

Gog's defeat upon the mountains of Israel

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there for burial in Israel, the valley of the passers-by to the east of the sea; and it shall stop the way of the passers-by; and there shall they bury Gog and all the multitude; and they shall call it, Valley of Hamon-Gog. - Ezekiel 39:11

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

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Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance and sometimes from other sources as indicated. Unless otherwise indicated all of these sources, both the bible text's, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from the e-Sword Bible Program or sometimes from THE WORD from Online Bible.

Introduction -

In our study of Ezekiel Chapter 38 we have read about Gog, the leader of a confederation of northern nations that will invade Israel at a time when they are restored to the land and living in peace and safety. We have seen that God Himself will give Gog the thought to do this. It's also been noted that the reasons for God desiring to judge Gog seem to imply a connection with Israel from ancient times. The connection is probably a family one. But what happens to Gog when his forces do invade the land of Israel? Are they successful or are they destroyed? In Chapter 39 we'll see what does become of this leader Gog and the forces arrayed with him against Israel.

Lesson Text Ezekiel 39:1-29

Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the peoples that are with thee: I have given thee to be meat for the birds of prey of every wing, and to the beasts of the field.

Eze 39:1 And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;

Eze 39:2 and I will turn thee back, and lead thee, and will cause thee to come up from the uttermost north, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel.

Eze 39:2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: - KJV

Eze 39:2 and I will turn thee about, and will lead thee on, and will cause thee to come up from the uttermost parts of the north; and I will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel; - ASV

Comments -

and leave but the sixth part of thee is the translation according to the King James Version (KJV) while it's translated and lead thee in the Darby Translation and as and will lead thee on in the American Standard Version (ASV). There's a great difference between 'leaving a sixth of a body of people' on the one hand and on the other 'leading them on to someplace' while not even mentioning the sixth of the people. Which translation is correct? Let's look at some sources. Using the e-Sword Program KJV with Strong's definitions these English words "*and leave but the*

sixth part" are given as the translation of the Hebrew word Strong's number 8338 with the definition -

H8338 ????? sha^sha^' shaw-shaw' A primitive root; apparently to *annihilate*. (Translated by confusion with H8341.): - leave but the sixth part [by confusion with H8341].

Strong's indicates that the word was translated wrongly by the KJV, mistaking the Hebrew word 8338 which means to annihilate for the word 8341 which does refer to a sixth. Checking the Strong's definition for 8341 we see this -

H8341 ????? sha^sha^h shaw-shaw' A denominative from H8337; to *sixth or divide into sixths*: - give the sixth part.

The word 8341 does, according to Strong's definition, have the idea of a sixth. Looking at other common sources for word study there's the impression that the words Strong's numbers 8338 through 8341 are similar. For all of these (similar sounding?) words the TWOT gives meanings with variations on six such as six, sixty and sixth. That supports the KJV translation. Gesenius sees the meaning as being lead. The BDB definition (from e-Sword) and the Companion Bible notes both indicate being lead.

The commentators checked reflect much the same range of opinions. John Gill sees the sixth part as referring to a sixth of Gog's forces that are left at home. Gill seems to see that all of the rest, the other five sixths, of the people of Gog and his allies go to Israel and are destroyed. But surely it's the military forces that invade Israel. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown referring to the margin (of the Bible?) give the possibility that the meaning is the six plagues or judgments predicted upon Gog's hordes in chapter 38 verse 22.

Eze 38:22 And I will enter into judgment with him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.

Adam Clarke referring to the *margin* also sees the possibilities as striking Gog with six plagues or drawing him back with a hook having six teeth. Albert Barnes' Notes by contrast says that the better translation is leading Gog along which he indicates is the translation in the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Apparently this question also existed among the ancient Jewish Sages since it's said that one of them, Radak, took the word to mean to destroy, or to mean that they will be cut to a sixth of what they were, or that God will punish them with the six forces of the natural world. That's interesting given that Radak wrote in Medieval times presumably drawing from older Jewish sources.

There seems to be genuine uncertainty about how to translate this part of this verse. Perhaps the meaning is that God will lead Gog on to Israel where he faces complete destruction. That is consistent with the judgment in Ezekiel 38:22. Perhaps there is a sense of the sixth hinted at. Some scholars think so. That is in line the existence of Gog and Magog after the Millennium (see *Revelation 20:8*) when they invade Israel one last time and are finally destroyed. If so then some of Gog's people survive this judgment to rebuild and strike at Israel one last time.

Eze 39:3 And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.

Eze 39:4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the peoples that are with thee: I have given thee to be meat for the birds of prey of every wing, and to the beasts of the field.

Eze 39:5 Thou shalt fall on the open field; for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord Jehovah.

Eze 39:6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell at ease in the isles: and they shall know that I *am* Jehovah.

Comments –

And I will send a fire on Magog which Ezekiel says is in the uttermost north where Gog lives corresponding (from name similarities) to modern Russia, and he mentioned the people of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal as near to or a part of them. God will judge them with fire in some manner. Probably it is something like the descriptions of John in various places in the Revelation.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth: and there were voices, and thunders and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels

who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might sound with their trumpets. 7 **And the first sounded his trumpet: and there was hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.** 8 **And the second angel sounded his trumpet: and as a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood;** 9 **and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea which had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.** 10 **And the third angel sounded his trumpet: and there fell out of the heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.** 11 **And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many of the men died of the waters because they were made bitter.**

of **Wormwood - G894 ?????? *apsinthos* ap'-sin-thos** Of uncertain derivation; wormwood (as a type of bitterness, that is, [figuratively] calamity): - wormwood.

and among them that dwell at ease in the isles probably referring to those in the countries along the Mediterranean coast. Those countries border Russia (Gog) and Central Europe (where Gog's allies such as Gomer and Togarmah are mentioned).

And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel If this takes place during the Great Tribulation the idea might be that God will return after that Tribulation and His presence will be in the midst of His people Israel as it was in Old Testament times.

Eze 39:7 **And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not suffer my holy name to be profaned any more: and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel.**

Comments –

And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel If this takes place during the Great Tribulation God will return after that and be in the midst of His people Israel as in Old Testament times.

and I will not suffer my holy name to be profaned any more Israel was always rebellious and idolatrous. They will see God and realize their sin. It may also refer to the nations of the world which strive to prove that they are just and that Israel is no different than the other nations. But God has promised the land of Israel to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not to Ishmael or Edom. **and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel** The nations at large will be forced to accept this as accomplished by God.

Eze 39:8 **Behold, it cometh, and shall be done, saith the Lord Jehovah. This is the day whereof I have spoken.**

And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land;

Eze 39:9 **And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall kindle fire, and burn weapons, and shields, and targets, bows, and arrows, and hand-staves, and spears: and they shall make fires with them seven years.**

Eze 39:10 **And no wood shall be taken out of the field, neither cut down out of the forests; for they shall make fire with the weapons; and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and plunder those that plundered them, saith the Lord Jehovah.**

Eze 39:11 **And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there for burial in Israel, the valley of the passers-by to the east of the sea; and it shall stop *the way* of the passers-by; and there shall they bury Gog and all the multitude; and they shall call it, Valley of Hamon-Gog.**

Eze 39:12 **And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land;**

Comments –

Adam Clarke interpreting Ezekiel 38–39 to refer to Antiochus Epiphanes invasions says that Syrian soldiers being wounded hid in various places in Palestine and many died there. He continues that

it took seven months to find the bodies for burial. Clarke does not mention his source. If true this is an amazing early example that this prophecy can be fulfilled as it is written.

But Antiochus is not a precursor of Gog from the north but rather the little horn of Daniel 7. He was forced out of Egypt (after invading it) by the Romans from the northwest and ravaged Judea as he passed through returning to Syria. But he was not destroyed at that time on the mountains of Israel. Gog however, comes from the uttermost north with tribal allies that commentators say have moved from the Black Sea into Russia.

Antiochus though a precursor of the beast or little horn in Daniel 10-11 didn't fulfill all of the prophecies. He did ravage Israel and commit terrible sacrilege in the temple of God. But he didn't exalt himself above all of the Gods as the final beastly ruler must. In fact, he erected shrines to several of the Greco-Roman gods.

The final fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 7 as the final beastly ruler corresponds to a ruler from the Middle East in the area of the ancient Syrian Seleucid Greek Kingdom. He is surely the one Daniel says will make a treaty with Israel for a time, the last week of seven years. But half way through he will betray them and invade.

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

Gog's hordes in contrast correspond to an alliance from far north in Russia and Europe that invades Israel. These hordes were originally in northern Anatolia (our modern day Turkey) but Ezekiel's words *uttermost north* must mean land further north than he was familiar with.

Eze 39:13 and all the people of the land shall bury *them* ; and it shall be to them for renown in the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord Jehovah.

Eze 39:14 And they shall sever out men of continual employment to go through the land, who, with the passers-by, shall bury those that remain upon the face of the land, to cleanse it: at the end of seven months shall they make a search.

Comments on vs 13-14 –

Some commentators may make too much argument of this verse. It does say that Israel will hire special groups whose job will be to search throughout Israel to locate any of the dead bodies so that they can be buried to remove the uncleanness from the land. Perhaps at first the remains will be found easily as people go about and these will be disposed of quickly. But it would appear that it will become more difficult as the search progresses and they will hire workers specifically to search for the remains and bones of these soldiers of Gog and his allies so they can be buried.

Eze 39:15 And the passers-by shall pass through the land, and when *any* seeth a man's bone, he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-Gog.

Comments –

After that further provision is made that if anyone is traveling through these outer areas and comes across bones of these people they will place a marker so that it can be located again and the remains buried. Gill has this understanding with Jamieson, Fausset and Brown also seeming to. But it may simply be the prophets way of clarifying and summing up that the people of Israel through the agencies mentioned will locate all of the remains and bury them properly.

Eze 39:16 And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

Eze 39:17 And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Speak unto the birds of every wing, and to every beast of the field, Gather yourselves together and come, assemble yourselves on every side to my sacrifice which I sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.

Eze 39:18 Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the

earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, *and* of bullocks, all of them fatted beasts of Bashan.

Eze 39:19 And ye shall eat fat till ye are full, and drink blood till ye are drunken, of my sacrifice which I sacrifice for you.

Eze 39:20 And ye shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord Jehovah.

Eze 39:21 And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid upon them.

Eze 39:22 And the house of Israel shall know that I *am* Jehovah their God from that day and forward.

Comments on vs 17-22 –

The prophet is told to issue an invitation to the birds of the air to come to the feast of the bodies of Gog and all his allied armies. This is much like the invitation given by the angel in Revelation 19:17-19 to the birds of the air to come and dine on the flesh of the vast host of armies allied with the Beast against Israel and their God.

Rev 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, **saying to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, Come, gather yourselves to the great supper of God, 18 that ye may eat flesh of kings, and flesh of chiliarchs, and flesh of strong men, and flesh of horses and of those that sit upon them, and flesh of all, both free and bond, and small and great.** 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and the false prophet that *was* with him, who wrought the signs before him by which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and those that worship his image. Alive were both cast into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone; 21 and the rest were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which goes out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Eze 39:23 And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they were unfaithful against me; and I hid my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies, so that they fell all of them by the sword.

Eze 39:24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I did unto them, and I hid my face from them.

Eze 39:25 Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name:

Comments on vs 23-25 -

The House of Israel is said to be dwelling in safety in the land of Israel giving us two points of reference to determine when in the flow of prophecy this might occur. First, Israel is back in the land and that has only begun within our times shortly after World War II. Thus far only Judah has returned but the mention of Israel here may indicate that God has revealed Himself to those of the House of Israel also and has started their return to the land with their bretheren of Judah. Also, since Judah has begun her return to the land after the war she has not known any significant period of time when there was real safety. Israel (the Tribe of Judah at this moment) has been kept on it's guard against the Islamic nations around it.

Eze 38:14 *Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In that day when my people Israel dwelleth in safety, shalt thou not know it ?*

A time of real safety such as this would require agreements between the Israelis and Islamic countries and would surely require a powerful third party between guaranteeing to keep the peace between the two. That may be like the covenant Daniel describes between Israel and a ruler at a future time after the Roman destruction of the temple. But again Israel has not controlled the land after that destruction by the Romans until our times. That indicates this ruler is still to come just as the Beast of Revelation or Little Horn of Daniel is.

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm a covenant with the many *for* one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the protection of abominations *there shall be* a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

Comments

The covenant will be for one final week (seven) of years. But in the middle of the time he will invade Israel himself and take control of the temple of Jehovah and commit sacrilege as his precursor Antiochus Epiphanes did. But this cannot be the church of Jesus Christ because they are taken from the earth before the destruction and terrible judgement of God upon the world in the time of the Tribulation the Great and this invasion by Gog is probably the troubling news from the East and the North that the Beast hears.

Dan 11:44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate, and utterly to destroy many.

Eze 39:26 and they shall bear their confusion, and all their unfaithfulness in which they have acted unfaithfully against me, when they shall dwell safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid;

Eze 39:27 when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations.

Eze 39:28 And they shall know that I *am* Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to be led into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

Eze 39:29 And I will not hide my face any more from them, for I shall have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

Comments on vs 26-29 -

The promise is to the house of Israel, the northern Israelite kingdom that was taken captive to Assyria. Afterward they were scattered further (see *Ezekiel chapter 20*) among the Gentiles and have never been rejoined to Judah. At this future time they will be joined again with Judah and will realize the truth of their sins and God's judgment on them and will be forgiven and live in safety again in the land of Israel.

Summary -

We have seen in this lesson that the invasion of Israel by Gog and his allies is not successful. God destroys them on the mountains of Israel. It is perhaps difficult for us to know for certain whether all of their military forces are destroyed or if the mysterious sixth part that some translators see in the text do survive to tell future generations about this terrible defeat. The judgment will not stop there but will be brought to bear also on the land of Magog itself from which Gog comes and also upon the those dwelling securely (and perhaps too unconcerned) in the isles. Maybe the isles refer to the northwest quarter of the world and the maritime nations with their seacoasts. We have also seen that the house of Israel, the larger portion of the old Kingdom of Israel, will be reunited with their brethren in Judah at this time and will see the truth of their sins and God's judgment on them. The whole people of Israel will then truly dwell in safety in the land of Israel once again as during the reign of King David.