Judgment of God upon the Russian Confederacy

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The Judgment of God upon the Russian Confederacy

The Fifth in a Series of Addresses

by

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THE JUDGMENT OF GOD UPON THE RUSSIAN CONFEDERACY

IT HAS BEEN my privilege during the past several weeks to speak to you in my radio audience on themes which vitally and immediately concern the future of the nations of the world and the people of God. These themes are doubly important today because of the lightning speed with which the nations are unwittingly hastening to fulfill the prophetic portions of the Scriptures. Centuries ago the Spirit of God spoke through the mouths of His servants, the prophets, fore-telling the very events that are taking place before our eyes today. He told us also that these events would be the heralds of the most remarkable and the most magnificent advent this old world has ever witnessed, even the return in power and great glory of God's well beloved Son as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Therefore, we watch with bated breath for the daily papers, and listen with straining ears before the radio, as we remember the promise which Christ gave us when He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

I feel very strongly, my dear friends, that the time which still remains between the present hour and that coming glorious day of His appearing can not be of long duration. If this world is to survive, and if civilization is to endure, then Christ must come back soon and begin His reign of truth and equity, inaugurating that period when righteousness shall cover the earth "as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). I am well aware of the fact that the general rank and file of people do not recognize these events as signs portraying the return of Christ to the earth. But you must remember that the arch enemy of God is at work in the world, blinding the eyes of those who otherwise would believe, lest they should come to the knowledge of Christ. Satan has a subtle and apparently plausible excuse for all world happenings, one which is never in line with God's truth. However, for those who know the Scripture, and for those who have an ear ready to listen to the "still small voice" of the Spirit of God, there is overwhelming and indisputable evidence of the "time of the end."

Let me lay upon your hearts the urgent need to "go into all the world," beseeching men to become reconciled to God, before the storm of His wrath breaks upon this Christ-rejecting mass of humanity. Now is the day of salvation; and someday, perhaps sooner than any of us realize, it may be too late. May God grant us each and every one the privilege of being evangelists for Him, heralds of the Gospel of God's grace, while still it is day; for the night surely cometh, "when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Now, you will remember that I have been addressing you on the general signs of the end of "the times of the Gentiles"; on the characteristics and life of the coming, great world dictator; and on Ezekiel 36-38. In chapter 37 of this prophecy we saw foretold the dispersion and restoration of the nation of Israel and her coming period of glory. In chapter 38 we got a glimpse of the snarling wrath of the coming dictator of Russia against God's chosen people, his yet future expedition of hate into the land of promise, and God's sovereign judgment upon him. We ended our study of this chapter with an outline of how God will one day defeat and overwhelm the legions of Gog, in order to rescue His people, Israel. Today we are to study chapter 39 to note the details of the defeat of Gog's army, in that coming day, when God's ultimate triumph will bring about the full conversion of the nation of Israel.

If you have not already procured the addresses on these subjects, please write me for them; because our study today will be better understood in the light of the truth which we have considered already in connection with these themes.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF EZEKIEL 38

Let us go back for a brief review of the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, so closely linked with our lesson today on chapter thirty-nine. Gog, you will remember, is the mighty prince of the great northern confederacy, which will embrace not only the far-flung Soviet Empire, but also Germany, the northern European states and some southern allies. This monster combination is to be opposed in world politics by the revived Roman Empire with the dictator of Rome at its head; and by the vast and almost innumerable hordes of the kings of the East, which probably will include Japan, China, and India. Palestine, it would seem, at this time will enjoy a period of semi-independence, with a large group of the world's wandering Jews back in the land originally given by God to Abraham. This measure of independence will be guaranteed by a pact between the leaders of the Jews and the head of the Roman Empire. With this impetus of semi-autonomy, the land of the Jews will blossom forth into fabulous wealth, including the raising of agricultural and botanical treasures, as well as the uncovering of mineral and chemical stores.

Into the mind of the dictator of the great northern confederacy will come a thought of swift conquest with incalculable
booty and spoil. With incredible swiftness he will send his legions southward toward "the glorious land." Thousands upon thousands of infantry, juggernaut, fire-belching tanks without number, armored air-birds darkening the sky—all these will swoop down on the land which will have erected no defenses because of the joint pledge of the nations of the world to respect her territorial integrity.

Protests will doubtless be lodged as this demoniacal crusade gets under way. The world's press, in all probability, will point out the reason for the expedition as one of thievery and rape. Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and a group called the "young lions thereof" (verse 13) will condemn the proceedings; but apparently the protest will be but a verbal one, not backed with armed intervention.

Many have wondered who "Tarshish" and "the young lions thereof" are. While we can not be dogmatic, nor do we wish to be, it seems that this combination of nations best describes Great Britain with her coterie of colonies. Some Bible students have come to this conclusion, after a careful comparison of all the Old Testament references to "Tarshish."

You will remember that the picture of the revived Roman Empire given us in Daniel's prophecy is under the symbol of the two feet of the great image. That this empire is to be the one of the latter days is made sure, because the "stone cut out without hands" indubitably refers to the return of the Lord Jesus, when He will smite the feet of the image. Apparently there will be in this revived Roman Empire, two divisions with five kingdoms lining up on each side, yet confederated into one. This is suggested by the five toes on each foot. And if we press the symbol a little further, we see that, as there is one great toe on each foot, with four smaller ones, so there may well be, in this confederacy, two great nations, possibly Great Britain and Italy, each aligned with four smaller, more dependent nations. Certainly Italy and Great Britain cover part of the territory occupied by the old Roman Empire, and will be in the revived confederacy ruled over by the Antichrist in that coming day. "Sheba" and "Dedan" represent the peoples south of Palestine, doubtless in the Arabian peninsula. And if "Tarshish" represents Great Britain, as many believe, then in all probability Egypt, backed by England, will join forces with Sheba and Dedan in opposing Gog when he enters "the glorious land," in order "to take a spoil" (Ezek. 38:13).

This widespread protest to the invasion of Palestine by Gog and his millions will apparently fail to stem the tide of the raid for spoil. But there is One who will not only be righteously indignant against this rapacious dictator, but who will do something about it! God will speak, and terrifying, atmospheric elements, of hail, lightning, and wind will war against the Russian thieves. God will speak, and the earth will tremble as mountains tumble into valleys, and as cities are razed to the ground, burying alive the despoilers of Israel. God will speak, and the vivid spectre of pestilence will steal health and even life from the invaders, covering the ground with pale corpses. Thus, in and through this answer of Jehovah to Gog's threat of extermination of Israel, the name of God will be magnified, and the nations of the world will be led to realize that Israel's God lives!

The Destiny of the Vast Army of Gog

Chapter 39 continues to unfold the prophecy of chapter 38, adding many details concerning God's victory over the satanically inspired forces of Gog. The whole scene is one of unspeakable solemnity, and brings us to a realization of how terrible this time of the end will be. Let us note that the chapter begins as does chapter 38; we read verse 1 from the Revised Version:

"And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal."

In our former studies in this series, which are now in print, we showed that "Rosh" is "Russia," and that "Meshech" and "Tubal" are clearly "Moscow" and "Tobolsk." The prophecy goes on in verses 2-6, to reveal the destiny of the vast army of Gog:

"And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord."

Here we see that what has been told us in the preceding chapter is repeated, with added details concerning the overthrow of the Russians and their allies. A most terrible slaughter is pictured; for you will remember that Gog and his allies will have a
vast army. Already dictators of the Soviet Union have threatened
to have an army of twenty million men in the field within a com­
paratively short time; and this is not at all impossible today. But
picture, if you will, the army of that coming day, when not only
the resources of the Soviet Union are marshalled; but when Ger­
many, the northern European states, and “many people” are in­
cluded. In fact, this army will be so vast that not a move will
be made by the rest of the world except to utter a feeble protest.
Let us suppose, for the sake of visualization, that this army will
reach the extent of twenty million men. That would mean that
five-sixths, or nearly seventeen million, would be destroyed by
the hand of God.

Verse 3 tells us that the invaders will be powerless in seeking
to use their weapons, for these deadly implements of war will be
dashed from their hands. There has been much talk, or rumor,
during recent months of an invisible “ray of death” that is sup­
posed to have the power to render modern weapons impotent.
With this ray, so the rumor has it, an invading army could pour
in its own fire while paralyzing the guns of the defenders.
 Personally, I doubt that any such thing will ever be the invention
of the human mind. Nor do I think that even the slightest inkling
of such a scheme is available to the governments of the world.
Just consider, if you will, the mad, suicidal race for guns and air­
planes and larger navies that is being engaged in by all the nations
of the world today. If such a ray were possible, do you think
that nations would continue to be pouring billions into offensive
and defensive armor that could be rendered invalid by a secret
ray? Certainly not. But remember this, that such a thing is en­
tirely possible with God. In an instant God could supercede the
laws of His universe which govern explosives and electricity; and
immediately all the weapons of men would be absolutely power­
less.

JUDGMENT UPON RUSSIA AND HER BORDERS

Let me call to your attention verse 6, where it is stated that
God will not only bring judgment upon the army of Gog, which
at that time will be marching upon the land of Israel; but He will
also send fire upon Russia herself. Several instances in the Scrip­
tures show us that God is able to send devouring and destroying
fire in judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah were so judged. And in
Ezek. 39:6 we read that God will not only deal with the army of
Gog, but also upon the land of Gog severe judgment will fall.
The word translated “isles” might better be translated “coasts”
or “borders,” and undoubtedly refers to the countries which will
be in league with Russia in this nefarious business. The result
anticipated by this extension of judgment will be that “they shall
know” that God is the Lord! Thus the annihilation of the armies
of invasion, together with the vast and far-reaching judgment
upon the land of the invaders, will produce certain chaos in the
northern confederacy, rendering these lands defenseless against
aggression by other powers. One might well reason that the re­
vived Roman Empire, with its ruling man of sin will lose no time
in extending her sway over these tempting lands. Certainly inter­
national disorder, desolation, and unprincipled seizing of wealth
and property will be the order of the day at that time. We have
had a slight glimpse of what will be rampant as we have witnessed
the happenings of recent years. The occasion for the attack upon
and seizure of smaller countries by the larger nations has been
manufactured out of nothing. The modern dictators ruthlessly
take whatever their fancy desires, without the slightest regard
for moral principle or right. Let us repeat, for emphasis—this
opportunity may be taken by imperial Rome to incorporate the
entire world within her boundaries.

GLORY FOR GOD’S NAME IN ISRAEL

This judgment will have a wonderful effect upon the Jews
of the world, as we note from verses 7 and 8:

“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 (nations) shall know that I am
the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is come, and it is
done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have
spoken.”

The direct intervention of Jehovah when all will seem to be
lost, will prove to many of the Jews that the God of Sinai and of
the Red Sea is coming to their aid once more. Doubtless there
will be a turning to God from the idols of commercialism and
materialism, which have so enamoured God’s ancient people
through the centuries. We know of a surety that Israel will look
to Jehovah at this time. Perhaps there will be such a catastro­
phic judgment upon a bitter and overwhelming enemy that the Jew
will realize his own sin and idolatry, and will fall upon his knees
in genuine repentance. God has promised that in the seed of
Abraham all nations of the earth shall be blessed. Up to this time
this prophecy has never been completely fulfilled, although Israel
has given to the world the greatest of all blessings when she gave
Christ and the Bible to a sinning race. But there is coming a day
when the hearts of unsaved, commercial, grasping Jews will be changed by the love of God. Then their lives and characters will show forth Christ. May God hasten the day!

**The Burning of Weapons in That Coming Day**

Now let us read verses 9 and 10 for yet further details of the coming judgment upon Gog:

“And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand­staves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God.”

There have been those who have maintained that, according to this passage, there would be a reversal of the methods of modern warfare, and a return to the more primitive weapons of former centuries. This is supposedly set forth by the fact that, after the destruction of the army by the hand of Jehovah, all the countless wooden handles of various weapons will remain upon the ground, furnishing firewood for the entire land for seven years. Of course, this is a literal interpretation of these verses. But, personally, I do not see any difficulty presented in the use by Ezekiel of terms describing ancient warfare. You well know that, when one person speaks to another, the terms used must be those with which both are familiar. When one has a message to impart to others that is novel or strange, he must use words that are known, and by contrast and comparison describe the new thing. As the prophet had to speak of future methods and machines of warfare to a people who knew absolutely nothing about them, he either had to coin words, which were unintelligible to his readers and auditors, or he had to speak of the weapons of future centuries under the symbols of the then present-day weapons. This is exactly what he did. In describing the almost incredible slaughter and destruction of Gog’s army, he made it intelligible to those living in his day by presenting a picture of how such a slaughter would have looked to the Israelite then—nearly 600 B.C. Had he spoken of airplanes or tanks or heavy artillery, no one would have had the slightest conception what was meant. Rather, he took the picture and translated it into language that his own people could understand.

A quotation of a familiar passage in Isaiah helps us to understand such a circumstance. Isaiah, in describing the coming day of peace and righteousness, which will be ushered in by our Lord, wrote, saying:

“And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

Here we have the picture presented in words which the people of Isaiah’s day could well understand. Certainly the prophecy foretells the turning from a policy of munition-making to the pursuit of agriculture. Surely we need not suppose that all the weapons in use in that day will be swords and spears; or that all the agricultural implements, into which they will be converted, will be the plows and pruning hooks of the ancients. Isaiah was merely setting forth, in language that his immediate audience could understand, the great and transcendental truths of the coming universal peace.

Likewise, in our passage in Ezekiel, the meaning is that there will be immense and almost incalculable stores of munitions and implements of modern warfare that will be taken by the preserved Jew, and converted into the service of a time of peace.

No doubt, there will be vast quantities of material that can be burned; and it will furnish fuel for the land for seven years. In all probability, there will also be vast quantities of gasoline, oil, and other fuel that can be diverted to turn the wheels of industry in the land. Of steel, copper, and various metals, there will be an abundance. These may be used to build new industries, to erect new homes, ships, and railroads. God alone knows! Just the opposite has been true during recent years, as scrap iron has been loaded into ships in United States ports, so that foreign nations could make tanks, shells, and artillery. But in that coming day tanks and shells and artillery will once more be used for peaceful pursuits. The stores and materials necessary for a modern army almost defy the imagination. Not only must food and drink be carried to feed the soldiers, but ammunition, gasoline, and oil must be transported. Repair shops, machine shops, and forges are so necessary for mechanized warfare that these, too, must be provided for the moving army.

What a vast quantity of all these things will be left upon the rolling hills of Palestine when an army of possibly twenty million men is annihilated by the hand of Almighty God! What a spoil will be given to the Jews by those who will seek diabolically to despoil them! What a commentary on the impossibility of attempting to do despite to God’s ancient people!
Now let us read verses 11-16 for a description of the magnitude of the task of burying the slain from Gog's army:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Ha-mon-gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God. And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Ha-mon-gog. And also the name of the city shall be Ha-mo-nah. Thus shall they cleanse the land."

In the first place, God will give unto Gog a vast cemetery, so that those who pass by may know what happened to the one whose greed and lust led him to attempt to plunder the land and the people of Jehovah. Its name is to tell the same story, for this cemetery is to be called "the valley of Ha-mon-gog," meaning "the valley of the multitude of Gog." It is interesting to note here that, while we have not previously seen just what will happen to Gog, the prince, in verse 11 we are told that Gog, too, will be buried in the land, which he will seek to conquer.

Let us stop here a moment to contrast two scenes. Do you remember that in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel another valley was brought to our attention? That one was filled with dry bones which represent the nation of Israel. The valley graveyard, in this case, represents the Gentile nations, among which Israel has long been scattered. In this scene of bleak desolation Ezekiel was told to prophesy; and as he obeyed, the bones strangely moved, came together, and were covered with sinews, flesh, and skin. There they were, now a valley filled with corpses, yet without life. To Ezekiel again came the word of God, and he was told to prophesy to the four winds, that breath and life might enter into this multitude of corpses. And even as he obeyed, breath entered into them, and the multitude stood upon its feet, an exceedingly great army. All this, God told Ezekiel, was but a picture of national Israel at the time of the end, when

God will take them from the cemeteries of the nations of the world, breathe new life into them, and return them again to their own land. Then they shall live again as a nation before Him. My friends, it is thrilling to be living in a day when this prophecy of the restoration of Israel is taking place as God has spoken it! And just as surely as it has begun, so surely will it be consummated, exactly as foretold in God's Word!

Now, in contrast, see Gog's army, another exceedingly great host of millions, lying dead upon the mountains of Israel. For this army, dead because they will have opposed the living God, burial, not resurrection, will be ordered. They are to be buried together in a vast cemetery, as a reminder to all people of what happens to the nations who defy God. This scene will make the war of 1914-1918 look like a mere skirmish. And even the dreadful death-toll of recent "blitzkrieg" warfare will not be compared with the desolation that will be accomplished here. Verse 12 goes on to state that a full seven months will be required to inter the dead. Evidently they will not be buried in huge trenches, as some have been buried after great disasters, because the Jews will not want to defile the land. There are certain strict rules and regulations among the orthodox Jews which require them to bury the dead in a certain way, in order that the land may be ceremonially clean. Accordingly, throughout seven, ghastly months, the people of Israel will move up and down the land, placing under the sod the remains of the once proud soldiers of the northern confederacy.

Some have wondered, in this connection, why the government of Russia will not bury her own dead. But we must remember that not only will judgment be sent by God upon the army of Magog, but fire and punishment will also be visited upon the land itself. No doubt the punishment at home will be so great that all who are able will be busy, burying the dead there. And, according to verse 13, the defeat and death of the army of Gog will be for an object lesson before all men, reminding them that Jehovah of ancient Israel will vindicate His people. And through all this He will receive honor and glory. Would that the nations of the world would turn from their wicked ways of defiance and insult to God, bow their knees, and acknowledge His right to rule and reign over the world that He has made! But the heart of the natural man is "desperately wicked" and opposed to God's will. The Lord has been speaking in grace and mercy for more than nineteen hundred years and yet the greater percentage of the population of the earth has not turned to God. Nor will
unregenerate man acknowledge God's interest in the earth.
Therefore, to this Christ-rejecting world God must one day speak
in terrible judgment. And this punishment upon Gog and his
army is but one of the judgments that will be meted out upon
the earth as God thunders His wrath. The last book in the Bible
is filled with a description of the judgments of God.

My dear friend, if you are reading these pages and have not
yet come into the family of God, let me solemnly warn you that
those who will not have the love of God as manifested in His Son,
must some day be the objects of His fierce wrath. Today the way
is open. Yea, the door into the new life that is to be found in
Christ Jesus is open wide. "Whosoever will" may enter in, and
have everlasting life. I pray that you may come; and coming,
find life and peace and endless joy in Him, "whom to know
right is life eternal."

THE FEEDING OF THE BEASTS AND THE FOWLS
UPON THE FLESH OF THE MIGHTY

Let us turn now from the scene of the great burial to that
 pictured in verses 17-20:

"And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak
unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field,
Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side
to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacri­
fice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and
drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink
the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and
of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Ba-shan. And ye
shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken,
of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall
be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty
men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God."

When God speaks to the elements, which are His, and with
a mighty stroke utterly wipes out the invading army, He will
invite the fowls and the beasts to feast upon the flesh of the slain.
This has been done in the past and will be repeated at that future
time, as well as at the close of the great tribulation period. Just
all that is involved here, we may not fully understand. I believe
that there will be literal fulfillment of this prophecy; for the
number of the slain will be so enormous that it would be impos­
sible to protect the bodies either from the beasts of prey or from
the fowls of the heaven. Then, too, retribution will be visited
upon the enemies of God. Men who have shaken their fists in the
face of the God of all the earth, men who have brazenly and bla­
tantly blasphemed His holy name will be given their proper doom.
Their bodies will become meat for the beasts and birds, which
God Himself invites to that awful feast.

Some have seen here a provision of God to prevent the land
from becoming a stench. Because the people can not bury the
dead fast enough, God will bring in great swarms of birds and
beasts to eat the flesh, so that pestilence may not sweep the land.
At any rate, the fact remains that the flesh of the once-proud, of
the mighty, and of the haughty will become carrion food for
the birds and beasts.

What a lesson is here for us too, my friends! One of the
things which God hates is pride. God hates it because there is
no reason for it. What do we possess that we have not received?
Nothing. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the life that is
ours, the sun that warms us, the breezes that cool us—all are God­
given! And yet men boast and loudly vaunt themselves, as if
they had, unaided, caused all these things to be. I sometimes
wonder why God does not send a thunderbolt from the blue, and
wipe such creatures from the face of the earth. And Christians,
too, are by no means free from this fault. There are believers
who glory in pride of station, pride of family, pride of wealth,
when they should glory in the Lord. There is only one pride
which is right and proper for Christians to have, and that is
pride in a wonderful Saviour. Nothing else is safe for the child
of God. The dismal end of Gog and his hosts awaits all who defy
the living Lord.

GLORY FOR GOD AMONG THE NATIONS

At this point the prophet turns from considering the sordid
scene, and begins to speak of the effect this judgment will have
upon the nation of Israel, as well as upon the other nations of
the world. Let us read verses 21-24:

"And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the
heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my
hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall
know that I am the Lord their God from that day and
forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel
went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed
against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them
into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.
According to their uncleanness and according to their
transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them."

As we study these verses, we believe that the Spirit of God,
through the prophet, is going forward a bit in time and is envi-
sioning the return of Christ to the earth. When will God set His glory among the nations? When will all nations fully realize the fact that there is a God in heaven who possesses the earth, and who directs the affairs therein? When shall the house of Israel fully know that Jehovah is her God? When shall the nations understand that Israel was scattered to the four corners of the world for her iniquity against her God? I believe that these things can come only at the time of the glorious return of God's Son. That will be the time when all these things shall be fully accomplished, and not before then! The world will acknowledge the righteousness of God in His dealings with Israel and with the nations only when His Son takes the reins of government.

Israel will return to her own land in great numbers, but in unbelief. Christ will still, at that time, be Israel's "stumbling-block." He who is loved by us will still be ignored by Israel. True, the temple worship will be set up, and the ancient sacrifices resumed. Lambs will continue to be offered as before, and the priests will function as in the days of old. All this will Israel do, not knowing that God's Lamb has come, and has been slain for the sins of Israel and of the world. Of Christ's present High Priestly ministry they will be ignorant. How inexpressibly sad is Israel's blindness! But Ezekiel, in this chapter, looks beyond this period of blindness, and sees the time when Israel will behold Him whom they have pierced, and will mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son. Then she will receive Him as her long-awaited Messiah. At this time Christ shall come unto His own, and His own shall receive Him, praise God!

The Restoration and Blessing of Israel

Let us note the coming glory, as described in the last five verses of the chapter:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

We need to remember that, whenever God speaks of any trial into which His people are to go, the recital of the trial or judgment is always accompanied by some note of the glory which is to follow. Here in Ezekiel 39 we have the record of one of the greatest trials which God's ancient people will ever be called upon to endure, but here also is the note of ultimate victory.

First, God's decision to call the scattered nation of Israel back to her own land is reiterated in verse 23. This is amplified and repeated many, many times in the Old Testament, even as we have often observed. This is the central theme of Israel's glory in the prophetic portions of the Old Testament, the regathering of the Jew to his homeland for God's blessing.

Furthermore, God is going to regather "the whole house of Israel," not merely some of the tribes. All twelve of the tribes are to be included. How utterly foolish is the modern cult which would divide Israel and give only a portion of the nation the glory which God has promised! All Israel is guilty of the sins of disobedience and rejection of the Messiah. All Israel has wandered and suffered throughout the centuries. Even so, all Israel will be regathered to enjoy the time of great happiness that is to come. In that day all Israel shall know that the years of her captivity were permitted for her own chastening; and, what is more, all Israel shall know the true character of Jehovah who is her God. For the Lord will not hide His face from His people, but will dwell among them and pour out His Spirit upon them.

Gog's War against Israel—not Armageddon

Now, lest some should think that, following the defeat of the armies of Gog, the period of blessing will immediately come to pass, we need to remember that the battle discussed in this chapter is not the battle, or the war, of Armageddon. That is an altogether different war. The Roman prince, and not Gog of Russia, is the leader of the enemies of God at Armageddon. Moreover, the decision at Armageddon will not be accomplished by atmospheric and seismical upheavals, but by the personal appearance of the Son of God, followed by the armies of heaven. And the Antichrist will not be buried on the hills of Palestine; but, with the false prophet, will be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone.

The time element between these two great battles of Gog and Armageddon is thought by most Bible students to be about the
time of "the great tribulation," but again we do not want to be dogmatic. However, we are sure that there are many distinguishing features between these events.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS DAY OF GRACE

With this lesson today we conclude this series of studies on "the signs of the times" of the end of Gentile dominion, the coming world dictator, and the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:1-39:29. These are searching and solemn themes that we have been considering. And as this day of grace seems to be drawing to a close, we are impressed with our own responsibility of heralding the Gospel message while there is yet time. God faithfully warns us of the coming judgments upon a rebellious world, saying unto us, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness . . .?" (II Peter 3:11). The end of this present age draws nigh, and still God is beseeching men and women to turn to the Lamb of Calvary. Many have not yet heard the Gospel story. Many others have not heard it clearly. It is our task and our privilege to go with the blessed story of the grace of God to those who are hopelessly lost in darkness and sin.

I do not know, my friends, just how much longer I shall be allowed to broadcast this message. Perhaps one of these mornings the trump of God shall sound; the dead in Christ shall be raised; and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air! (See I Thess. 4:13-18.) What a wonderful prospect for us, to be sure! But how terrible to think that millions will be left to go through the tribulation.

My friend, are you safe in Christ? If not, turn to Him without delay. Are your loved ones saved? If not, in God's name, do not sleep until they, too, come to know Him, "whom to know aright is life eternal." Then there are your friends, your associates, your acquaintances—have you not some influence with them? Will you not beseech them to become reconciled to God? May our gracious Heavenly Father grant unto each and every one of us the privilege of working for Him during the time which still remains. Good bye, and may God bless you as you testify for Him in the name of our gracious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.