

WHEN RUSSIA MARCHES TO HER DOOM

Ezekiel 38 and 39

Our first task in this message is to identify the persons and places named. Gog is the prince or ruler. Magog is the land. Chief prince comes from a one syllable Hebrew word, Ros or Rosh, which is the name of modern Russia. Meshech is Moscow, and Tubal is Tobolsk. Moscow and Tobolsk are the European and Asiatic, or western and eastern, capitals of Russia. Gomer is Germany. Togarmah is Turkey. Persia is now called Iran. That is what is left of the great empire of Persia, which reached its highest under Cyrus the Great. Then he mentions three countries in Africa--Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya. In the ancient world, Ethiopia usually meant the whole continent of Africa. So you can see how that continent will be involved in the final federation.

The prophetic preview of Russia, which is the only nation in the world that can ever approach the role that Gog is to play upon the stage of the nations as the "times of the Gentiles" draw to a close, is found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. All outstanding Bible expositors consider this a distinct and definite prophecy as to Russia. So God's people, who study His Word and have an eye for prophecy, know full well what God declares the future of Russia will be.

The plan of Russian expansion and dominion was devised by Peter the Great over 200 years ago. He devised a grand scheme for this expansion. His first desire was to keep the other nations continually in a state of turmoil. His second desire was very much akin to it in that it was his aim to involve the other nations in wars among themselves, at the same time keeping Russia out unless she might emerge a victor. Following the aims of Peter the Great, Stalin has been very successful in keeping the other nations continually in a state of turmoil and has involved other nations in wars between themselves. And regardless of how little you may think of him, you must admit that Stalin is the most outstanding world figure today.

Ezekiel clearly indicates that Gog will be at the head of a nation that will deliberately declare open war on the eternal God Himself, and that between him and God there will be war to the death, with no quarter shown. "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." Ezekiel 38:1-3. Gog is supremely guilty of profaning the name of God among the nations. It is only when Gog is utterly destroyed that Jehovah says, "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." Ezekiel 39:7. No other nation so completely fits into the divine portraiture of a completely anti-God nation as does modern Russia.

Seventy-five to eighty years ago, the Russian Red conspirator, Bakunin said, "Brethren, I come to announce unto you a new gospel, which must penetrate to the very ends of the world. The old world must be destroyed and replaced by a new one. The Lie must be stamped out and give way to Truth. The first lie is God; the second lie is right, and when you have freed your minds from the fear of a God, and from that childish respect for the fiction of right, then all the remaining claims that bind you, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality, and justice, will snap asunder like threads. Let your own happiness be your own law." Thus, Russia has been the most fertile of all lands for the dragon to sow his seed.

Religious liberty is a precious inheritance that the people of the Russian Empire have never known. Immediately after the Revolution of 1917 there was a brief interlude during

which Russia enjoyed the largest measure of religious freedom that unhappy land has ever known. But, it was very brief. The disciples of Bakunin lost no time in taking advantage of the chaos produced in Russia by the World War I. With hands dripping with blood, they grasped the helm of the ship of state, and their first onslaught was upon religion. And since the days of Nero, the cross of Christ has never known fiercer resistance. It was in January 1918 that official Russia took its first step toward its war on God. At that time the Soviet of Commissars issued a decree, Article 12 of which said, "No church or religious association shall enjoy the rights of judicial persons." That decree throughout opposed every fundamental right of religious associations. That decree has stood in practice, in spite of some loudly professed "religious liberty" declarations made in recent years by those who sought to curry favor from certain influential groups outside the land of Russia.

With the issuance of that edict, the Communist Government began a systematic attempt to drive all faith in God from the then 193,000,000 people within the Soviet Republics. Evil and cruel as was the Czar's Government, there was given some freedom to preach the gospel, and the Word of God was proclaimed on a very limited scale. But the deepest, darkest night that Russia has ever known came sweeping in when the Soviet reign began in October, 1917. Then, every curtain was drawn and every door was shut and bolted to avoid the entrance of a ray of light from the gospel of Christ. On one-sixth of the surface of this earth it became a criminal offense for a mother to teach her little child so much as a verse of scripture. A prison yawned before any person who would gather together so many as three young people to instruct them in the things of God or in the hope of a life after death. No Bible groups could be formed. No lectures were permitted. No church could possess a library. Twenty-five million children in the day schools were subjected to caricatures of Christianity and the most blasphemous representations of Jesus the Saviour of the world.

In 1929 it became illegal to print, import, or translate the Word of God. It is very doubtful if ten million Russians have ever seen a Bible. As a result of the special decree, churches were closed, confiscated, or taxed out of existence. Believers were persecuted in the most cruel and wanton manner. All over Russia people were compelled to have cards with which to obtain bread. The Government saw to it that in order to secure one of these cards one had to belong to some association or organization which was godless. Government favors were bestowed only upon members of the Communist Party. It was ordered that all candidates for membership in the Party had to be free from every vestige of belief in anything supernatural. It is still true that all Communists are avowed atheists regardless of where they live. A Communist must not only be without religion, but he must also be anti-religious. What a tragedy that millions of young children have been taught daily to hate any conception of God and all religious faiths. Such instruction has been mandatory on the part of teachers, and if they failed to carry out their orders they lost their jobs. Children have also been taught to hold their parents in contempt and to disobey them if they maintain any belief in religion. Communists everywhere boast of being atheists and take great pride in waging war on God. There is an irrepressible conflict between Russian Communism and a belief in God. There can never be a reconciliation between a Communist and a Christian. This is the testimony of real Communists and of real Christians.

During the first eighteen years of the Soviet rule, the authorities put to death 11,763,411 human beings. According to the official figures of the U. S. S. R. 42,800 clergymen died in concentration camps during that period. Not long after the Communists came into power, they killed the intelligentsia, robbed property owners of all they had, and put an end to private ownership. The state was supreme and the individual citizen was nothing. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right of public assembly were taken from the people. Every one who named the name of Christ was considered an enemy of the government. Christians were imprisoned, exiled in Siberia,

or put to death by some of the most inhuman methods ever conceived by depraved human beings. Lest you might think this picture a little overdrawn, let me quote Lunacharsky, the Soviet Commissar for Public Instruction, in a lecture which he delivered to a large assembly of young Communists in Moscow, in 1928.

"Indeed, I am thankful for having the privilege of speaking to you young folks, the hope of Soviet Russia, yes, the hope of the world. And you must always remember this, that we hate Christianity and the Christians. Even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. They preach love of one's neighbor and pity (mercy), which is contrary to our principles. Christian love is a hindrance to the development of the revolution. Down with love of one's neighbor! What we need is hatred. We must know how to hate, for only at this price CAN WE CONQUER THE UNIVERSE. We have done with kings of the earth; let us deal now with the kings of the skies. All religions are poison. They intoxicate and deaden the mind, the will and the conscience. A fight to the death must be declared upon religion. Our task is to destroy all kinds of religion, all kinds of morality." Lenin and his faithful disciple, Stalin, both made much of the statement, "Religion is the opiate of the people." Communism and Christianity do not go together. The living God has no choice in the matter. He simply says, "I am against thee, O Gog!" Ezekiel 38:3. And terrible will be the fury of God when His day of vengeance arrives.

On May 1, 1937 the Soviet Government issued a decree stating: "There must not remain on the territory of the U. S. S. R. a single house of prayer to God, and the very conception 'God' will be banished from the boundaries of the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages which has served as an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."

What shall we say about the present situation? Few nations, if any, have ever risen to such power in so brief a time as has Russia. Before the last war she had much. During that war she received billions as gifts, better known in the United States as lend-lease. Her armies looted the countries which they occupied, taking great herds of live-stock, at least eighty percent of the grain, and eighty-five percent of the industrial equipment, and all manufactured products which were usable. She also took between 210,000 and 225,000 German technicians and skilled workers into the Soviet Union. Naturally, Russian resources and German brains and ingenuity are a combination with which the world will have to reckon.

What are the prospects of another great war? We have the same causes as brought about the previous wars. What are they? Sin, selfishness, and senselessness. Our country will furnish more than her share of the latter. That has been our policy for years. To prove this fact, I remind you that we won the first World War. Then we ignored God at the peace table; never even had a prayer. We forgot God and a terrible depression came. Then our officials told us that if we would repeal the eighteenth amendment, open the distilleries, breweries and make plenty of good liquor, we would not have any old saloons or any more unemployment, but the government would have plenty of money, our taxes would be reduced, and we would be out of debt very quickly. So, the Lord said, "If you think you can pay your debt and straighten out your mess with liquor and sin, I will let you see what a real debt is." So the debt we were going to pay in such a short time has changed from thirteen billion to somewhere in the neighborhood of two-hundred-seventy billion, and the end is not yet. Within a few more years we will likely discover that taxes haven't been reduced as we were promised they would be.

Stalin now looks with longing eyes on Iran, a country about twice the size of Texas, which has the finest and richest oil fields of the world. He is also interested in

the Suez Canal, which is the very life-line between the various parts of the British Colonial Empire, and in the Dead Sea with its vast resources or wealth of minerals.

In brief, the scriptures say that in the last days, after Israel has settled back in the land confidently, a great northern confederacy will go down into Palestine. This confederacy will be headed up by Russia, and along with her will be at least parts of Germany, and the Balkan States, Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia. Their ultimate goal will be the riches of the Dead Sea. This body of water is 46 miles long and 10 miles wide. For centuries God has been pouring the waters of the Jordan River into it. Until the fabulous riches of this body of water were discovered, Palestine was thought to be a poor, insignificant land, that could well be ignored by those desiring to invest large sums of money. Now, it is by far the richest country in the world. In 1931, when a dollar was worth one hundred cents, the total wealth of the United States was 329 billion dollars. At that time the chemical wealth of the Dead Sea was conservatively estimated at 1,270 billion, which was more than the total wealth of the rest of the world, and approximately four times as much as the total wealth of the United States then.

God is never in a hurry, nor is He ever late. Repeatedly He has promised that His people should be gathered at the end-time, from all parts of the earth, back to Palestine. He said, "I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land." Ezekiel 36:24. That this is being done now is common knowledge.

The ease with which these salts can be extracted from the Dead Sea is one of the remarkable features of this phenomenon. The sun, God's sun, 93 million miles distant does the work. In Isaiah 60:5, God looks ahead to this day and predicts, "Then shalt thou see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged: BECAUSE THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEA SHALL BE TURNED UNTO THEE." "Our Father is rich in houses and lands; He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands; Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold; His coffers are full, He has riches untold."

It has been reported that Russia plans to put at least 6 million men into the battle of Palestine. It is said that Stalin already has made the boast that he will gather the largest army ever assembled and send it against Palestine; also, that if there is a God he will destroy Him, but that he is going to prove to the world that there is no God. The final battle will be fought on the mountains of Israel, when Russia and her allies move to take all the Near East. Whether that march will take place under the administration of Stalin or one of his successors, I do not know. It may happen during the lifetime of some of my hearers, and it may come later. But, the effort will be a failure. Palestine will be to Russia what Waterloo was to Napoleon and Stalingrad was to Hitler. Success for this northern army cannot be attained since God has already spoken and decreed Russia's doom. Russia is the one nation in the world that God says He is against. "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." Ezekiel 39:1. Read Ezekiel 38:18-23. Five-sixths of the northern horde will never live to escape. Ezekiel 39:2,4,12.