the completion of the entire process. *Not only* does God promise to restore them as a nation, but also to restore them spiritually. The *last* part of this is referring to the spiritual regeneration of Israel, and *that is not* going to happen until the glorious appearing, the actual Second Coming of Christ.
- Verse 14 says, “And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,” declares the LORD.” That is the ultimate goal of God for Israel.
- Look at v. 7, “So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them.”

- Now listen, this is a picture of the nation of Israel right now. They have come back together as a nation, but there is no spiritual life in them. They have yet to be spiritually regenerated. They have come back together into the land, but they have come back in unbelief.
- That's *not* to say that there are no Jews today who are saved. *Some* have believed on Jesus Christ and have received eternal life just like we have. But generally, the nation of Israel is still without spiritual life, even though they are a nation once again.
- That will one day change. Look at v. 9, "Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, 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 come to life." Verse 10, "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army."
- This hasn't happened yet. This is speaking of the spiritual regeneration that will occur when they recognize Jesus as their Messiah and all the remnant of Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26).
- Now, you say, "I'm *not* sure this is really talking about the nation of Israel." Oh really? Look at v. 11, "Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones

are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people."

- You say, "Well, pastor, when he says Israel there, he doesn't really mean the nation of Israel." Really? Then why does he say that he is going to bring them "into the land of Israel?" That sounds pretty specific to me. It sounds to me like God promised that he would restore them to their own land, which is in fact what we have witnessed with our very own eyes.
- Drop down to v. 25, "And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever."
- Now, I must *not* be smart enough to take this any other way than what the Bible literally says, but it sure seems to me like God is saying that there will come a day when they will be in the land that God promised to Abraham (and re-iterated to Jacob),

and that the Messiah will sit on the throne of David forever, just like God promised.

- This is *not* symbolic. It is natural to see this as the actual physical land that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There is nothing in the text to indicate that it should be taken any other way than to see the literal fulfillment of this promise.
- But let's move on (now) to chapter 38. I don't know how far we will get tonight, but we'll get as far as we can.
- Look with me at Ezek. 38:1, "And the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him...'" (Stop right there)
- Now, these are strange-sounding names to us, but they can be identified. First of all, notice that Gog is a *man* from the land of Magog. He is the "the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." (v. 2)
- If you read Genesis 10:2 you will discover that Magog, Meshech, and Tubal were the grandsons of Noah. They became the forefathers of tribes of people who carried their names.
- Historians and lexicographers, (such as Gesenius), tell us those tribes migrated to the north of the Black Sea and settled what is today known as

Russia. The name Meshech is the Hebrew derivative of the Greek word Moschi, from which Moscow receives its name.

- One pastor writes, "Meshech, and Tubal are easily identified by history. Meshech settled in western Russia. The name of the region became known as Moskva and later changed to the modern name, 'Moscow'. Tubal settled in Siberia and the region was called Tobol. The modern day name of Tobol is the city of Tubolsk."
- And notice the title "chief prince" used in Verse 2. This is from the Hebrew word Rosh, which means "top or head." In other words, they were the people living on top of Israel, (in fact) on top of the world. The Hebrew word Rosh is where the name Russia comes from.
- Three times those tribes were said to be located at "the uttermost north of Israel." (Ezekiel 38:6, 15; 39:2) And If you were to draw a line due north from Israel you would pass right through and Moscow.
- Now, almost all Bible scholars are in agreement that this refers to Russia, but it was easier to take this position when Russia was a super-power.
- Jerry Vines says, "...when Communism fell in Russia, it sent Bible teachers of prophecy scurrying for an explanation. The fall of Communism seemed

to remove Russia as the figure that would be involved in this invasion.”

- But don't count the former Soviet Union out. Although the Soviet Union has disintegrated, many students of Bible prophecy believe that Russia is still a threat, and could be more so in the future.
- Verse 3, “and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.”
- Now, other Bible teachers, (including John MacArthur), point out that the usage of “Gog” in the Septuagint is used to refer to both Agag (Num. 24:7) and Og (Deut. 3:1), “possibly showing that though it was a proper name, it came to be used as a general title for an enemy of God's people.” (MacArthur Study Bible)
- One thing that nearly *everyone* agrees on, is that there will be a huge coalition of nations that will come together against Israel in the last days. A confederacy of nations will invade the Promised Land.
- In v. 4 he says, “And 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...”

- Now, the language here *could* be figurative. There is no doubt (here) that God is sovereignly behind all this. He is the One bringing these nations out against Israel in order to lead them to judgment and destruction.
- They will think that it is their own plan, but it will all be according to the drawing of these nations by God, as this verse makes clear.
- However, they may *not* be literally riding on horses. They may *not* literally be wielding swords and shields. This may be an ancient way of describing weapons of war. It doesn't have to be taken literally, if this is (in fact) a figure of speech.
- *Then* some *other* participants are mentioned in v. 5, “Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet...” Interestingly, ancient Persia is modern day Iran.
- Ethiopia is still known by the same name (although it is referred to in the NIV as Cush). “Put” is modern day Libya (possibly also including Saudi Arabia). Verse 6 adds, “Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah *from* the remote parts of the north with all its troops-- many peoples with you.”
- Gomer was the eldest son of Japheth and the grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:2). Contemporary Jews understand Gomer to be Eastern Europe. Gomer's descendants were called "Rheginians",

and a map of the ancient Roman Empire places them in the area where Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany now exist.

- “Togarmah” is *now* what we would call eastern Turkey. So when you put it all together, the Bible predicts a day when there will be an unusual alliance of the nations of the former Soviet Union with the nations of Eastern Europe, northern Africa, and all the Muslim nations in the Middle East, coming together for one purpose: to destroy Israel. (And yet, with current conditions in the world today, it is *not* that difficult for us to conceive of this...)
- Now, there’s another element we need to add to all this. In Revelation 16:12 we read that the waters of the Euphrates River will be dried up, “that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.” This is probably the great army of 200 million men mentioned in Revelation 9:16, the greatest army ever assembled in human history!
- Interestingly, we also read about this great invasion in the second Psalm. According to Psalm 2, the day is coming when all the nations of earth will get together, and the one item on the agenda will be to get rid of God, Christ, and Christianity. “The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed: “Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!”

- And note God’s response. Verse 4, “He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury...”
- This is exactly what we are going to see here in Ezek. 38-39. Listen, God will *not* be at all intimidated by this mighty host. In fact, He will be the One in charge of the whole thing.
- Folks, listen, it is *not* a matter of “if” this will occur, it is only a matter of “when.” The Bible declares that this will one day take place.
- And this isn’t all that far-fetched. Even now, America is often alone in its defense of Israel. And there are many (even in our country) that are beginning to question our position of support. One day, in essence, the entire world will turn against Israel.
- Back in Ezek. 38, look at v. 7, “Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. 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.”

- Again, we see the same thing *here* we saw in Ezek. 37. God will gather His people from being scattered among the nations of the world. They will regather “to the mountains of Israel.” The idea of being “restored from the sword” is that of being returned after persecution has scattered them.
- Now folks, there is only one people this could be referring to here, and that is the nation of Israel. I don’t want to keep hammering this, but I just don’t see any other way of looking at this. God is going to regather His people, Israel, which in fact He already has.
- The only thing needed to fulfill this prophecy is that Israel does *not* now live in safety. But the time is coming when they will have a short period of living in safety. We know *that* period will begin with the signing of the peace agreement.
- And even though the nations of the world keep going back to the peace table, (trying to secure peace without accomplishing it), one day somebody will succeed. Antichrist will pull it off.
- Now, I want to try to get down to v. 17 if we can, because there is a natural break there. Look with me at v. 9, “And 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.”
- This is fast-forwarding (now) to that invasion at the end. This is what it will look like to those in Israel at the time. It will be like a huge cloud covering the entire land of Palestine.
- One author writes, “Coming against the little strip of land called Israel will be the sophisticated air power of Russia, covering her like a canopy. Enemy forces will swarm the land like ants on an ant hill. They will storm Israel and attempt to wipe her out completely, to exterminate her.”
- Now, vv. 10-13 describe the period of peace during the Antichrist’s shortened treaty with them. This, of course will be during the first three and a half years the Tribulation.
- Look at v. 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, 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, 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.' 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?"

- Notice a few things there quickly. Notice, first of all, that God calls this an "evil plan." Satan will be behind this. This will be Satan's final jihad.
- And notice that the purpose of the invasion is said to be that of going down to get spoil. Some have pointed to the tremendous wealth in Israel, (particularly the minerals in the dead sea).
- I don't know if that is what is being referred to here, but apparently they want to go in and take all the possessions of the land of Palestine.
- Now, there is an interesting possibility here, (and I can't be dogmatic about this), but some of the *older* prophecy guys say that the people mentioned in v. 13 are the British colonies, and that would include America.
- This is based on the JKV translation of v. 13, which uses the word "lions." The NASB and the NIV both use "villages," and this word *could* be translated either way. It's the word "kephiyr" (kef-eer').
- Interestingly, in the AV it is only translated "villages" one time, while it is translated "young lion" 30 times.

- Dr. Thomas Chalmers, (who was the director of the New York Jewish Mission many years ago), used to say, "...remember that the lion is the symbol of the British empire. The young lions are her colonies."
- He said, "Britain will be there defending the land; she has traditionally been a defender of Israel. Canada will be there. The United States of America will be there. Our tradition through the years has been to defend Israel."
- He said, "Although America is *not* specifically mentioned in Bible prophecy, I believe she is in this verse (38:13) as a defending power. When Russia comes against Israel, I believe America will be there to say to her, 'Are you come to take a spoil and to take a prey?' But we will not be able to stop her."
- Well, I don't know if that is accurate or *not*, but it is an interesting theory. I hope and pray that the United States will remain the ally of Israel.
- Notice two more things (here) before we move on. First, notice that this tells us that the invaders are going to come up against "the land of unwalled villages." They will attack "those who are at rest, that live securely."
- Again, this is simply a reference to the false peace

that will be entered into, but will be terminated prematurely. Israel does *not* dwell at peace right now, but there will come a day when they will think that they will no longer need any walls to protect themselves.

- And notice that Ezekiel refers to Israel (here) as those “who live at the center of the world.” In God’s perspective, Israel is the center of the earth. Everything revolves around Jerusalem. It will certainly be the center of the world during the Millennial Kingdom, but in essence it already is today.
- Well, let’s move on down quickly. V. 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*? And 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; and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It will come about in the last days that I shall bring you against My land, in order that the nations may know Me when I shall be sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.” 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?””

- Well, we’re out of time, but again notice that the armies will come “out of the remote parts of the north.” The Hebrew language gives it the sense of “uttermost parts” of the north.
- And once again, geographically, God always speaks relative to the land of Israel. Jerusalem is the center and everything is based on that.
- The “horses” (here) may *not* be literal horses. As MacArthur writes, “some see horses here...being used symbolically to represent a meaning which would be easy to grasp in Ezekiel’s day, but which would be fulfilled in the future time with different war forms suitable to that time.”
- And notice that God Himself is going to bring this about “in order that the nations may know (Him) when (He) shall be sanctified...before their eyes.” The ultimate purpose of all this is to glorify God by showing His sovereign power over the nations of the earth.
- And notice lastly, the question of v. 17, “Are you the one...?” This is referring to “Gog” who is (no doubt) the Antichrist. He is the one who will come against God’s people in the final jihad.
- What is going to happen? We’ll have to wait and find out next time...