

EZEKIEL

Hard to Heart

"Mountain Doom"

39:1-29

Ezekiel 39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;

Chapter thirty-nine one reads just like chapter thirty-eight three. The wording is the same.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum is a name you should remember. He writes extensively on the place of Israel in evangelical thought and theology. There is an interpretative principle he calls The Law of Recurrence and he says it occurs in chapter thirty-nine. He describes it as follows:

This [law of recurrence] describes the fact that in some passages of Scripture there exists the recording of an event followed by a second recording of the same event giving more details to the first. Hence, it often involves two blocks of Scripture. The first block presents a description of an event as it transpires in chronological sequence. This is followed by a second block of Scripture dealing with the same event and the same period of time, but giving further details as to what transpires in the course of the event.

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is like that. There is a clear chronology of events if you follow the opening of the seven seals. In-between there are chapters that fill-in the details.

Ezekiel thirty-nine goes deeper into certain details of chapter thirty-eight.

Ezekiel 39:2 and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel.

Once again I would remind you of our finding that the magnetic north pole is shifting rapidly toward Russia. The invaders come from “the far north” and that is clearly Russia even without the pole shift, but I find it amazing anyway.

Ezekiel 39:3 Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand.

This could be figurative language, using “bow” and “arrows” to stand for whatever weapons the invaders possess. Or, as we have suggested, the unusual times in which the invasion occurs may call for just such weaponry to be employed as this army comes on horseback.

Either way it is clear that God personally intervenes. This is not a victory for the Israeli forces or any human defender of Israel. God Himself fights for His elect nation.

It’s an important point because often we read into the text our own ideas of what might occur. No human means or implements are going to be involved. It’s all God defeating Gog because through it God will be magnified and get the glory.

Ezekiel 39:4 You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.

Ezekiel 39:5 You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord God.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum has an interesting comment about the mountains of Israel:

They extend the length of the center of the country, beginning at the southern point of the Valley of Jezreel at the town of Jenin in Galilee (biblical Ein Ganim), and continuing south until they peter out at a point north of Beersheva in the Negev. These mountains contain the famous biblical cities of Dothan, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Bethel, Ai, Ramah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Debir, and most importantly, Jerusalem, which seems to be the goal of the invading army.

Here is another example where the Six Day War has set the stage for the fulfillment of prophecy. Up to the Six Day War in 1967 all of the mountains of Israel, except for a small corridor of West Jerusalem, were entirely in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs.

Only since 1967 have the mountains of Israel been in Israel, thus setting the stage for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

The phrase in verse four, “I will give you,” literally translated is, “I have given you.” It doesn’t mean it has already happened. It’s in a tense scholars call the *prophetic perfect*. Even though it is future, since it is the Lord making the prophecy then it is certain to take place. God can talk about events future to us as having already happened because He knows He will bring them to pass.

Ezekiel 39:5 You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord God.

The invaders never get very close to Jerusalem. They are slaughtered when still some distance away.

Ezekiel 39:6 "And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

This seems to be “fire” from Heaven, a la fire and brimstone. Not only are the invaders attacked, but God attacks their homelands as well.

I should mention that there are those who see this as some sort of nuclear exchange. But the text clearly says indicates it is God who brings this fire. God is not going to need a nuclear bomb, or help from human technology or armies, to defeat Gog and his forces. In fact, as I indicated, any such help nullifies the fact God gets the glory for all this.

Ezekiel 39:7 So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

God makes His name “holy” through these events. All the nations “know” that the God of Israel is God.

It doesn’t mean that all the nations are saved. Only that they have irrefutable evidence to the fact that God exists, the God of the Bible, the God of Israel.

Notice God says “I will not let them profane My holy name anymore.” Up until that point in history God *is* allowing Himself to be profaned by mankind.

One way God is allowing His name to be profaned has been the scattering and persecution of His elect nation. I mean, just on the surface if you tell a nonbeliever that the Jews are the apple of God’s eye, and they are at all familiar with the history of Israel from the sixth century until the twentieth century, they’re going to think God is either unloving or that He is not all-powerful.

Another way God’s name is profaned is by scoffers who say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’ They say that everything is continuing just as before and that God is not at work in human history. Some would go so far as to admit He may have been at work at one time, but not any longer.

God has told us exactly what He is doing. The apostle Paul tells us at the end of the Book of Acts that because the nation of Israel has rejected Jesus Christ, the Gospel will go out into the world, to the Gentiles, and we will hear it.

Israel was set aside, but only temporarily and partially. And in their setting aside, the Gospel was turned to the Gentiles. After the Gentiles fullness has come in, after the church is complete (that's what that means) God will go back and redeem Israel. Zechariah tells us exactly how. He says, “They will look on Him whom they have pierced and they will mourn for Him as an only son.”

When God defeats Gog, then all the nations will know He is God. It will be a major end times event.

By the way, this is another reason why I think that the invasion by these opponents of Israel must occur before the end of the Great Tribulation and not in or at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. When Jesus Christ returns to earth in His Second Coming and establishes the Kingdom, it will be pretty clear to the nations that He is God! They still do not all receive Him, but they’ll know.

Ezekiel 39:8 Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord God. "This is the day of which I have spoken.

God is really, really emphasizing this prophecy. Chapter thirty-nine is already a restating of chapter thirty-eight. As if the repetition isn't enough, God says, ***I'm really going to do this!***

Ezekiel 39:9 "Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years.

Ezekiel 39:10 They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them," says the Lord God.

Some see the "seven years" as a clue that this invasion must take place prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Here is their argument:

If this battle takes place after the Rapture but before the [Great Tribulation] begins, there would be ample time and the freedom of movement even through the first half of the Tribulation (the time of pseudo-peace for Israel under the Antichrist's covenant) to accomplish this job. Moreover, the statement about not needing to gather firewood from the forests (verse 10) would make more sense than after the first trumpet judgment when one-third of the trees were burned up (Revelation 8:7). If this battle were to take place at any point in the Tribulation the people would run out of time to complete this task, before the intensified persecution of the final 42 months (Matthew 24:16-22) that drives the Jewish Remnant into the wilderness to escape the Satanic onslaught (Revelation 12:6). While there is no reason why the burning of weapons for firewood could not continue into the Millennial Kingdom, since during this time other weapons will be converted to peaceful and productive uses (Isaiah 2:4), the renewal of nature and increased productivity of this age (Isaiah 27:6; Zechariah 8:12; Micah 4:4) could argue against this necessity.

Notice those who hold this position are willing to concede "there is no reason why the burning... could not continue into the Millennial Kingdom."

I feel that the more important clue as to the timing of this event is that Israel will be dwelling in peace when this invasion occurs. It seems to me the most likely time for that is during the first part of the Great Tribulation as the antichrist guarantees the peace of Israel.

If that is true, then the invasion will occur after the Rapture, sometime after the peace treaty is signed but before the antichrist defiles Israel's Temple right at the mid-point of the Great Tribulation.

As far as burning these weapons into the second half of the Great Tribulation, just because Jews will flee from Jerusalem it doesn't mean there will be no people in Israel to continue the burning. The antichrist and his forces will obviously be there.

I don't see a problem if the burning continues into the Millennial Kingdom. It's not the creation of a new earth but the restoration of an earth ravaged by the judgments of the Great Tribulation. It seems to me that the restoration of the earth will be somewhat gradual.

Ezekiel 39:11 "It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog.

Ezekiel 39:12 For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land.

Ezekiel 39:13 Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified," says the Lord God.

I'm thinking this burial of bodies occurs as soon as the slaughter is over and then continues for seven months. This slaughter ends during a time when travelers are still on the roads. This would be true if the invasion occurs either before the Great Tribulation or in its opening years. I don't see it being true during the last part of the Great Tribulation, after the antichrist has started his persecution of Israel. Jews will be fleeing for their lives, not worrying about cleansing their land or keeping the roads clear for travelers.

Ezekiel 39:14 "They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search.

Ezekiel 39:15 The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog.

Ezekiel 39:16 The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land." ' "

Even after the initial cleanup, squads of men will be employed to search the land for additional remains. As they go through the land and one of them sees a human bone, he will set up a marker beside it. Then as gravediggers see the markers they will take the remains to the Valley of Hamon Gog for burial. The operation will be so vast that a town will be set up in the valley at the gravesites to accommodate those cleansing the land.

Why all this detail about the bodies? If you were a Jew hearing this for the first time, and it was in the context of God working to restore both the land of Israel and Israelites, you'd have questions about how the land could be cleansed because dead bodies and blood on that scale will ceremonially defile the land. You'd think of this through the Law with its requirements for cleansing things that came into contact with death and with blood.

Ezekiel 39:17 "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, 'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: "Assemble yourselves and come; Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal Which I am sacrificing for you, A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, That you may eat flesh and drink blood.

Ezekiel 39:18 You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, Drink the blood of the princes of the earth, Of rams and lambs, Of goats and bulls, All of them fatlings of Bashan.

Ezekiel 39:19 You shall eat fat till you are full, And drink blood till you are drunk, At My sacrificial meal Which I am sacrificing for you.

Ezekiel 39:20 You shall be filled at My table With horses and riders, With mighty men And with all the men of war," says the Lord God.

This expands upon verse four. It pictures an inglorious end to the invaders. As gross as it will be, it will be evident that something supernatural is taking place. God must be bringing these birds and beasts to do His bidding. It will be understood as a divine intervention in nature.

As the chapter closes God tells us His purposes in all these things.

Ezekiel 39:21 "I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them.

Ezekiel 39:22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward.

Ezekiel 39:29 And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord God."

The ultimate end of these events is the total salvation of Israel. All the Jews who survive the Great Tribulation will believe, be born-again, and receive the Holy Spirit. God's historical work in disciplining them and regathering them and restoring them will result in them being regenerated.

So that's the famous passage from Ezekiel - 38 & 39. At some point in history future to us God is going to draw a coalition of nations led by Russia to attack Israel when she is dwelling in peace.

I've suggested a certain timing but we're not certain exactly when this event will occur.

It is interesting, fascinating, to see nations aligning against Israel just as predicted in this passage.

And it's amazing, mind-blowing to read about the magnetic north pole shifting more towards Russia, making the predictions of Ezekiel that the invasion comes from the north extremely literal.

God is on the move!

