

CHAPTER 11

STRATEGIC ROLE OF PERSIA IN FUTURE PROPHECY

Did you realize that Iran is mentioned in the Bible in connection with the events which will happen at the end of the world? Many of these events center around Israel when many nations of the world unite to try to eliminate Israel. Are you ready if these different catastrophic events should happen suddenly? Ezekiel chapter 37 refers to a valley full of “dry bones”. The prophet Ezekiel asked the Lord, “Can these bones live?” Then these bones were joined together. They had tendons put on them and then flesh covered with skin. Finally, breath is put into them and they come to life. The Lord gives the prophet an explanation, “I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land.” (Ezekiel 37:21) Even though prophecy was fulfilled when Israel was restored and became an official nation in 1948, the Jewish people are still like dry bones spiritually. One day God will put His spirit in them and “they will be my people and I will be their God.” (Ezekiel 37:23)

The restoration of the nation of Israel is described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Other nations are mentioned as well with Persia being eminent among them. That is why this future event is included.

A. HOW IS ISRAEL’S CONDITION DESCRIBED IN EZEKIEL 38?

1. (v. 8) They have been gathered from many nations and live in safety.
2. (v. 11) They are secure living in walled villages with no bars or gates. They think they are safe from all enemies.

B. WHAT MAJOR EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE AND WHERE DOES THE INVASION COMES FROM?

1. There will be an invasion of Israel.
“After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.” Ezekiel 38:8
2. The invasion of a great army comes from the north. v 15

C. WHICH COUNTRIES MAKE UP THIS INVADING ARMY?

1. Most of the nations which existed in the time of Ezekiel have ancient names. This makes it hard to identify those which have modern names now. Most evangelical

commentators identify them as follows:

- a. (v. 2) Gog - land of Magog. Magog was the second son of Japheth (Gen 10:1,2) and evidently, what formerly would be called the southern area of the USSR. The chief prince (Rosh) Meshech and Tubal are parts of the USSR.
- b. (v. 5) Persia - present-day Iran. This is the only nation whose identity is agreed on by 100% of the commentaries, since its ancient name is still the same name today.
- c. (v. 5) Cush - This is either the present day region south of Egypt, present day Ethiopia, or refers to the region of east central Babylonia. Libya - present day Libya, or the region south or southeast of Cush, or present day Syria, or Iraq.
- d. (v. 6) Gomer - evidently, Germany.
- e. (v. 6) Beth Togarmah - Turkey, Armenia, or central Asia.

2. Many other nations join those countries listed above.

D. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE REFERRED TO BY MOST COMMENTARIES WHICH DESCRIBE THIS ATTACK ON ISRAEL? MANY CALL THIS THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

1. (Daniel 11:25-44) King of South
2. (Rev. 16:12) King of the East
3. (Daniel 7:23-26; Rev. 13:1-3; 17:8-14) a confederation of ten nations evidently from the west

E. HOW DOES THIS ARMY OF THE NORTH COME AGAINST ISRAEL? (EZEKIEL 38)

1. (Ezekiel 38:9) It will descend like a storm.
2. (Ezekiel 38:12) It will plunder and loot a defenseless land.
3. (Ezekiel 38:15) It will come upon horses (literal horses, or is this a symbol to show it is a mighty force?)

F. WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE?

1. God is against Gog and the other nations including Persia. "Son of man, set your face against God, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him." Ezekiel 38:2

“Son of man, prophesy against God and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, O God, chief price of Meshech and Tubal.’” Ezekiel 39:1

2. God’s zeal and fiery wrath are directed against the nations.
“In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.” Ezekiel 38:19
3. There are great natural disasters including an earthquake, rain, a hailstorm, and burning sulfur.
“The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.” Ezekiel 38:20-22
4. It takes months to bury the dead.
“For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign Lord.” Ezekiel 39:12-13
5. The nations are completely defeated.
“On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord.” Ezekiel 39:4-5
6. The war materials will be burned for fuel for seven years.
“Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up –the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel.” Ezekiel 39:9

G. WHEN DOES THIS BATTLE TAKE PLACE?

1. (38:8,14,16) latter days, last days.
2. (Rev. 16:16) Many equate this judgement of the nations with Armageddon.

H. IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVENTS OF THE LAST DAYS WHERE DOES THIS BATTLE FIT IN?

1. For those who hold a pre-millennial theological position there are five possibilities:

- a. Before the rapture of the church.
 - b. Middle of the seven-year tribulation.
 - c. End of the seven-year tribulation when the Lord comes with His saints to rule.
 - d. Beginning of the millennium.
 - e. End of millennium.
2. Considering all the facts, the author who holds theologically to the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church followed by seven years of tribulation on the earth feels that this battle will be in the middle of the tribulation for the following reasons:
- a. Israel is dwelling in its own land (38:8).
 - b. The Jews are in peace, secure possibly from the promise of the beast or anti-Christ giving guarantees. (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:1-10).
 - c. The times called latter or last days refer to the times of tribulation, the seven years when God deals with His people Israel again.
 - d. If one interprets Daniel 11:41 as referring to the occupation of the land of Palestine by the beast, then this invasion causes him to break his covenant with Israel.
 - e. Passages like Rev. 7:4-17 show that many Jews and Gentiles will be saved during the tribulation period. Ezekiel 38:23; 39:21-22 mention how this event was used for the spiritual salvation of many, too.
 - f. In Rev. 19:20 we are told that the Lord will deal specifically with the beast and false prophet at His coming. Evidently, the king of the North (or the Assyrian as he is called sometimes in Isaiah 30:31-33; 31:8,9; Micah 5:5) must have been judged already.

I. MAKE A PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What should a Christian's attitude be as he studies prophecy, and sees signs of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? Look at Daniel's example in Dan. 9:1-19 when the prophecy concerning the 70 years' captivity was fulfilled and King Cyrus permitted the Jews return to Jerusalem. Notice how he fasted, prayed, confessed sin, and trusted in God's great mercy as he saw fulfilled prophecy!
2. In light of the knowledge that the world may be involved in a global conflict, what responsibility do we have to spread the good news of the gospel now?
3. The prophecies concerning the establishment of the Persian Empire under King Cyrus have been fulfilled. The many prophecies concerning Jesus Christ such as the city where he would be born, his virgin birth, and his death by crucifixion were also predicted hundreds of years before they happened in the Bible. Are you ready to believe that the Bible is the holy book sent from God?