

## ***Session 4 The Forerunner Message in Ezekiel 38-39***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Ezekiel 38-39 describe the Antichrist's future invasion of Israel and his destruction. It is one of the most detailed and important passages related to rise and fall of the Antichrist. This prophecy will be fulfilled in the "latter days" (38:8, 16), that is, at the end of the age when Jesus returns.
- B. The Antichrist's invasion of Israel will take place near the middle of final seven years of this age when Israel is living in peace and safety in unwallled villages (38:8, 11). This attack occurs after the Antichrist establishes a covenant that brings peace to Israel and the Middle East (Dan. 9:27).
- C. Outline for Ezekiel 38-39

#### **Ezekiel 38** The rise and fall of Gog (the Antichrist)

- 38:1-3 Ezekiel is called to prophesy against Gog
- 38:4-9 The Lord calls Gog and his allies to attack Israel
- 38:10-13 Gog's evil plan to attack Israel
- 38:14-16 Gog attacks Israel who is dwelling in safety
- 38:17 The Antichrist (Gog) was foretold by the prophets
- 38:18-23 The Lord will be gloried in judging the Antichrist

#### **Ezekiel 39** The destruction of Gog (the Antichrist)

- 39:1-16 Gog's complete destruction
  - 39:1-8 The day of the Lord
  - 39:9-10 Gog's weapons will be burned for 7 years
  - 39:11-16 Gog's army will be buried for 7 months
- 39:17-29 God is glorified when the nations see Gog's destruction
  - 39:17-20 The birds and beasts will devour Gog's slain army
  - 39:21-24 The glory of God is seen in judging Gog
  - 39:25-29 The nations will understand that God judged and restored Israel

### **II. EZEKIEL IS CALLED TO PROPHECY AGAINST GOG (38:1-3)**

- A. Ezekiel set his face and prophesied against Gog—the Antichrist (38:1-3)  
*2*"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, *3*and say... "Behold, I am against you, O Gog..." (Ezek. 38:2-3)
- B. ***Set your face against Gog***: I understand Gog to be an official title like Pharaoh or Caesar—the prophetic name for the primary eschatological enemy of God's people. Two men with this unique role will appear—at the end of this age (38:1-16) and at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:8).

- C. **Prophesy against him:** The prophetic message is “*The God of Israel is against you*” (38:3). It will be dangerous to prophesy against the Antichrist once he is established on the world stage.
- D. **The prince of Rosh:** There is debate about how to translate the word *rosh*. It can be translated as “chief or head.” The debate is in seeing *rosh* an *adjective* describing Gog as the “chief” prince or leader of Meshech and Tubal or as a *proper noun* referring to the name of a people or nation.
1. The phrase can be translated as “*Gog, prince, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.*” I agree with those who say that Gog is a title the “chief prince” of Meshech and Tubal. In other words, Gog is the “chief” or “top leader” of Meshech and Tubal and other nations.
  2. Equating *rosh* with Russia based on their etymological similarities is commonly rejected.
- E. **The land of Magog:** Magog is the name of a people or nation (38:2; 39:6). The land of Magog is Gog’s home country. Magog is probably a reference to western Turkey. Is Magog the place of the Antichrist’s birth or the place where he initially governs before coming on the world stage?
- F. **Meshech and Tubal:** Many scholars identify this area as referring to territory mostly in modern-day Turkey, yet possibly reaching into parts of Syria, Armenia, or areas near southern Russia. Magog, Meshech, and Tubal are in the far north of Israel (38:6, 15; 39:2). Gog is from Magog, and he will be the leader over the territories or principalities of Meshech and Tubal.
- G. **I am against you:** Ezekiel was told to proclaim that the Lord was against Gog.

### III. THE LORD CALLS GOG AND HIS ALLIES TO ATTACK ISRAEL (EZEK. 38:4-9)

- A. The Lord will lead Gog and his army and allies to attack Israel (38:4-6).
- <sup>4</sup>I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. <sup>5</sup>Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup>Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north...many people are with you. <sup>16</sup>...In the latter days I will bring you against My land... (Ezek. 38:4-6, 16)***
1. **Lead you out:** The Lord will lead the Antichrist in an irresistible way (hooks in his jaws) to attack Israel to fulfill His end-time plan. The Lord is the *first cause* of this end-time plan, whereas Satan and sinful choices of humans are *secondary causes*. God has sovereign control over the Antichrist. He is both God’s enemy *and* instrument to discipline Israel and nations.
  2. One of the most offensive biblical doctrines to our natural mindsets is that the Lord will lead the Antichrist to attack Israel (38:4, 16, 17; 39:12; Zech. 11:16-17; Rev. 6:1-2).
- <sup>4</sup>I will turn you around...and lead you <sup>16</sup>...In the latter days I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog... <sup>17</sup>...the prophets of Israel...prophesied for years...that I would bring you against them.” (Ezek. 38:4, 16-17)***

- a. First, God leads the Antichrist and the kings of earth to attack Jerusalem (38:4, 16, 17; Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:3; 14:2).
  - b. Second, Satan empowers the Antichrist (Rev. 13:2) and inspires the kings of the earth to attack Jerusalem (Rev. 16:13-14; 19:19).
  - c. Third, men choose to attack Jerusalem in their greed, anger, and envy (35:11; 38:10).
3. **A great company:** The Antichrist is challenged to bring his entire army. Gog's vast army will be well equipped with a cavalry, shields, swords, and a multitude of soldiers (38:4). His forces are armed both defensively (buckler, shield, helmet) and offensively (swords).
  4. **Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya:** Iran (Persia), Ethiopia (Cush) and Libya (Put) will join the Antichrist's coalition. Persia refers to modern-day Iran. Ancient Cush is translated as Ethiopia but includes northern Sudan. Libya (Put) includes portions of northern Africa.
  5. **Gomer and Togarmah:** Gomer refers to Turkey and Togarmah to Turkey and Armenia.
  6. **Far north:** Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah are in the far north of Israel.
  7. **Many people are with you:** This military coalition will involve other nations besides the seven mentioned here (38:6). It is probable that the territories associated with Russia or the former USSR will participate in the Antichrist's end-time attack against Israel.
  8. **Seven nations:** Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah represent the northern extreme of the world known to Israel, Persia represents the eastern extreme, and Ethiopia and Libya the southern extreme. Therefore, this list of seven nations suggests that the *whole world* will be involved in attacking against Israel.
- B. The Lord formally challenges the Antichrist to prepare for battle in the land of Israel (38:7-9).
- <sup>7</sup>***“Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies...and be a guard for them.***
- <sup>8</sup>***“After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people [countries] on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate...now all of them dwell safely. You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and ...many peoples with you.” (Ezek. 38:7-9)***
1. **Prepare yourself:** The Lord calls Gog to prepare to meet Him in battle and to assume leadership by serving as the “keeper” or “guardian” of the allied forces.
  2. **You will be visited:** The Antichrist will be “visited” supernaturally, emboldening him to attack the land of Israel (38:8). Thoughts will arise in his mind to attack Israel (38:10-11).
  3. **In the latter years:** God's summons to Gog was “after many days” or at the end of the age.
  4. **Storm and cloud:** Israel will be helpless before this storm cloud (38:9). The Antichrist's alliance of many nations will ascend like a storm, covering Israel like a cloud (38:9, 16), suggesting a nationwide occupation instead of only the plain of Megiddo.

5. **Land of Israel:** Israel has only been brought back from the sword to their land two times—in 536 BC after the Babylonian captivity and in 1948 after having been scattered in AD 70.
  6. **Dwell safely:** Israel has not dwelt safely in their land for over 2,500 years. The Antichrist’s invasion of Israel follows a time of peace and safety that he establishes in the Middle East (Dan. 9:27; 1 Thes. 5:3) by establishing a covenant guaranteeing Israel’s protection.
- C. Ezekiel gave three timing indicators for this prophecy to be fulfilled (38:8). First, it is when Israel is gathered to the land after being “desolate for a long time” (1948). Second, when Israel is regathered “from many countries.” Third, when the Jewish people “all dwell safely” in the land.

#### IV. GOG’S EVIL PLAN TO ATTACK ISRAEL (EZEK. 38:10-13)

- A. Gog will devise an evil plan to invade and plunder Israel (38:10-12). This attack will not occur until Israel is defenseless, only after a peaceful agreement is finally established in the Middle East.
- 10...“On that day...thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls...12to take plunder...to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited and against a people gathered from the nations [1948] ...who dwell in the midst of the land.’ 13Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, ‘...Have you gathered your army...to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?’” (Ezek. 38:10-13)***
- B. **You will make an evil plan:** Evil plans will arise in the Antichrist’s mind. Ezekiel shifts from God sovereignly drawing the Antichrist into battle to the Antichrist being led by his own evil motives.
- C. **Dwell safely:** The Antichrist will go up against Israel who will be living as a peaceful people who dwell safely without any walls. Currently, the Israeli government maintains walls at the West Bank as a security barrier against terrorism. It will be over 400 miles upon completion.
- D. Ezekiel highlights two motivations of the Antichrist and his allies—first, they unashamedly admit their greedy lust **to plunder** Israel’s gold, silver, livestock, and goods (38:11). Second, they covet Israel’s strategic location as in the **“midst of the land”** or the “center of the earth” (38:12; cf. 5:5) highlighting Israel’s important geographical location in proximity to three continents.
- E. **Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish:** Sheba and Dedan (both in Arabia) and Tarshish (Spain) were well known as “merchants”—here they are pictured as longing to plunder Israel (during this national crisis). They might be seeking to buy at a bargain price what Gog steals from Israel.

#### V. GOG ATTACKS ISRAEL WHO IS DWELLING IN SAFETY (EZEK. 38:14-16)

- A. Both divine and human elements are involved in the Antichrist's attack on Israel (38:14-16). Ezekiel informs us of Gog's role (38:14-16a) and the Lord's role (38:16b). Ezekiel was told to prophesy to Gog informing him that the Lord knows about his plans to betray Israel by breaking his covenant with her.

***14“...son of man, prophesy and say to Gog,... ‘On that day when My people Israel  dwell safely, will you not know it? 15Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.” (Ezek. 38:14-16)***

- B. ***I will bring you against My land***: The Lord will bring the Antichrist to Israel to teach the nations the truth about His name. Here the Lord tells us why He will lead Gog and His armies to Israel.
- C. ***Jesus is hallowed in Gog***: The Lord will raise Gog up, similarly to Pharaoh, to show His power to the nations by destroying him. Gog will be as unsuspecting of the Lord as Israel will be of Gog.

## VI. THE ANTICHRIST (GOG) WAS FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS (EZEK. 38:17)

- A. The Lord asked Gog rhetorically if He had spoken about him through His prophets (38:17).

***17Thus says the Lord...“Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?” (Ezek. 38:17)***

1. ***He of whom I have spoken by My prophets***: Several Old Testament prophets spoke of the Antichrist before Ezekiel, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, Joel, Zephaniah, etc.
2. ***The Lord warned Israel for years***: The Lord's repeated warning about sending the Antichrist to discipline Israel and the nations has been one of the most neglected warnings in Scripture.
3. ***I would bring you against them***: God claims responsibility for raising up the Antichrist and sending him to attack Israel to prepare them to respond to God in obedient love and humility.

## VII. THE LORD WILL BE GLORIED IN JUDGING THE ANTICHRIST (EZEK. 38:18-23)

- A. At the same time that the Antichrist enters Israel, God's face will show His fury (38:18-23).

***18“...At the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel...My fury will show in My face. 19For in My jealousy...I have spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, 20so that...all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down...and every wall shall fall...21I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains...every man's sword will be against his brother. 22And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him...flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and***

*I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.”*  
(Ezek. 38:18-23)

- B. **Great earthquake:** God will cause a great earthquake to express His fury against the Antichrist.  
*18...there was a great earthquake...as had not occurred since men were on the earth...*  
*21And great hail...fell upon men, each hailstone about [100 pounds]... (Rev. 16:18)*
- C. **Jesus will judge the Antichrist:** He will judge his armies with pestilence, bloodshed, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone in the 30-day period following His return (Dan. 12:11).
- D. **Jesus will sanctify Himself:** Jesus will sanctify His name when He destroys the Antichrist (36:23; 38:16, 23; 39:21; cf. Isa. 66:18-19). The spectacular miraculous judgment on Gog and deliverance of Israel will be an **eschatological vindication of Jesus’ name**.
- E. It is essential to understand why God raised up the Antichrist (parallel to Pharaoh). The Lord is unfolding His masterplan. He regathered Israel from the nations to their homeland in 1948 to set up a global drama where He will stir up Gog (the Antichrist) as His tool to discipline and thus to wake Israel (and the body of Christ) up to their glorious destiny found only in faithfully walking in covenant relationship with God. He will allow sin come to fullness, and then He will draw all of the Antichrist’s leaders and armies to Jerusalem to destroy them in a way that both Israel and all the nations on earth will see His power and zeal for His people. This is how He starts the Millennium.

### VIII. GOG’S COMPLETE DESTRUCTION (EZEK. 39:1-16)

- A. The day of the Lord (39:1-8): Ezekiel 39 retells the story of Gog’s attack on Israel and his defeat.  
*1...“I am against you, O Gog...<sup>4</sup>You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel...<sup>5</sup>[and] on the open field...<sup>6</sup>I will send fire on Magog...<sup>7</sup>I will make My holy name known in the midst...Israel...the nations shall know that I am the LORD...<sup>8</sup>This is the day of which I have spoken. (Ezek. 39:1-8)*
- B. Gog’s weapons will be burned for 7 years (39:9-10). Israel will clean up after an enormous battle.  
*<sup>9</sup>“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. <sup>10</sup>They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons... (Ezek. 39:9-10)*
- C. Gog’s army will be in the process of being buried for 7 months (39:11-16). The Israelites will bury the dead soldiers in the Jezreel Valley, east of the Mediterranean Sea. This will be a graveyard for the slain army of Gog.  
*<sup>11</sup>“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 his multitude...they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. <sup>12</sup>For seven months...Israel will be burying them... (Ezek. 39:9-14)*

IX. GOD IS GLORIED WHEN THE NATIONS SEE GOG'S DESTRUCTION (EZEK. 39:17-29)

- A. The birds and beasts will devour Gog's slain army (39:17-20).

*<sup>19</sup>You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal...*

*<sup>20</sup>You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men... (Ezek. 39:19-20)*

- B. The glory of God is seen in judging Gog (39:21-24).

*<sup>21</sup>"I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment...<sup>22</sup>So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD...<sup>23</sup>The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity...because they were unfaithful to Me..." (Ezek. 39:21-32)*

- C. The nations will understand that God judged and restored Israel (39:25-29).

*<sup>25</sup>..."I will bring back the captives of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name—<sup>26</sup>after they have borne their shame...in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land...<sup>27</sup>When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations,<sup>28</sup>then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer.<sup>29</sup>And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on Israel..." (Ezek. 39:25-29)*