Invasion of Palestine by the Northern Confederacy in the Latter Days

Louis T. Talbot
The

INVASION OF PALESTINE
by the
NORTHERN CONFEDERACY

In the Latter Days

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by

LOUIS T. TALBOT, 1889-
Pastor
The Church of the Open Door

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"IN THE LATTER DAYS"

We are entering today upon a detailed study of the thirty-eighth chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel. I trust that you have your Bible open before you as we proceed with this lesson. And you will please keep in mind our former studies in this series, based upon the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters of Ezekiel; for our lesson today can be fully comprehended only as we link it with the prophetic events of these preceding chapters.

We have seen in chapter thirty-six the divine reason for the world-wide dispersion of the nation Israel; in chapter thirty-seven, the prophecy of the regathering of this people and the glory they are to enjoy in the reign of Christ on earth. Now in chapter thirty-eight we come to the consideration of a powerful prince called "Gog" from the land of "Magog," who will invade Palestine with a vast horde of men and machines at the end of this age. It is this invasion of the Holy Land by this northern confederacy "in the latter days" that is our lesson for today.

Do you remember that in our consideration of the eleventh chapter of Daniel we read of "the king of the north"? This king will be displeased with the Antichrist in his invasion of Egypt and Palestine, and will come "against him like a whirlwind with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships." Doubtless this "king of the north" in Daniel's prophecy is the same person described in the chapter before us as "Gog" from "the land of Magog." And, as we shall see, Gog is the name of the dictator of the vast country of Russia, which lies to the north of Palestine.

It is very important that we read and reread this chapter and the one which immediately follows; for this is indispensable to a right understanding of the meaning of this prophecy. And as we read, shall we not pray that the Holy Spirit, the only Teacher of the Word of God, will guide our hearts into a right comprehension of the significant truths herein revealed? What a joy it is to know that the blessed Third Person of the Trinity is here for the express purpose of making these prophecies understood by us! As we ask this of Him, He delights to make these "deep things of God" real to us. No Scripture can be rightly understood apart from the gracious ministration of the Holy Spirit.

Who Is Gog? And Where Is Magog?

Now let us read verses 1-3 of our chapter from the Revised Version:

"And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal."

The question before us here is the identity of Gog, referred to in this passage. Who is he? And where is "the land of Rosh"? The great Hebrew scholar, Gesenius, has identified Rosh with modern Russia; Meshech with Moscow, and Tubal with Tobolsk. He made his identification through the phonetic similarity between these names in the Hebrew and in the Russian. Since Ezekiel tells us in verse 15 (R. V.) that Rosh is in "the uttermost parts of the north," there can be little doubt of the correctness of the interpretation of Gesenius. When God speaks of "the king of the north," or "the king of the south," or "the kings of the east," He refers to them in their relation to Palestine, even as He said through Moses:

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8).

Therefore, "the uttermost parts of the north" from Palestine could mean only Russia and countries in that direction from the Holy Land.

The Scofield Reference Bible has a good footnote on this point. Lest some of you who are listening to this broadcast do not have a copy, let me read it to you:

"That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers headed up by Russia, all agree. The whole passage should be read in connection with Zech. 12:1-4; 14:1-9; Matt. 24:14-30; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:17-21. 'Gog' is the prince; 'Magog,' his land. The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification."

It is deeply significant that Leningrad, which was formerly St. Petersburg, is no longer the capital of Russia today. Within recent years the government was moved to Moscow. And this is all the more striking because Russia had every reason to keep Leningrad as the capital; for there is no name in all Russia so revered, even today, as the name of Lenin. Therefore, in this prophecy Gog is without doubt the prince of Rosh, or Russia; Meshech is Moscow; Tubal is Tobolsk. Tubal, or Tobolsk, takes its name from the River Tobol. It was the ancient capital of the eastern division of the Russian Empire and may become so again; hence the reference to it here.
“Gog . . . the Prince of Rosh”

In verse 3 God addresses this personage who is called Gog, the prince or ruler of Rosh. God is the coming dictator of the vast northern confederacy, which will include not only the sprawling empire of the Soviets, but Germany and her dependents as well. Verses 5 and 6 identify some of these nations that will be a part of this great northern confederacy: “Persia, Ethiopia, Libya with them . . . Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people” with Gog.

In the last decade Russia has turned from the ideals and practices of Socialism to imperialistic totalitarianism. There is no country in all the world that is more autocratic than the Union of Soviet Russia, governed by its wholly deified Lenin, and its half-deified man of cold steel, Stalin. Far from being a Communist state or Socialistic government, Russia is the rankest kind of autocratic, absolute monarchy. And this is exactly in fulfillment of the prophecy of Scripture which is before us; for here God Himself speaks to a certain “prince” who represents the whole of this confederacy of the north.

Who is Gog? Gog is the mighty dictator who will rule over this coalition of countries at the time the events of this chapter take place. We often find in the Word of God that men are named before they are born. This was true of Josiah, a good king of Judah. Cyrus, a mighty king of Persia, was also named by God long before the day of his birth. Here in Ezekiel we have God giving us the very name of the supreme despot of that coming day.

“Behold, I Am against Thee, O Gog”

God speaks against this prince and his infamous regime. We hardly need to ask, “Why is God against Gog?” For Gog with his ungodly, blasphemous, blatant philosophy will be one of the most God-defying men this world has ever produced. He will belong in the class with the Antichrist, who will rule in that day. In fact, “the king of the north” will be the great antagonist of the “man of sin”; but this northern dictator will be conquered by the Antichrist.

Literally scores of quotations from current newspapers and periodicals might be cited to illustrate the blasphemous defiance of God in Russia today. For the past score of years the leaders of the Soviet Union have been ceaselessly endeavoring to make their country positively and absolutely anti-God. Their philosophy is that religion is an opiate for the people, and that no nation can have an ideal government until this opiate has been entirely wiped out. Here is an excerpt from a proclamation issued by Lounatcharski, Commissar of Education:

“We hate Christians. Even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. They preach love to one's neighbor and pity, which is contrary to our principles. Christian love is a hindrance to the development of the revolution. Down with love for one's neighbor! What we want 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.”

Such a tirade is only a shadow of what is still to come at the time of the events pictured in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. The Soviet Union has always been against God, but at the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy they will form a diabolical expedition utterly to wipe from the face of the earth every last vestige of the worship of God, symbolized first by the Jewish people, and then by their Promised Land with its capital city of Jerusalem. Therefore, judgment swift and complete will come upon Gog and all his hordes, because our all-powerful God will Himself defend His name, His people, and His chosen city.

He will bring irrevocable doom upon all who oppose Him in that day.

The Nations in This Northern Confederacy

A moment ago we read from verses 5 and 6 of our chapter, the God-given list of the allies of Russia at the time of the expedition of death upon the land of Israel. Let us read again all of verses 5 and 6:

“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.”

These are the countries which will be aligned with Russia and her prince at the time of the end.

1. Persia Is One of Them. We need to remember that, when Ezekiel wrote these words, Persia was just about to reach world supremacy. Then after ruling the world for a time, Persia was conquered by Greece, which was in turn subdued by the mighty legions of imperial Rome. Notwithstanding the fact that Persia
has been a weak, helpless country from that time, yet she has continued to exist as a nation down to the present hour. Today Persia is well known to the world's press as Iran. This country, then, is to be an ally of Russia.

2. Ethiopia and Libya Will Be in This Confederacy. Some Bible students have found no little difficulty in making Ethiopia, which is today a part of the Italian Empire, an ally of the confederacy of the north. But, without attempting to enter into any dispute, let me remind you of the amazing rapidity of the movement of events today. Who would have thought last year of the recent changes in the map of Europe? Yes, Ethiopia and Libya, too, are today under the dominion of the dictator on the Tiber; but God's infallible Word declares that, at the time of this invasion of Israel's land, they will be followers of Gog.

Perhaps a ray of light can be thrown on this situation when we remember that in the eleventh chapter of Daniel we read that the Roman prince will be forced into an expedition against "the king of the south," or Egypt, and will eventually clash with the monster-army of "the king of the north." The fate of these two countries may well be the cause of this coming conflict.

3. Gomer Is Germany. In Gen. 10:2, 3 we read that Gomer was the grandson of Noah, and the son of Japheth; and that Togarmah was a son of Gomer. The three sons of Gomer settled to the north of the Black Sea, which was then called "Gomeria," and later "Cimmeria," and still later "Crimea." Other descendants of Gomer were said to have travelled along the Danube, settling in the land which is now Germany. According to some authorities their land was first called "The Land of Gomer," or "Gomerland," from which the word "Germany" came.

Webster's dictionary says that the descendants of "Gomer" are the equivalent of the "Gimirrai," who are the Germans. You might ask almost any Jewish rabbi about this term, and he would most assuredly tell you that Gomer represents the Germans. Furthermore, almost all Biblical scholars seem to be agreed that this is the correct meaning of this term.

**Russia—The Leader of This Northern Confederacy**

We need only glance at this prophecy again to see that it is "Gog," "the prince of Rosh," and not Gomer, who will take the lead in these events. This too may seem strange to us today, as we remember that the one who has caused such a profound stir, and almost a world revolution, is not the leader of Russia, but the dictator of Germany. But let me remind you again that events today seem to move with the speed of lightning, and that thrones and even dictatorships may change overnight.

Let us consider at this point the intense and bitter antipathy that was openly manifested between the dictators of Germany and Russia until about a year ago. In his "Mein Kampf" Adolf Hitler openly charged that never could the German people have anything to do with the Russia murderers. An alliance was unthinkable. To quote a sentence from that book, "Stalin and his associates are common, blood-stained criminals, the scum of humanity, with whom under no circumstances should Germany ever make a treaty." But the world was amazed, as one day the startling news came over the wires that a pact had been signed between Russia and Germany. It is safe to say that comparatively few people from the world's two thousand million even remotely expected such a turn of events. But this alliance came, and has persisted unto this time. And although the alliance has certainly not progressed to the extent revealed in the chapter before us, yet it is certain that at the time of the expedition into the land of promise, foretold by Ezekiel, the Word of God will be found to be absolutely correct in its statement.

Now let us read verse 7 of this chapter, and call attention to one word in it:

"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."

We have already seen that it is Russia who, through her prince, will play the leading part in this terrible drama. And here she is said to be a "guard" unto her allies. The marginal reading of the word "guard" is "commander." That is, Russia is to be the commander over the confederacy. We may think that today Russia is playing the secondary role in world events, for Germany's Hitler seems to be the aggressor in the field of action. But let me call this to your attention, and you may judge for yourself as to which one of the dictators is the more wily of the two. In the Polish campaign which nation did all the work? And which nation stepped in and, it is said, with the loss of only eight men took a large portion of the spoils? Which nation stormed the fortresses of Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France to gain dearly won victories? And which nation quietly and subtly took over three countries and part of another, not counting a portion of Finland? If there has been one country pulling the proverbial chestnuts from the fire, which country has it been? Surely the crafty occupant of the Kremlin has accomplished as much as Hitler, with no loss of "Red" blood.
We can not know positively what the immediate future holds, but there is One who does know all about the future; and He knows what takes place in the secret councils of the Soviet Union, of the Reich, and of all the governments of the world. More than three thousand years ago the Spirit of God wrote about things that are beginning to take shape today, things that will reach their appointed climax when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. I want to tell you, there is no book so up-to-date as the Bible. And our Almighty God is abundantly able to shift and direct the nations, so that His purposes will be fully brought to pass. If you will honestly peruse the pages of history with an open mind, my friend, you must see that the invisible hand of God has ever been present, directing the movements of all nations. God has never abdicated His throne in favor of anyone, nor will He ever do so!

Thus these opening verses of our chapter tell us plainly of this future alliance between Russia and Germany, with Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya taking part in it, making what we have called the great northern confederacy. With this group there will doubtless be many dependencies of both Russia and Germany, all of which are comprehended in the statement made to Gog in verse 6, “... and many peoples with thee.”

**The Motive for This Invasion of Palestine**

Verses 8-12 tell us the motive that will prompt these vast hordes to invade Palestine in the time of the end. Let us read them together:

“After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.”

These armies of “the prince of Rosh” will enter the land of Palestine “to take a spoil, and to take a prey.” How significant all of this is at this present time! This very prophecy was difficult to understand until a few years ago because it was only too clear that the land of Palestine was not worth invading by anyone. I remember that about fourteen years ago I was preaching on this passage of Scripture to my congregation in Minneapolis. At the close of the service a university professor said to me: “All this is very interesting, but why should any nation want Palestine? I visited that land a few years ago and found it but a desert, and absolutely valueless.” I must confess that it was a puzzle to me, too, to understand the reason behind the invasion of this huge army into this land which at that time was a barren waste.

But with the rapid development of the natural resources of that land, the picture is entirely changed today. I have told you before of the almost invaluable wealth hidden in the waters of the Dead Sea. Chemicals are stored there that would fertilize the soil for the production of crops to feed the millions of Europe; chemicals that are vital to the munitions factories of the warring nations; chemicals, for which countries will battle to the death.

We do not need to stretch our imaginations unduly today to understand why many nations are already casting greedy eyes toward that land which the Spirit of God calls “the pleasant land.” Without a doubt the governmental philosophy of that day will be that the coalition of nations controlling Palestine, with its minerals and oil, will also control the military destinies of the world. Because of the desperate need for the things that Palestine possesses, the northern confederacy will evidently decide on a policy of taking what they want to secure these things. Certainly this does not seem entirely foreign to the events of the past year.

When these things come to pass many Jews will be back in Palestine. In our former studies we have seen that the children of Israel are scattered to the four corners of the earth. Everywhere there are Jews. But God has promised to gather them again to their own land. And just as surely as God has scattered them, just so surely will He regather them. There are today some five hundred thousand Jews in Palestine. Immigration has been greatly impeded by the unsettled conditions both in the Near East and in Europe. I suppose that if the restrictions were to be entirely removed, the number of Jews in the land would jump to five million by 1950. There may be a speedy settlement of the trouble there between the Jews and Arabs and a much wider opening through which the Jews may pour into their land. And certainly before any of the events of the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel can transpire, there must be many Jews established there. In fact, they must be dwelling all over the land in “un-
walled villages . . . having neither bars nor gates." They must be
dwelling "safely," "at rest," without fear of invasion, and with­
out fear of plunder.

Recently I saw some pictures of the great cooperative farm­
ing enterprise of the Zionist Movement in Palestine. There are
modern buildings, with farms stretching away from these centers
in every direction. The villages are literally "unwalled," with no
visible means of defense. And when we remember that the Jews
are to return under the protection of the Roman prince who is to
make a covenant with them and guarantee their national integ­
ritiy, it is easy to see that God's ancient people will turn their
attention wholly to commercial, agricultural, cultural, and reli­
gious pursuits, rather than to military preparedness.

THE NORTHERN CONFEDERACY WILL ASCEND "LIKE A STORM"
UPON PALESTINE

This northern confederacy will come upon the land "like a
storm." There has lately come into the vocabularies of the world
a fitting word to describe this kind of attack. It is the word
"blitzkrieg," or lightning war. Here is God's account of this
type of swift, modern, mechanized warfare, described some 3,000
years ago. The war that is to be waged will be like an electric
storm, and is compared to a "cloud" that covers the land. Of
course, even ancient warriors could march in such great hordes
that they could be said to cover the land like a cloud. But notice
how aptly this description fits modern sky warfare. With all his
bands, Gog's armies are to cover the land "like a cloud." Does
this not mean that the aircraft factories of both Germany and
Russia shall be geared to a maximum speed, and shall be sending
forth literally tens of thousands of flying monsters, each one with
scores of troops ready to open their parachutes and descend to
earth as from a cloud? Do you wonder how these things have
found their way into the Scriptures? We must remember that
God knows the end from the beginning. All these things are open
and clearly revealed in His sight.

Russia today is not behind the other nations in the prepara­
tion of the engines of warfare. When we think of the man-power
and natural resources of Russia, combined with the mechanized
implements of war and the military efficiency of Germany, we
can well imagine what an army will come from such an alliance.
Already the race in airplane production has become a major issue;
and we can well imagine the part aerial warfare will take in that
coming world conflict.

It is not mere speculation to predict that the total number of
planes will be counted by the millions instead of by the thousands.
Then Ezekiel's prophecy will be literally fulfilled, in that the
northern hordes will be "like a cloud to cover the land."

1. In Hatred of God and the Jew "the prince of Rosh" and
his confederates will invade Palestine. This hatred is expressed
in verse 10:

"Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that
at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou
shalt think an evil thought."

Here Jehovah declares that Gog, the prince of Russia, will "think
an evil thought." What is this evil thought? I believe that it will
concern the absolute extermination of the Jewish nation. "Why,
this infidel prince will reason, "Should this outcast, despised
people possess the land which has such value? Moreover, they are
a continual reminder of the fact that there is a God in heaven."
So will Gog reason with himself.

Now we know that Russia is against God, His Son, the Lord
Jesus Christ, and the Bible. But her program seeks not only the
elimination of the name of God from the earth, but also the
extermination of those who profess to believe in Him and His
Word. In the eyes of godless Russians the Jews are mainly res­
ponsible for the things of God and of Christ. Did not the Jews pro­
duce the Bible? Did not the Messiah come through the nation
of Israel? Is not the conception of the one living and true God a
heritage of the monotheism of the Hebrews? So with his mind
made up, as to the advantages of attaining his purpose, the prince
of Russia will plot his invasion of the land of the Jews.

2. "To Take a Spoil," therefore, he will swoop down upon
his prey. Look at verse 12:

"... to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine
hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and
upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which
have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the
land."

"The desolate places" shall have become inhabited, and the people
that are gathered out of the nations shall have "gotten cattle
and goods."

The agricultural activity of the Jews who have already re­
turned to the land is nothing short of amazing. All down through
the centuries they have not been an agricultural people. Often
for many, weary years they have not been long enough in one
place to plant and harvest crops. Constantly wandering, they have had to turn their attention to trade and bartering. But now, as they are returning to their beloved land, they are turning to the soil. With what joy they plow and harrow! With what rejoicing they reap the harvest! And what a transformation is even now taking place in that once desolate land! Yes, for centuries lying waste, "the desolate places" are now being inhabited.

Furthermore, this is the people which "have gotten cattle and goods." A great many reasons are advanced in answer to the question, "Why does the world hate the Jew?" Most of these reasons are not reasons at all. I suppose the real argument behind the anti-Semitism of the world is that the Jew is more clever than the Gentile. And being more shrewd, he is able to gain more "cattle and goods" than the Gentile. All of this makes the Christless Gentile jealous, so he proceeds to hate the Jew. In the end of this age the character of the Jew will not be changed, nor will his ability to acquire "cattle and goods" be lessened. The land filled with the children of Israel will be rich, with much wealth to tempt avaricious dictators who look on with greedy eyes. Doubtless some excuse will be trumped up by the press of the northern confederacy to attempt to justify the invasion, as has been the case during the recent seizures by both Germany and Russia. Some affront will have been imagined; some boundary will have been infringed upon. But the real reason behind the land-grab will be a rapacious desire for plunder there.

Opposition to This Invasion of Palestine

In verse 13 of our chapter we read of a protest to this invasion by opposing nations:

"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"

In these words it is predicted that these three countries and their allies will question the right of the northern confederacy to invade the Holy Land. There seems no doubt but that "Sheba" and "Dedan" represent the peoples near the land of Palestine, near the Red Sea. Perhaps all of the Arabians are included here. But what is the nation called "Tarshish"? Most references to Tarshish in the Bible point to this people as a nation of traders, with many ships. The map in the back of the Scofield Reference Bible, showing the early settlement of the nations, places Tarshish in western Europe. Whatever the nation in the mind of God here may be, it will be linked with "Sheba" and "Dedan" in opposition to "the prince of Rosh" and his confederates in that coming day.

Yet their protest will evidently be ineffective and powerless. Perhaps the press of the world will condemn the assault on the Jews. It will be very clear that pillage will be the motivating cause of the invasion. But the opposing nations will evidently fail to go to the assistance of the beleaguered Jews in their extremity.

This reminds us somewhat of the impotency of the protests lodged by the nations of the world in the anxious months before the outbreak of the present European war. The independent nations of central Europe were being violated, yet none went to their aid. Fear will so possess "Sheba" and "Dedan" and "Tarshish" that they will not be able to render effective aid to suffering Israel in that terrible time.

Palestine Will Be under the Dominion of Rome

But someone will ask, "Does not Great Britain hold a protectorate over Palestine today?" Yes, she does. But when the Antichrist is revealed, after the translation of the church, then—if not before—Palestine will come under his dominion; for the land of Israel was a part of the old Roman Empire. It would be speculation to suggest how this will be brought to pass; but even in our own time, such a situation is far from inconceivable. Whether it means anything or not, Hitler is promising the Holy Land to Mussolini! And we know that "the king of the north" will be the great antagonist of the Antichrist in the end time.

God's Righteous Wrath Will Be Poured Out upon Gog in That Day

A far mightier hand than that of Tarshish is to be extended against Gog and his minions; and a far more authoritative voice than that of the Roman dictator is to speak. God uncovers the secret machinations of the heart of Gog as He says through Ezekiel in verses 14-20 of this chapter:

"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the
heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God, Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground."

We talk a great deal about the mercy and longsuffering of our God; and well we may! His mercy is as high as the heavens, and His longsuffering beyond all human comprehension! But let me tell you that there is surely coming a day of wrath of Almighty God against His enemies and against the enemies of His people. The verses which we have just read give us a glimpse of His tender love for His chosen people will be manifest, even as He said in Gen. 12:3, "I will curse him that curseth thee."

Through many prophets God has given warning against mistreating His people. "He that toucheth" Israel "toucheth the apple of His eye." So we are not surprised to read that His wrath will be stirred to the depths by this wanton invasion of "the pleasant land" by an ungodly, blatant dictator. However, we are given to understand that God will not be taken unaware by this sudden decision to invade the land; for He has known about it from the beginning. He will make this a stupendous spectacle for the rest of the world to understand once for all His love for His chosen people, and His hatred of unrighteousness and sin.

We marvel at the patience of God as we look about us in the world today. Schemes and plans are being proposed by the thousands among governments and by citizens, with never a mention of God, and never a thought of His interest in the world. Sin is rampant and unrighteousness abounds; but still God restrains His hand, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But I do want to warn you in most solemn tones that the patience of God will one day be exhausted. The age of grace will surely close, and the day of the wrath of Almighty God be ushered in. As God waited 120 years in the days of Noah for men to repent and turn to Him; as He sent the flood of waters to destroy both men and beast and creeping things; so also there will come a time of punishment upon sin such as the world has never known. What I should like to know, my friend, as you listen to these words, is this: Are you ready to meet God? Have your sins been washed away in the blessed fountain of cleansing opened by Christ as He hung upon the Cross of Calvary? Have you been made "a new creature" by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit? If you have not, let me beg of you that you do not delay, but that you look to Christ and be saved. As an unworthy sinner, accept by faith His wonderful and abundantly sufficient righteousness!

"A GREAT SHAKING IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL"

In the passage we have just quoted God spoke, saying that in that day there would be "a great shaking in the land." Part of the judgment upon the invading horde is to be this cataclysm. So great will the disturbance be that it will extend to the bodies of water in and around the land, and to the blanket of atmosphere over the land. Mountains shall be thrown out of their places; steep valleys shall be filled in; and buildings and walls shall fall. You are aware, of course, that from time immemorial God has used earthquakes to bring to pass His purposes. And at that future time the whole land will tremble as an aspen leaf at the wrathful voice of the Creator of all things.

"I WILL CALL FOR A SWORD" AGAINST GOG,
"SAITH THE LORD GOD"

Now as this shaking of the land is the prelude to destruction of the vast host of Gog, we note in the next few verses that it is to be completed by the use of a mighty sword. Let us read verses 21-23:

"And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

What is the sword which will be called to slay the great host of the prince of Russia? Some have seen in this the sword of the Roman prince who will fight against the soldiers of the northern confederacy. They have seen in this combat a battle to the finish over the right to control the Holy Land. Palestine will have been
under the protectorate of the Antichrist, but this authority, some hold, will be challenged by the Russian Gog.

This may be so, for we can not be dogmatic about these things. But is not the whole tenor of the passage against this? Is not this rather the sword of God as He alone fights the battle against Gog? Is not the sword in this case the soul-terrifying earthquake with its demolishing and leveling of everything? Great ocean tidal waves could easily send to the bottom mighty dreadnaughts of the northern navy, absolutely nullifying all sea travel. Atmospheric tornadoes could bring every airplane and dirigible to the ground in flames. Moreover, God’s sword will doubtless include pestilence and blood, with torrential rain and hailstones, fire and brimstone. Surely this will be enough to prostrate the proud might of the Russian and German invaders! Nor will this be all, for in the black, weird confusion that will follow the fury of the elemental upheavals, “every man’s sword shall be against his brother,” and through this will be wrought a great slaughter.

“Many Nations . . . Shall Know That I Am the Lord”

By the complete overthrow and annihilation of the invading army, Almighty God will become known among the nations. Israel will be preserved, and God will be glorified. And this will be a step toward that time when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). May the God of all grace hasten that time!

“The Lord willing,” we shall study chapter 39 of Ezekiel in our future broadcasts. The same burden of prophecy continues to unfold in the next chapter, with the addition of many details concerning the horrible carnage and death that are yet to come upon the world, and with a message of certain victory for the distressed nation of Israel.

As we study these chapters, we may encourage our hearts in the thought that all of these things are but stepping stones to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory. And after the horrors of the days of the tribulation have cleared away, He whose right it is to reign will set up His everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed.

May the Lord bless you and use you to win many souls to Him, if He tarries, before that day dawns!