

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY

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“Israel, Palestine, and the Return of Christ” (part 5)*(understanding our present and future in light of the past and the witness of God's Word)****“The Coming Antichrist and Storm”***

I. Review – God made covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David. Each covenant would play a role in the salvation of mankind – restoring that which was lost in the Garden of Eden as a result of the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. In the first covenant, God promised that Abraham's descendants would bless the world as they became God's Chosen People - Israel. In the covenant with Moses, God declared that the blessing would include the revelation of God's Law summarized in the Decalogue (“Ten Words”). In the Davidic Covenant, God declared that David's line of rule will continue forever. This will be through the birth of an eternal King. God declared His covenants with Abraham and David are eternal. They find their fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah or Christ – who we now know is Jesus (The name Jesus means “*Yahweh saves*”). It is Jesus who establishes “***the New Covenant in His blood***” – Lk. 22:20. In other words, Christ's life, death and resurrection which are all symbolized in the Passover meal Jesus had with His disciples before His crucifixion, is the means of blessing for the whole world! Through Christ's ministry our relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is eternally healed and restored! For in Christ, we receive forgiveness of our sins, thereby freeing us from the power of the devil's accusations and eternal separation from God. Although most of Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah (Jn. 1:11), God has not rejected them. They still have a role to play in God's redemptive work for mankind. For when Jesus returns to Jerusalem, many Jews (the modern spiritual and ethnic descendants of Israel) will receive Him as their Messiah (Zech. 12:10-11; Rom. 11:1-27). As noted in our previous studies, the restoration of Israel as a nation for the Jewish people today is in fulfillment of numerous bible prophecies found in the Old Testament. As noted before in the covenants, God gave the land that is today Israel (and even beyond) to His Chosen People. Moreover, Jerusalem is God's city! It is where He established the first public worship site for the entire world. It is where Jesus came to die on the cross. It is where He rose again and from which He ascended into heaven. And it is where He shall return!

We will now look at the numerous passages in the Bible that tell us what will happen *before* Christ returns at the end of this present age. The culminating event of the end times that will usher in the coming of Christ will be a major invasion of the land of Israel and attack on the Jewish people.

II. The spirit presently at work in the sons of men...

Eph. 2:1-2: “And you were dead in your offenses and sins,² in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

Recall that Jesus said of the devil in Jn. 10:10a, – “***the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.*** The principle means Satan does this is through deception and pride/ego. In the book of Proverbs 6:16-19 we are told of those things God detests: “***There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, 19a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.***” Such attitudes and behavior can be seen in the spirit of antisemitism that pervades our world. *Hamas* in Gaza is a stark example of a combination of all seven! So too, the Nazis and

communists. For all the above, arrogance of power is combined with deception, wickedness, murder, and war.

Satan is an equal opportunity offender among both Gentiles and Jews! Concerning the Jewish people the devil seeks to rob them of the truth of God's love and purpose for them by convincing them that Jesus is not their true Messiah. He also influences the hearts of the Gentile world (Christian and non-Christian) to promote resentment and hostility toward the Jewish people because of their success and rejection of Christ. In some ways the Jewish people are a type of Christ even as they reject Christ! They highlight both the spiritual battle that is going on and the sin that is in the heart of man. Those who seek to control and manipulate others in totality – think of dictators and autocrats – do so, in disregard for minority views and opposing voices. As noted above in **Proverbs 6**, they will use lies, murder, and evil plans to thwart anyone who stands in their way. Such attitudes and actions are diametrically opposed to the spirit of God and His Kingdom. We can see these manifestations in countless leaders and governments throughout history. It will be this spirit of hell that will pervade the rise of a final world ruler who will have the spirit of antichrist within.

III. The Rise of the Antichrist – will be opposed to both Jews and Christians

A. The spirit of the Antichrist

I John 2:18, 22 highlights this spirit and the coming of THE antichrist, ***“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour... who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”*** John continues describing this spirit in I John 4:1-3, ***“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”*** So, the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world with the coming of Christ but it points to that time when the ultimate “Antichrist” will seek to rule and reign.

The prefix, “anti” means “in place of” or “against.” When people seek to take the place of Christ or oppose Christ they are reflecting the spirit of the antichrist. It is why the final world ruler when Christ returns is referred to as “the Antichrist.” He is also called the ***“man of lawlessness and son of destruction”*** (2 Thess. 2:3). In 2 Thessalonians 2, the Apostle Paul is speaking of the signs that will precede Christ's return. We read in that verse, ***“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”*** Paul's reference to the ***“temple of God”*** which at the time would be a reference to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem suggests that the Jewish Temple that once was at the heart of the old city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt!

Names and descriptions for this final world ruler who opposes God and exalts himself as a god above all others include ***the beast*** (Rev. 11:7; 13:1); ***the little horn*** (Dan. 7:8); ***the prince that shall come*** (Dan. 9:26); and ***the willful king*** (Dan. 11:36).

There are a number of descriptions in the Psalms of those who oppose God and His people that reflect the spirit of the antichrist. Hence, we find the following titles in the Psalms that some believe also refer to this end time ruler. These include, *the bloody and deceitful man* (Ps. 5:6), *the wicked one* (Ps. 10:3-4); *the man of the earth* (Ps. 10:18); *the mighty man* (Ps. 52:1); *the enemy* (Ps. 55:3); *the adversary* (Ps. 74:10); *the violent man* (Ps. 140:1); *the spoiler* (Is. 16:4); *the profane and wicked prince* (Ez. 21:25). Both the *"king of Assyria"* (Is. 10:12-19) and *"king of Babylon"* (Is. 14:4) also reflect the spirit of the antichrist. Ultimately, however, this evil figure will be a false or pseudo-Christ, empowered by Satan, seeking to thwart the people and will of God. Both Jews and Christians will ultimately be in his crosshairs until Christ returns.

B. The book of the Prophet Daniel

1. **visions of Daniel 2 & 7** - as noted above, the prophet Daniel gives us a number of descriptions of this end time world ruler. Before he tells us what this man will do, Daniel reveals the meaning of the visions God gave both to Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and himself concerning world empires. In **Daniel 2**, King Nebuchadnezzar he sees a statue with a gold head, silver arms and chest, bronze middle and thighs, iron legs and feet made of iron and clay. Daniel tells the king that the various parts of the statue represent world kingdoms. The common interpretation is that the gold represents Babylon, the silver the Medo-Persians, the bronze – the Greeks under Alexander and the iron – Rome. However, the feet and ten toes made of iron and clay point to this "iron kingdom" as one that become divided and breaks apart. This final part is viewed to symbolize a "revived" government like that of Rome either geographically parallel or similar in style and structure. What made Rome the greatest of all ancient empires was its ability to unify various people groups and tribes under one authority (Caesar and the Roman Senate), language (Greek), and army. It allowed for cultural and religious diversity as long as everyone submitted to Caesar. This type of unity among so many diverse peoples is unparalleled in human history although today organizations like the United Nations and more specifically the European Union seek to emulate some of Rome's characteristics. At the end of the vision a stone cut out by no human hands struck the statue and pulverized it into chaff and out of which arose a great mountain that filled the whole earth. This Daniel says represents God's Kingdom established forever!

The vision of four beasts that Daniel sees in **Daniel 7** also represents these empires and at the end of that vision, the Lord himself overthrows the final world empire represented by the fourth and most brutal beast. This beast has ten horns which recalls the ten toes in Daniel 2. From those ten horns comes a **"little horn"** that ***"will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."*** (Daniel 7:25) Many believe that the expression ***"a time, times, and half a time"*** (see below) reference a three and a half year time period of the second half of the seven year ***"tribulation"*** mentioned by Christ in the gospels.

It is clear this is another reference to the final world ruler since we then read, ***26'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'*** (Dan. 7:26-27) Earlier, in **Daniel 7:9-10 & 7:13-14** the prophecies of the coming Messiah who will rule and reign forever confirm these words.

2. Daniel 9:36-45

a. the seventy weeks: *“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”*

What does the phrase **“seventy weeks”** mean and when do they begin and end? The word translated “weeks” is literally “sevens” in the Hebrew. Therefore, it does not mean a literal week of seven days! Rather the English phrase “seventy weeks” is literally “heptads” or units of seven. We will see that the prophecy makes sense when those seventy sevens are understood to represent a total of 490 years. This period is the time it will take to accomplish six great achievements for the Holy City (Jerusalem) and God’s people. The first three in verse (“finish transgression,” “put an end to sins,” and “to atone for wickedness”) deal with removing sin. The last three (“to bring everlasting righteousness,” “to seal up the vision and prophecy,” and “to anoint the most holy place”) concern restoring righteousness and God’s holy rule – His Kingdom!

Recall that this prophecy was given more than 500 years BEFORE the time of Christ. Note again the breakdown in **Dan. 9:25-26a**: *“from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing...”* “The Messiah will be cut off” undoubtedly, refers to Christ’s death. Therefore, sixty-nine weeks (483 years) should pass from the time the order is given to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple until Christ’s death.

Now that we have witnessed the coming of Christ, we can look at dates and see how they relate to this period of time and the accomplishments listed.

1) Did Cyrus the Great’s decree in c. 535 BC (2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2-4) to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem begin the seventy weeks? NO! For his decree only had to do with rebuilding the temple, not the city. In addition, it would mean that the end of the 483 years would be 52 BC! Rather there are two other better possibilities.

2) Artaxerxes I’s decree in 457 BC - (the seventh year of his reign - Ezra 7:12-26) - while Ezra did not succeed in rebuilding the Temple at this time, the rebuilding process began in that plans were laid (**Ez. 9:9**). It took several decades to rebuild the city and this rebuilding was overseen by Nehemiah. Therefore, if the first seven “weeks” are understood to be 49 years of rebuilding this would place us at 408 BC. The remaining 434 years (62 “sevens”) would then take us to 27 AD as you wouldn’t count the year between 1 BC and 1 AD. This is the year Jesus began His ministry if you accept the **April 14, 30 AD date for His crucifixion**. And it was *“After the sixty-two weeks that the Messiah will be cut off.”* Three years after according to this view as Jesus is rejected by His people and crucified.

3) Artaxerxes I's commission in the twentieth year (445-444 BC) of his reign to Nehemiah to lead the rebuilding of the Temple (cf. Neh. 2:5-8) - At first glance, the problem with this view is that it means a date for Christ's death in 38 or 39 AD. However, if one uses the lunar calendar year (360 days) which is used in Rev. 12:6 where 1260 days correlates to the *"time, times, and half a time"* period (3 ½ yrs.) and in **Rev. 12:14**, and where 42 months is designated as 1260 days in **Rev.11:2,3**, the date of Christ's crucifixion falls on **April 3, 33 AD** which is the other possible date since the Passover falls on Friday of that year as well. So how does this work? **The 483 years (solar) is the equivalent of 476 years (lunar). Therefore, 476 years from 444 BC places the time of the Messiah being cut off at 33 AD.**

Christ's crucifixion fulfilled the third goal ("to make atonement for iniquity"). However, the other five goals - "to finish transgression," "to put an end to sins," "to bring everlasting righteousness," "to seal up the vision and prophecy," and "to anoint the most holy" still remain yet to be accomplished. Therefore, the 490 years cannot be viewed as running consecutively and ending in 37-40 AD. **Rather, the last "week" should be viewed as representing the last seven years preceding Christ's return when He will once and for all remove sin and establish God's Kingdom forever (recall Daniel 7:13-14).** These last seven years would represent the final period of the present age known as the *Great Tribulation*.

Further light is shed on this last week as the prophecy now moves from the coming of the true Messiah to the coming of the false messiah or Antichrist. We read, "and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." Who are the *"people of the prince to come."* None other than the Romans who would destroy the Jewish Temple in 70 AD thus fulfilling the words *"(they) will destroy the city and the sanctuary."* The *"prince who is to come"* will be from these people! He will be the leader of a revived Roman empire type government. Notice what he will do:

27"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Many believe that the words, "make a firm covenant with the many" refer to a peace treaty brokered by the Antichrist between Jews and Muslims that addresses the rebuilding and/or use of a new Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The words, *"for one week"* would then be the 70th week of Daniel's seventy weeks or a period of a final seven years. Thus, this peace treaty will mark the start of the seven-year tribulation period (*for one week*) but in the middle of the week the Antichrist will intervene and betray the Jewish people! We read "but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering." The Antichrist will seek to put an end to Jewish worship! It will set the stage for all the judgments pronounced in the book of Revelation. It is why we then read, "and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

JESUS REFERRED TO THIS PASSAGE FROM DANIEL!!! Jesus refers to this *"abomination of desolation"* in both **Matthew 24** and **Mark 13**. Concerning the signs preceding His return, Jesus says in **Mt. 24 (c.f. Mk.13:14-26)**, "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains... For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred

since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22“Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.” Jesus continues to show that the above events will happen right before He comes back, “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. 24“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25“Behold, I have told you in advance. 26“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. 27“For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28“Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29“**But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** 30“**And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.** 31“**And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”**

3. Daniel 11:36-45: While the earlier part of Daniel 11 speaks of the conflict between Egypt (Ptolemy dynasty) and Syria (Seleucid dynasty) during the time *after* Alexander the Great, the narrative moves to descriptions that involve the last days. We read beginning in verse 36, “Then **the king (the Antichrist)** will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. 37“He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. 38“But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. **(he will honor and seek after military might)** 39“He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god (false religion of the final false prophet – beast from the land in Rev. 13); he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.”

40“At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. (This means that though this world ruler will be the most powerful man in the world he will be opposed by some) 41“He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. 42“Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. 43“But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. (Put and Cush in Ez. 38) 44“But rumors from the East (kings of the East in Rev. 16:13-16) and from the North (“recesses of the north” in Ez. 38) will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. 45“He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain (Israel); yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

IV. Armageddon and the Coming Invasion of Israel

A. Revelation 16:12-16; the Sixth Bowl – Armageddon: “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings

from the east. 13And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15(“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”) 16And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”

Here we have the vision of the **“kings of the whole world”** gathering together for the final conflict or war before Christ’s Return. This conflict is popularly known as Armageddon since we are told that they are gathered together at a place known as Har-Magedon, which literally means, *Har* - “hill or mountain” of Magedon which many believe is Greek for Magiddo which was a fortified city in Galilee of Israel. It is located in the Jezreel Valley which is in the heart of Israel. The valley itself is 67 miles long, 14 miles wide and 1000 square miles in area. As a result, it is an ideal location for armies to converge for battle. Throughout history some two hundred battles have been fought in this vast area. Napoleon Bonaparte is said to have remarked that the area around Megiddo would be perfect for armies to gather for battle. Of course, before modern warfare that would be true. Many scholars believe that while Megiddo might be part of the final war before Christ’s return, it is better to look at “Armageddon” as simply a reference to the place where the final war occurs and that is in Israel and the surrounding region. The Hebrew can also mean *“the place or mount of the gathering of troops.”*

The simple fact is that the Bible speaks of a final conflict taking place in Israel and the surrounding region in many passages. The old adage, “Scripture interprets Scripture” comes into play here. We need to look at the various other passages that deal with this conflict in order to gain a greater understanding of who is involved and what happens. Before we look at the other passages, it should be noted that the One who is moving the nations against Israel and God’s people is Satan. It is why John tells us above that he sees *“coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God...”* They are like frogs which was an unclean animal in the Mosaic Law. It also was the symbol for a number of pagan deities in the ancient world. For the Egyptians, the frog represented *Heqt*, the goddess of resurrection and fertility. In Persia, however, the frog was the double of *Ahriman*, the god of evil and agent of plagues. Such deities for the people of God were seen really to be demons! (**I Cor. 10:20-21**). It is also noteworthy that mention is made of the Great River Euphrates. The source of this river is in the heart of what was once the Babylonian Empire and it is the lifeline (providing water for much of the Middle East) for the entire region. But John sees the Euphrates dried up to make way for the *“kings of the East”* which could very well mean the armies of Pakistan and India, and even China and the Far East. Whether the drying up of the Euphrates is literal or figurative, the significance is this final war will involve the entire world with forces coming from the North, the East, the South and the West!

NOTE: Additional key passages for understanding this final conflict known as Armageddon are **Daniel 11:36-45** (reveals that at the end of the present age, Israel will be attacked by the Antichrist and the armies of the world will converge there); **Zechariah 12-14** (also speaks of a time when Israel will be invaded by the worlds’ armies) and **Ezekiel 38-39** which describes an attack on Israel by a confederation of nations led by Gog and Magog. These forces are totally destroyed by the Lord. Some view this vision given to Ezekiel as referring to Russia and a prequel to the final war known as Armageddon. Others view

Gog and Magog (literal means “place of Gog”) as another name for the Antichrist and his kingdom since these names are also seen in **Rev. 20:8**. **I believe it is better to view the Ezekiel vision as also referring to Armageddon**. Certainly, Russia may be involved, and the Antichrist may very well be in control of Russia! But the fact that the destruction of Israel’s enemies is total and that Israel then enters into a restored new relationship with the Lord strongly suggests that the vision in Ezekiel is that of the sixth bowl in **Rev. 16:13-16** (see above).

Before we look at these key OT passages let us here again what Jesus said concerning the final conflict of nations before His Return: **Luke 21:20-24**: *“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21“Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.23“Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”*

Let’s now look at the prophecies of Ezekiel (580 BC):

B. Ezekiel 38:1-23: *And the word of the LORD (God is speaking - it doesn’t get any more authoritative!) came to me saying, ² “Son of man, set your face toward Gog (**Europe/the Antichrist**) of the land of Magog (**southern part of the former Soviet Union**), the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. (**Russia and parts of Turkey**)*

If you look on a modern map, you won't find most of the nations mentioned in chapter 38. When God gave this prophecy, He knew that countries change names and people tend to move around. Therefore He described these people using the names of tribal groups dating back to the immediate Post-Flood period. For perspective, the Bible gives us two major passages to help us interpret these two verses: **Genesis 10:2-5 (shown below) and Ezekiel 27:10-15**.

Genesis 10:2-5: *“The sons of Japheth were: **Gomer**, and **Magog**, and Madai, and Javan, and **Tubal**, and **Meshech**, and **Tiras**. ³ And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and **Togarmah**. ⁴ And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and **Tarshish**, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵ By these were the coastlands of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations*

Who is **Gog** in verses 2-3? This is the most difficult name of all to identify. The only other reference to **Gog** is in **Rev. 20:7-9**: *“When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.”* It is also a personal name of one of the sons of Joel in **1 Chron. 5:4**. However, the context does not suggest this is the actual name of a person, but rather a leader who is in charge of this alliance of nations.

As a result, some commentators believe that **Gog** is a name for the Antichrist. If so, then this is the final battle at the end of the Great Tribulation, sometimes called the battle of Armageddon. Others contend that **Magog, Meshech and Tubal** are in Russia or allied with Russia (**Rosh**), and thus Gog is the leader of Russia. Advocates of this theory usually conclude that this invasion happens *at the beginning* of the seven-year period known as Daniel's 70th week (see above in notes on Daniel 9).

"Magog" refers to a people known to the Greeks as the Scythians who settled in Asia Minor, originally in the approximate area of Armenia. Eventually they came to dominate all of Asia Minor (now Turkey) and spread eastward as far as China. The northern portion of Magog included regions that are presently in the countries of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

Note that while portions of Magog included provinces of the former Soviet Union and part of present-day Russia, it would be a severe stretch to say that Magog is solely Russia - although this is a popular view of many. Some make the case that **"Rosh"** might be the origin of the word for "Russia" but there is no solid linguistic evidence to support this theory. More likely, as others contend, since "rosh" means "head" in Hebrew then it should be translated as the proper noun - "chief prince." In fact, most Bible translations translate **Ez. 38:2-3 and 39:1** as **"Gog, chief prince of Tubal and Meshech"** rather than **"Gog, prince of Rosh, Tubal, and Meshech."** Other scholars of Hebrew say that "rosh" is never used as an adjective and that "Rosh" is not only a place name but that there is much evidence from ancient sources that "Rosh" referred to people far north of the Middle East. Such sources use the word "Rus, Ros, and Rox" to identify these peoples. Even the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the *Septuagint*, only three centuries removed from Ezekiel's original prophecy, translates "Rosh" as "Ros," thereby indicating a proper name rather than general noun or adjective.

"Tubal and Meshech" have been identified with the Tubalu and Mushki tribes that settled in Asia Minor (Turkey), who were within the Magog sphere of influence. "Togarmah" settled in the southeastern part of Turkey, near what is now Syria. Please note that most of the areas mentioned so far are predominantly Muslim. Hence, many believe this include many Muslim nations.

⁴ *"I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords;* ⁵ *Persia (Iran), Ethiopia (Sudan) and Put (Libya) with them, all of them with shield and helmet;* ⁶ *Gomer ("Gomer" is known to historians as Gimirrai of north-central Asia Minor. Ancient Jewish historian, Josephus, said that Gomer founded those whom the Greeks called Galatians which is in present day Turkey. However, the Jewish Talmud (rabbinic teachings) claimed that "Gomer" referred to Germani or the Germans. The Midrash (Jewish commentary on the Old Testament) called "Gomer" Germania) with all its troops; Beth-togarmah (Turkey, Azerbaijan) from the remote parts of the north with all its troops - many peoples with you. ⁷ *"Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them.* ⁸ *"After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them. (Since 1948 Jews have been returning to their restored homeland in record numbers from all over the world. Verse 8 also speaks of "...the mountains of Israel, which have always been waste." The mountains might have been desolate in Ezekiel's day or**

subsequently in future years under Turkish rule, but they are beautiful today. Magog will attack Israel after the people are "brought back from the sword...gathered out of many people." Verse 12 echoes this by saying the Israelites are in their homeland, after being "gathered out of the nations." God repeats Himself to emphasize that this invasion did not happen at some remote time in the past, after the Babylonian or Assyrian captivities. The only time Israel has ever been gathered out of multiple nations has been in our lifetimes, since the nation was reborn in 1948.)

⁹ "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you." ¹⁰ 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, ¹¹ and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, (Israel will be at peace) ¹² to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, (at one time before the Jews returned to "Palestine" it was a swampy wasteland neglected by the Turks) and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.'

¹³ "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish (Saudi Arabia and Western nations? "Tarshish" can be seen as those who had settled in seaport areas surrounding the Mediterranean, mostly in western Europe, and became symbolic of Gentile nations who were a long sea journey west of Israel. Archeological evidence tells us that ships of Tarshish and Phoenicia even traded with the North American continent -- before the ships of the Romans destroyed their fleets. Recall that the prophet Jonah wanted to catch a ship to Tarshish before God intervened.) with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'" ¹⁴ "Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?" ¹⁵ "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; ¹⁶ and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about **in the last days** that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog." (Note the purpose of this invasion and of everything that God does - "THAT THE NATIONS MAY KNOW ME...")

¹⁷ 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them?" ¹⁸ "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "that My fury will mount up in My anger. ¹⁹ "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel." In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare [that] on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. (An earthquake will precede the Return of Christ as well so this is probably the same event) ²⁰ "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. ²¹ "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. ²³ "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself,

and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.'" (These words parallel the visions given to the Apostle John in Revelation.)

C. Ezekiel 39:1-29: *And you son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal; 2and I will turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north and bring you against the mountains of Israel. 3"I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. 4"You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. 5"You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord GOD. 6"And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD. 7"My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 8"Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord GOD. "That is the day of which I have spoken. **Here is finality – God's Holy Name will not be profaned anymore!***

9"Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn [them], both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of them. ("seven" is the number of completion in the Bible) 10"They will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them," declares the Lord GOD.

*11"On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call [it] the valley of Hamon-gog. 12"For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13"Even all the people of the land will bury [them]; and it will be to their renown [on] the day that I glorify Myself," declares the Lord GOD. 14"They will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15"As those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. 16"And even [the] name of [the] city will be Hamonah. So they will cleanse the land.'" **The seven months should be viewed as simply a number signifying totality or completion or if things were to be done normally it would take that long to bury the dead.***

*17"As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. 18"You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as [though they were] rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. 19"So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. 20"You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war," declares the Lord GOD. **(This imagery is used to convey the fact that God's enemies will be "sacrificed" to animals due to their own pride and vainglory. Instead of trusting in God's sacrifice they are "sacrificed" in judgment.)***

21"And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. 22"And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD

their God from that day onward. (This passage suggest that this will begin a new time where everyone recognizes and honors the Lord God.) 23"*The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword.* 24"*According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and I hid My face from them.*" (The whole world will now know and understand the purpose and reason for Israel's judgment and salvation.)

25*Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.* 26"*They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their [own] land with no one to make [them] afraid.* (the past age of sin and rebellion will be forgotten.) 27"*When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations.* (God will vindicate Himself before the world and Satan in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ!) 28"*Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them [again] to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer.* 29"*I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.* (Echoing Zechariah 12 (SEE BELOW), the people of Israel will now recognize that Jesus truly is their Messiah and not just theirs but the entire world's!)

D. READ Zechariah chapters 12, 13 (the Shepherd is Christ!), &14! Highlights below:

1. Zech. 12:1-3; 10-11: "*Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,* 2"***Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah.*** 3"*It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.* 10"***I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.*** 11"*In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Meqiddo."*

2. Zech. 14:1-9: "*Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst.* 2*For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem...* 3*Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.* 4*And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.* 5*Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus, the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.* 6*It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; The lights will diminish.* 7*It shall be one day which is known to the Lord—Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.* 8*And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur.* 9*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— "The Lord is one," and His name one."*