

ISRAEL & IRAN AT WAR: *A Problem of Prophetic Proportions*

Jeremiah 30, Ezekiel 38, Matthew 24, 1 Thess. 5

The Time of Jacob's Trouble after Israel's modern establishment was foreseen as "trembling...of fear...and not of peace," (Jeremiah 30:5). Israel, at age 77, has just begun its 7th major war due to the threat of annihilation from Iran. Their ancient birth was an emancipation from the bondage of Egypt. Their modern birth was an emergence from the ovens of the Holocaust, and their millennial rebirth will be an extraction from the apocalypse. As difficult as their modern existence has been, their darkest hour is still to come. Israel regathers for the Glory of God's Name. Over 77 years ago, Israel crested the summit of that first mountain peak. They are now in the final descent down the trail that skirts the treacherous slopes toward the valley of decision. This passage is a flashing road sign reading: tribulation just ahead. Verse six reveals a bizarre description of Israel's future: birth pangs *after* the delivery of a child, not before. Not only is the reverse order puzzling, but the prophet is perplexed by the vision of men, not women, grasping their loins in agony, "as a woman in travail" (Jeremiah 30:6). The prophet cried, "Alas! For that day is great." Hardly believing his eyes, he exclaimed, "none is like it!" Jeremiah 30:7. Why are all the "faces turned into paleness?" Jeremiah 30:6. Because they profaned His Holy name among the Gentiles. What is the purpose? To be sanctified in them, and be glorified among them before the watching world. "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." (Ezekiel 36:23-24)

Jeremiah 30:7 makes it clear that while the whole earth is in view, "this time that is coming has particular reference to Israel." Jesus affirmed that other nations would dominate Israel until He returns. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Verses eight and nine give Israel the promise of freedom from her aggressors. "I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him." Verses ten and eleven foretell the destruction of all nations where the Jews sojourned for almost 2,000 years. "I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee," Jeremiah 30:11. God will end the satanically inspired abuse by gentile nations and release her from, "the chastisement of a cruel one," (Jeremiah 30:14). The phrase "all thy lovers," Jeremiah 30:14, includes her fondest allies. America is not an exception to "all nations" (Jeremiah 30:11). According to the text, Israel will have "lovers" up into that time, who will "chastise" her and even give her "the wound of an enemy" (Jeremiah 30:14).

If we were shocked at the anti-Israel and pro-Hamas protests that erupted on our college campuses after Hamas killed over 1200 and took 251 Israelis as hostages, then just wait to see the protests as a result of Israel attacking Iran. Tomorrow, June 14, 2025, was already slated to be a day of protests against President Trump, on his birthday. Criticizing Israel will take precedence, even more than deporting illegal immigrants.

The Beginning of America's Downfall. It is often preached that if we turn our backs on Israel, then we are finished as a nation. Until recently, we have lived under the delusion that it could never happen. Yet one of our national political parties has already elected rabid anti-Semites to the Senate and Congress. They have accepted presidential candidates who are anti-Israel. Until now, 45% of the world's Jewish population has lived safely and prospered in America. Sadly, a dramatic increase in antisemitism, evidenced by defamations of synagogues and shootings, is chilling evidence of the coming global pandemic of antisemitism. Consider how this could worsen if America's economy were to crash. History is full of nations that suffered hard times and turned on "the Jews" as scapegoats of blame. We need not think it implausible that America could go from ally to enemy, even before the tribulation begins. The prophetic descriptions of the final days of wrath are unbearable enough without her lovers betraying and attacking her amid birth pains. Israel's

devourers "shall be devoured," her "adversaries will go into captivity," and her spoilers "shall be a spoil." Those that "prey upon thee" shall become "a prey," (Jeremiah 30:16). God, her covenant husband, will "loose the faithful lightening of His terrible swift sword" and will destroy the nations that are gathered to wipe out His chosen in the battle of Armageddon.

As Christians, we must pray for and stand in solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people as the political winds reverse against them, regardless of their national unbelief. It is even more urgent that we get the message to them that these chapters were partially fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth and will be completely fulfilled when He returns as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." Only in the Tribulation will "all these things be seen." In discussing the Tribulation events, Jesus revealed the key to understanding the signs of the last days. He said that only the generation that shall see "**all these things**" can know that it is "near, even at the doors." The full proof that His second advent is near will be the totality of these sign events happening simultaneously. The time is approaching, as evidenced by an increase in similar foreshadowing events. However, the Tribulation is preceded by the Rapture of the Church.

God's vengeance on gentile powers and mercy on Israel is reassured, "yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished," (Jeremiah 30:11). When the wicked see this correction and declare her as outcast by God, Jeremiah 30:17, then He will "have mercy on his dwelling places," Jeremiah 30:18. Though "no man seeketh" her, Jeremiah 30:17, God promised to "have mercy." Israel's rescue, spiritual salvation, and the destruction of gentile aggressors conclude the second prophetic event in this text.

In the list of nations that will join the Russian (Rosh and Magog) led attack against Israel, we see that four of those names refer to descendants that make up the modern nation of Turkey (Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Beth-togarmah) and will include Iran (Persia), Sudan (Ethiopia), and Libya (Libya). Ezekiel 38:7-9 "Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee." Ezekiel 38:8-9 "After many days," "in the latter years," and "gathered out of many people" place this prophecy in the Tribulation period. This cannot be referring to Babylon but rather the time the Jewish people return to the land from many nations and become a nation again. Israel dwelling "safely" can also mean "securely." Xjb - beh'takh "a place of refuge; abstract, safety, both the fact (security) and the feeling (trust); often (adverb with or without preposition) safely:--assurance, boldly, (without) care(-less), confidence, hope, safe(-ly, -ty), secure, surely." There is no reason why this verse cannot also apply to the first half of the Tribulation period. During this time, Israel is not only militarily strong but also has the assurance of security and safety provided by the Antichrist through a seven-year peace treaty. The imagery of "storm" and "cloud" speaks of the overwhelming numbers of invaders coming. Ezekiel 38:10-13, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? 38:10 "At the same time they are preparing for the invasion, there are thoughts that come into their mind. The thoughts, most likely, come from the sinful nature of the leaders, not from God - "thou shalt think an evil thought." Ezekiel 38:11-12 "midst of the land" "Thus says the LORD God: This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and the countries that are round about her." Ezekiel 5:5 "As the navel is set in the centre

of the human body, so is the land of Israel the navel of the world...situated in the center of the world, and Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel, and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem, and the holy place in the center of the sanctuary, and the ark in the center of the holy place, and the foundation stone before the holy place, because from it the world was founded."

The desire of the nations that come against Israel is two-fold: 1. To take a spoil - capture the wealth and resources of the nation, "silver and gold...cattle and goods" 2. To destroy the people (antisemitism) "upon the people that are gathered out of the nations." The heartbeat of Satan, his ultimate goal is to destroy the people of God. By destroying Israel and its people, Satan believes he can defeat God. This aligns with the Red Dragon seeking to devour the woman/Israel (Matthew 24:16-22; Rev. 12:4-6). The nations of the world will sit by bewildered, at least initially, as Gog and her allies prepare to come against Israel.

Sheba and Dedan. Sheba and Dedan are not difficult to identify. They are in the modern country of Saudi Arabia, "the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof. Tarshish is ancient Tartessus in the present-day nation of Spain. The key question for many Bible students today is the timing. That question will be addressed in our next study, *The Timing of the Gog Invasion*. We will also assess the status of these national alliances.

I believe the Battle of Gog Magog against Israel happens at the mid-point of the Tribulation for these reasons:

1) The key weakness of the pre-Rapture view of the timing of this battle is that it discards the imminency of the Rapture. According to the Gog Magog pre-Rapture view, the Rapture can only take place *after* that battle. Therefore, the Rapture cannot take place until it happens, thus turning the imminent blessed hope into a false hope for believers over the last 200 years.

2) A second key weakness of the theory of the battle taking place at the very beginning of the Tribulation is that Israel would have to get saved at the beginning of the Tribulation according to Ezekiel 39:22,23 "the house of Israel shall know from that day forward, that I am the Lord their God." According to Zechariah 12:9,10, it is at the point of the divine defeat of their enemies from all nations, not just the northern invading nations, that they will "look on me whom they have pierced." If this Gog Magog battle happens soon after the beginning of the Tribulation, then Israel gets saved at the start of the Tribulation. But according to Zechariah 13:8,9, "I will bring the third part through the fire...they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The LORD is my God." This salvation does not precede the refiner's fire of the Tribulation. Jesus placed Israel's conversion at the end of the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24:29-31, after the abomination of Desolation based on the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. At the beginning of this Olivet Discourse sermon, in Matthew 23:39, Jesus quoted Psalm 118:26: "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Clearly, their conversion follows the Battle of Armageddon and does not precede the Tribulation. Therefore, the battle of Gog Magog cannot be before or at the beginning of the Tribulation.

3) Furthermore, this interpretation confuses Armageddon with the Battle of Gog Magog. Revelation 19:17-19, referencing Ezekiel 39:17-19, describes the Battle of Armageddon. Ezekiel 38 is prophesying the divine defeat of Gog Magog before that battle. I say that the Gog Magog battle is the first battle in a campaign of war that ends at the Battle of Armageddon.

4) The timing of the salvation of Israel - The result of the defeat of Gog Magog is that God makes His name known "in the midst of my people," and in contrast the result of the defeat of all the nations of the world in Ezekiel 39:22 is that the house of Israel will know Him "from that day forward." The Gog Magog defeat awakens the nation of Israel that Jehovah God is "in their midst" (Ezekiel 39:7) whereas the deliverance of Israel at Armageddon regenerates every surviving Jew and Israeli to the recognition that Messiah Jesus is Lord and that His New covenant will be written "in their hearts."

(Zechariah 13:9; Ezekiel 39:29; Jeremiah 31:31-33). It is clear from Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus and John in Revelation that this national salvation happens after the Battle of Armageddon.

5) Another reason that I hold to the mid-Tribulation timing of this battle is the cause and effect that triggers the Abomination of Desolation. I believe that Israel's false messiah, the Anti-Christ, will take credit for the destruction of the northern armies upon the mountains of Israel, prompting his satanic possession and declaration of himself as God, thus defiling the Tribulation Temple. Triggered by this power vacuum, the Anti-Christ, who is satanically possessed, will only dominate the kingdoms of the earth for 3.5 years. I believe the defeat of the northern enemies of the western revived Roman Empire at a battle at the mid-Tribulation mark is the trigger for the unveiling or "revelation" of Satan's false Christ.

There is no doubt. This is not the time for the battle of Ezekiel 38... yet. But this **is** the beginning of the end of time. All the key nations are in place. It could be that Iran will be so weakened by this attack that Russia will have to salvage what's left and develop an even closer bond, as seen in this prophecy. Crimea, along with Ukraine, will soon no longer pose an obstacle. With Turkey becoming increasingly hostile toward the West and friendlier toward Russia, and with Syria now under the leadership of a new pro-Russia figure, Russia will have an unimpeded path to descend upon Israel like a storm. But first the Anti-Christ will convince Israel that she will have 7 years of peace and safety, with the permit for a new Temple.

So let's be comforted and challenged by the words of Paul to the Thessalonian church.

1 Thess. 5: 2 "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For **when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."