
RUSSIA IN PROPHECY

by Herbert W. Armstrong

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MANY WHO claim to be authorities on prophecy assure people a war involving Russia and the United States, Canada and England is prophesied in Ezekiel 38.

They understand that the United States, Great Britain and other democracies of northwestern Europe are the nations descended from the so-called lost Ten Tribes.

Therefore, they conclude, the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 foretells a military invasion of the North American continent from the Soviet Union.

But this is *not* what the prophecy says.

What Ezekiel 38 does foretell is truly astounding. Let's understand it.

The Time Sequence of the Prophecy

Ezekiel's message is for our day—a prophetic warning for America and Britain, *now!*

To understand the time, the place and all the facts of the prophecy of Ezekiel 38, we need to begin at the first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy and read the book clear through.

When we do this, we find a time sequence flowing through the book.

Let us skim through it very briefly.

Notice, in the very first verse, Ezekiel was among the Jewish captives who had been taken in the captivity of Judah to the river Chebar. It was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity that this prophecy began coming to Ezekiel through visions.

It is a prophecy. Ezekiel was being shown things far into the future.

Notice, the prophecy was inspired and written *after* Judah's captivity began—more than 130 years after the House of Israel had been taken captive to Assyria. The advance guard of the House of Israel already had begun to arrive in the British Isles before Ezekiel's vision and writing.

Yet, Ezekiel is a prophet to the House of Israel. (Not to be confused with the modern Jewish nation of Israel. These Jewish people are actually descendants of ancient Judah.) His prophecy applies to the far future—*not* to the captivity of ancient Israel, which had occurred more than 130 years before he wrote.

Notice Ezekiel's message, a prophecy for the future, is primarily for the House of Israel (Ezekiel 2:3; 3:1, 4-7).

In chapter 3, beginning verse 17, Ezekiel is set a watchman to warn the House of Israel.

Message to Israel, Not Judah

Notice! Beginning chapter 3: After the prophet "eats the

roll"—that is, receives the prophetic warning message—he is to "go speak unto the house of Israel"—not to the Jews among whom he dwelt.

Remember he is already among the captives of Judah. But the Eternal says to him, "Go, get thee unto the house of Israel" (verse 4).

Surely we do not need to pause here to explain to readers that the twelve tribes of Israel had long before this divided into *two nations*—the ten tribes being the House of ISRAEL, while Judah, Benjamin and Levi composed the House of Judah, who, *ONLY*, WERE "Jews." For the benefit of those readers who do not understand this vital distinction—a veritable "key" without which the prophecies cannot be opened to understanding—the special book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* is available and upon request, a copy will be sent free.

The Jewish people of today are descended from the House of Judah. But the white, English-speaking people of the United States and Great Britain are the leading "birthright" tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, heads of the ten-tribed House of Israel.

Ezekiel's message is for *our* day—and it is, therefore, a *message for America and Britain, NOW!*

Notice chapter 4. The prophet

is to place before him a tile, and trace upon it the city of Jerusalem, and lay siege against it. The war pictured was against Jerusalem, capital of Judah. But "this" (verse 3) "shall be a sign to the house of Israel." Then follows the well-known key to the "day for a year" method of reckoning prophecy.

Continue chapter 5: "For," comes the warning message from the Eternal, "thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel" (verse 4). Notice, this is to portray vividly a warning of some FUTURE destruction upon the House of Israel! Not upon Judah, already largely conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. But upon Israel—the ten-tribed nation who had gone into its first and original captivity 130 long years before! The warning is not of the captivity already so far back in history. It says "thereof shall a fire COME" upon Israel! It is a prophecy relating to a FUTURE destruction and captivity.

No such destruction and captivity has ever *yet* come to the House of Israel since this was written. Therefore it is still in the future—IN OUR TIME. It is a warning to Britain and America—NOW!

A Captivity Yet Future

Notice more of this warning:

"A third part of thee [America-Britain] shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds [in captivity being removed from our own land and scattered over the world] . . ." (verse 12).

Coming to chapter 6, the local scene of the vision shifts to the mountainous land of ancient Israel, in the Middle East—but the message is for AMERICA AND BRITAIN, today.

Will we heed it? God help us to wake up!

Listen: "Behold I, even I," says the Eternal God (verse 3), "will bring a sword [invasion] upon you, and I will destroy your high

places. . . . And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of ISRAEL before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities *shall be laid waste* [nuclear bombing]. . . . And ye shall know that I am the Lord" (verses 5-7).

Just a small remnant shall escape and be spared (verse 8). These are described in Luke 21:36.

Continue: "Thus saith the Lord God. . . . Alas for all the evil abominations of [not Judah, but] the house of Israel! for they shall [not *did*, in the captivity 130 years before Ezekiel wrote, but *shall*] fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence" (verse 11).

The Time Is Yet Future

This is not a popular message. You probably have never heard it before. The preachers and teachers of prophecy almost unanimously will rise up to deny this warning message—to apply it to a different time or people. But the warning is from the Eternal God, *and it is sure!* The reader will do well to heed.

Notice the time. It's important.

"All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water" (chapter 7, verse 17). "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand. . . . Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid . . ." (Isaiah 13:6-8). Plainly, the TIME is the "Day of the Lord"—yet in *the immediate future!*

Continue: "They shall cast their silver into the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the WRATH OF THE LORD. . ." (Ezekiel 7:19). Now compare that with Zephaniah 1:14-15, 17-18: "The great day of the Lord is near. . . . That day is a day of wrath. . . . And I [the Eternal] will bring distress upon men. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's

wrath. . . ." Both are speaking of the same time—a time shortly ahead of us now, in this present generation!

"Wherefore," continues verse 24 (Ezekiel 7), "I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: and I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease. . . . DESTRUCTION cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none . . . then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest" (verses 25-26).

Yes, when this comes, our people finally will cry out for a true prophet or minister of the Eternal God—but it will be too late! For then shall have come the time spoken of by the prophet Amos, when there shall be a FAMINE OF hearing the words of the Eternal—(Amos 8:11)—an end of true Gospel preaching. Already the people and their paid ministers have turned their eyes and ears from God's law.

Notice chapter 11 of Ezekiel's prophecy. It is a message addressed to the House of ISRAEL (verse 5). "... I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord God. And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. Ye shall fall by the sword . . ." (verses 8-10). WHEN? It is future from the time Ezekiel wrote, and it has not yet happened since then. GOD SAYS IT WILL HAPPEN!

Chapter 12, verse 11: "... they shall remove and go into captivity." It is yet future—and it is the House of Israel. Not Judah.

When? "And they shall know I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries" (verse 15). The expression "They shall know that I am the Lord" is used repeatedly through the book of Ezekiel—always referring to the time of the Second Coming of Christ, and Israel's final restoration back to her original land. Many prophecies show that the modern nations descended from

ancient Israel are to be scattered in this latter-day captivity *when* Christ comes to restore them back to that land.

People Won't Believe It

Always the true prophets and ministers of God have stood almost alone and opposed by the overwhelming majority in Israel. That is Israel's history of old. It is true today.

The 13th chapter shows the declaration of the popular ministry of this day in Israel—in America and Britain.

"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel. . . . Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord" (verses 2-5). It is speaking of the soon-coming "Day of the Lord"—not some ancient event! ". . . they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace . . ." (verse 10).

Our nations were not chosen for special favors. We were chosen for a service and righteous life we have failed to perform. Every time Israel of old disobeyed God, departed from his laws and ways and went into the pagan customs (as we have done today, actually deceiving ourselves by calling those customs "Christian"), they were invaded and conquered. Has God changed?

Ezekiel catalogs our sins—our customs and ways that seem right in *our* eyes but which are contrary to God's laws and an abomination in his sight. Some of them he mentions in the 8th chapter.

In chapter 22: "Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths," says the Eternal (verse 8). ". . . thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord. . . . And I will [not did, but *will*] scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy

filthiness out of thee" (verses 12, 15).

"Her priests [prophetically speaking of modern Israel] have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean [Lev. 11], and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (verse 26). Our people today can't see where these things make any difference. But Ezekiel says the preachers have deceived the people, and led them astray. They have condoned all these things, until the people have lost God's pure TRUTH!

At this point, Ezekiel digresses through eight chapters, 25 through 32, to prophesy against a number of foreign gentile nations who have come in direct contact with Israel. In Ezekiel 33:11, the prophet returns to pleading with the House of Israel. "Turn ye, turn ye," God pleads, "from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Here, too, Ezekiel is again set a watchman to WARN ISRAEL—AMERICA AND BRITAIN TODAY—at the time when this prophesied foreign sword is coming. Ezekiel wrote the message—but it remains for us to whom God has revealed it today to actually shout and proclaim it to the people. God help us to be faithful in this solemn and grave commission!

In the 34th chapter, God tells him to prophesy against the ministers of our land. They have fed themselves and not the flocks. They have preached what people wanted to hear (II Timothy 4:3-4) in order to get their salaries.

The Coming of Christ!

And now the Eternal inspires the prophet to come to the solution.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. . . . Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. . . . and will deliver them out of all places where they have been

scattered in the cloudy and dark day [the DAY OF THE LORD—yet future]. And I will . . . gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them [spiritual food] upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country" (Ezekiel 34:10-13).

Christ himself—for he is the Eternal—shall come and rescue our people, not only from the coming captivity and dispersion, but from the false Babylonish teachings that have been palmed off to our people cloaked as "Christianity." He will then set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people Israel (Isaiah 11:11). The spiritual blindness shall then be removed, and all Israel shall be saved! (See Romans 11:25-26.) The kingdom of God shall be established. Men shall be tired of their own ways, and seek God's ways—and his law shall go forth of Zion (Micah 4:2-3). And the nations shall find PEACE!

In the 36th chapter, the Eternal addresses the House of Israel: "Prophesy unto the mountains of Israel. . . . Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken. . . . But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. . . . And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast . . ." (verses 1, 4, 8, 10-11).

Yes, the House of Israel is pictured returning to its original land, *not* from a condition of wealth and prosperity from Britain and America—not in the position of a people victorious in a great world war—but as a slave and captive people, scattered through the nations of the world. All prophecies picturing this rescue and regathering of Israel at Christ's coming give us the same

prophetic picture. Why be blinded to the truth?

Both Houses of Israel United

In chapter 37, the first part pictures the "valley of dry bones." This represents (verse 11), the whole House of Israel—including Judah. It has a dual significance. It pictures the rebirth and resurrection of Israel *as a nation*, from captivity, dispersion and slavery.

It pictures, too, the literal bodily resurrection of the individual who has long since died, after which the knowledge of the truth—spiritual knowledge—shall be revealed, and he shall be converted, and God's Spirit shall enter within, and he shall be saved. (For more information on this vital point in God's Master Plan, write for our free article, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?")

Beginning with the 15th verse, the illustration of the two sticks shows the two houses, or nations, Israel and Judah, being once more united, under Christ at his Second Coming, in the land of Israel.

"... Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel [from the British Isles and America—from a position of wealth and affluence as recent victors in the world war? No, but] from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions.... And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt... they, and their children, and their children's children *for ever*.... Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an EVER-LASTING COVENANT..."—the

NEW COVENANT (verses 21-23, 25-26).

And Now Comes Gog

Notice, now the story flow—the time sequence: The prophet has carried us through the sins of his people, the coming invasion and captivity and dispersion, and the coming of Christ as deliverer to restore the fortunes of Israel. We have come to the time when both the Houses of Israel and Judah shall be reunited into one nation, rescued from captivity and dispersion and regathered again in their land, once again made prosperous, having learned our lesson, now living God's way, under his laws, enjoying his richest blessings, both material and spiritual!

And now we come to chapter 38. This chapter finds Israel restored in her land—"the land that is brought back from the sword" (verse 8). We find Israel now at rest, dwelling safely, totally unprepared for war—having "neither bars nor gates" (verse 11), in the desolate places of the land of Israel, now inhabited (verse 12)—yes, inhabited (same verse) by the people who are once again restored to great material prosperity—"which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land."

Notice it!

This prophecy does not picture the British Isles and America. It pictures the Holy Land. It pictures all twelve tribes having been taken there from a dispersion and captivity and slavery, gathered out of the nations where we had been scattered, now once again rich and increased with goods.

Notice it: the time of this prophecy is after—not before, but AFTER the Second Coming of Christ—after the great Deliverer has come and rescued our people and restored us to the land of Israel—AFTER Israel and Judah are reunited. Certainly the "latter years" (verse 8).

The place of this battle is not Britain or America—it is the Holy Land. "... 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 [or "once a perpetual waste"—Moffatt translation]" (verse 8). The "mountains of Israel" is an expression used all through the book of Ezekiel, and always refers to the literal mountainous land of ancient Israel.

Our people shall have regained so much wealth that Gog and allies shall come to "take a spoil" (verse 13), "to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil."

Christ's Reign Contested

But this very fact—that this invasion will not come until *after* the Second Coming of Christ—will seem preposterous to many, at first thought.

That is because we have been accustomed merely to assume things that are not true. We have blindly assumed that when Christ comes, there will be no opposition. Every person and power on earth, we have thought, will simply submit meekly and instantly to him and his power. But that is not true!

The gentile nations understandably shall not submit until forced to. The final restoration of the Roman Empire shall be subdued and conquered at a battle commonly called "Armageddon." But the populous nations of Eurasia who know not God or Christ, shall still have to be brought to submission.

Not Previously Held Accountable

All nations, except those springing from ancient Israel, have been cut off from God, by God's own decree, since the time of Adam and Eve. These nations are not now being judged.

Jesus Christ emphasized this when he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father... draw him..." (John 6:44). Other nations have never known much if anything about God. In ancient Egypt they worshiped their fictitious gods. The ancient Greeks and Romans and the peoples of Asia, including Russia, had their idol gods.

They had no salvation—but
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neither were they “lost”—God himself had cut off the descendants of Adam. They simply were not being JUDGED at all by God—nor are they even yet today. God is not judging them, so why should you or I? Some of us are called now. The world as a whole is not! Those now called to the Church of God are the “first-fruits”—merely the first small “harvest” of spiritual salvation. To all others, God said, in effect, “Go, since you (Adam) have rejected me, my government, my salvation, my revelation of knowledge, GO, form your own gods and your own religions—your own governments—your own fund of knowledge and education.”

And, for nearly 6,000 years, has the world so done!

It is important that you have this information before you read further.

“Gog” Identified

There is general agreement among students of prophecy that “Gog” in the land of “Magog” is the vast regions of northern Eurasia extending from the Baltic to the Pacific. “Meshech” is Moscow, “Tubal” is Tobolsk. The Bible margin says “Prince of Rosh,” which is Russia.

Notice the allies who come with them in this future battle. You will find “Gomer,” “Togarmah,” “Magog,” “Meshech,” “Tubal,” identified in Genesis 10 as the sons of Japheth, father of the yellow races. Ethiopia and Phut (mistranslated Libya) are descended from Ham.

Therefore, this prophecy of Ezekiel 38 shows who shall finally succeed in marshaling peoples of each major race into a gigantic invasion upon our people.

When God rules the world, through Christ—with his chosen people restored to great wealth in the land of Israel, the very center of the land surface of the earth (verse 12, Moffatt translation), this great Eurasian union of

nations shall finally rise up with the most overwhelming armies ever assembled by man!

Their mighty air force in that day will make those of the previous wars look puny. “Thou shalt ascend,” the Eternal says, “and come like a storm [in the air], thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land . . .” (verse 9). There shall be so many planes then that they will hide the sun from the ground below, like a huge dark shadow!

The End of World Conquest

The House of Israel—our peoples—shall not be armed or prepared. “In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?” asks the Eternal. “And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts [due north of the land of ancient Israel], thou, and many people [allies] with thee . . . a mighty army: 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 [note the purpose], when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes” (verses 14-16).

But our people shall not have to fight in that battle. We shall have learned by then that God fights our battles for us!

“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” (verse 18). “So that . . . all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence. . .” (verse 20). It is after Christ’s coming!

“I will summon an utter panic against him [Gog], says the Lord the Eternal, till every man in his host shall draw the sword against his fellow; I will punish him with pestilence and bloodshed, I will rain on him and his hordes and all the nations in his train an overpowering flood, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone. I will let all the nations see my might and dread divinity—to teach them that I am the Eternal” (verses 21-23, Moffatt).

Notice, these heathen nations do not see and recognize the dread divinity, the might and power of the Eternal Christ, even after he has returned. He has to teach them that HE IS THE ETERNAL!

The 39th chapter shows in more detail the result of this great battle, in which Christ, with supernatural power, causes five sixths of these heathen armies to be slain in this battle.

Notice, again, the time: “Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel [Israel and Judah], and will be jealous for my holy name. . . . 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 . . .”! (Ezekiel 39:25-28.)

Notice again! At Christ’s Second Coming, he shall gather the ten-tribed House of Israel—our British and American people—out of our enemies’ lands, not out of our own land of wealth and power, North America and the British Isles.

But by then, we shall be thoroughly chastened. We shall have learned our lesson. We shall live by GOD’s rules, and obey his law. “. . . for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God” (verse 29).

And then, beginning chapter 40, the remainder of the book of Ezekiel reveals the ideal theocracy—God’s new order of divine government upon earth—the permanent forms and institutions that shall express the ideal relation between God and man.

In the meantime, our job is to WARN America and Britain of what lies ahead. To shout the warning to come out of Babylon (Revelation 18:4), that those who heed may find God *now*—may come under his divine protection (Psalm 91), and by a true Spirit-filled life obedient to GOD’S WAYS and laws, be prepared to become a ruler or a teacher in Christ’s soon-coming glorious Kingdom! □