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"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"

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They had a hope, but it was a hope that made them ashamed. You and I have a hope of which we never need be ashamed, and if this Book's prophecies are coming true regarding these dark days, the prophecy that the Lord is coming back is coming true, too, and He is our hope.

Third and last, I think you and I ought to have a deeper prayer life than we've ever had before. Do you remember the ninth chapter of Daniel? Daniel knew by books that the end of the captivity was at hand and Israel was going back. What did Daniel do? He didn't run out and say, "Listen, men, throw down those shovels, let's go on a strike. We're going back to Palestine. The time is up." He didn't get up on a housetop and shout. He got down on his knees and wept before God. In fact, his prayer is five times longer than the prophecy of the seventy weeks in the same chapter. Now I am interested in prophecy, but the wonderful things that are happening on this earth should not leave us excited and unbalanced. They should lead us into the closet where we can shut the door and talk to God.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).—From *The Moody Monthly*, Chicago, by permission.

WORLD LEADERS IN THE FINAL CRISES

BY W. W. FEREDAY

IV. GOG (Ezekiel, 38:39)

The Four-Empire system of powers shown in the prophecies of Daniel and Zechariah, which began with Nebuchadnezzar, and which will be brought to a summary end by the appearing of the Son of Man, has no place in the book of Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar personally is mentioned, but merely as an instrument used by God in his own day. Ezekiel's prophecies have a feature not found elsewhere in the Scriptures; the nations which surrounded the land of Israel are spoken of as "trees of Eden in the

garden of God" (Ezek. 31:8, 16, 18). This was their character before Nebuchadnezzar was let loose upon them in judgment for their corruption. When the Babel-scattering took place, and men were divided into nations with diverse tongues, God planned that Israel should be the centre of the new order (Deut. 32:8). The Most High intended this in mercy for the good of all. The chosen people were to be a kind of "tree of life" in the midst of the earth, dispensing blessing all around. With Israel were the sacred oracles; Jehovah's name was known to them; and His holy law was intended to be their rule. But this favoured tree in the garden of nations became as corrupt as the others, and God in righteousness was constrained to cut it down. When the time came that God must needs judge His own people, He judged all others with them, and by the same terrible instrument (Jer. 25:29). The arrangement of nations from the setting up of Nebuchadnezzar downwards is not spoken of as the garden of God, because Israel for the time being is not the centre of His ways.

Another feature of the lengthy book of Ezekiel is remarkable: There is no direct mention of Christ either in His first coming in lowly grace, or in His second coming in power and majesty. Isaiah, Daniel and Zechariah give us a mass of detail concerning the general situation in the last days, and our Lord's Olivet prophecy, and the book of the Revelation tell us much more. But the many events connected with the coming of the Son of Man are all omitted by Ezekiel. These facts make his predictions concerning Gog (chs. 38 and 39) the more noticeable for here we have something not found in any other of the inspired books. The invasion of the Holy Land by Gog and his satellite Powers is Satan's last desperate effort against the people of God after their full restoration to the land, and the destruction of all their other foes. By His terrible judgment of this atrocity God will vindicate His great Name before all the nations.

The correct translation of ch. 38:2 is given in the Revised Version, "Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal". The verse was thus rendered in the Greek Septuagint before our Lord was born. "Rosh" stands for Russia, and "Meshech and Tubal" stand for Moscow and Tobolsk, two of Russia's principal cities. This colossal Power, well-known today, had no existence when Ezekiel wrote his book, but the God whom we know is able

to speak of "the things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

The foundations of the Russian Empire appear to have been laid by Ruric when he arrived at Novgorod with his Varangians 1500 years after Ezekiel wrote his prophecy. Within living memory Russia has expanded ruthlessly, crushing many peoples, but the day of recompense is near. The last enterprise of this rapacious Power will be a vast undertaking; her many satellites will be drawn from all three branches of the human race. Plunder is the motive (ch. 38:12). The immense wealth of Israel's twelve tribes, then restored by Divine grace to the land, will arouse the cupidity of their Northern adversary. Overwhelming disaster will befall the invading hosts. The Assyrian before them will be allowed to work havoc in the land, as retribution from God upon the Anti-christ and his followers. Jerusalem will fall a prey to them. Psalm 74 speaks of their desolation of the Temple, and Psa. 79 foretells their slaughter of the people, but Gog and his hordes will never get to Jerusalem. Jehovah will meet them in His indignation upon the Northern mountains, and there they will utterly perish. There will be no battles; God will create confusion in their ranks, causing them to destroy one another (cf. 1 Sam. 14:20); and He will also rain upon them fire and tempest from heaven (Ezek. 38:21-22). Heaven, earth, and sea will be affected by this fearful convulsion (ch. 38:19-20); and the wild beasts and ravenous birds will be divinely summoned to a great and gruesome feast (ch. 39:17-20). When the armies of the Western Powers are destroyed somewhat earlier, only the beasts are called to "the great supper of God" (Rev. 19:17-18). The judgment will be carried into the lands of the invaders (ch. 39:36); thus those who tarry at home and come not to the war will not escape: "I will send fire on Magog and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles; and they shall know that I am Jehovah".

The time of this final attack upon Israel should be noted. The "times of the Gentiles", spoken of by the Lord Jesus in Luke 21:24, have been fulfilled; Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by strangers, having received from Jehovah's hands double for all her sins; the people are now enjoying His comfort (Isa. 40:1-2). The "Lo-ammi" sentence which went forth 2,700 years ago (Hosea 1:9) will be revoked before the intrusion of Gog;

hence Jehovah's words in Ezek. 38:16, "thou shalt come up against *My people 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 nations may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes". The people will be all "dwelling safely"; Gog notes this fact (ch. 38:14). The "Stone cut out of the mountain without hands" has already fallen upon the feet of the great image (Dan. 2:34-35). The Four-Empire system of nations has been destroyed by the judgment of God; but undaunted by these solemn events, the arrogant Russian will move Southward for another mighty effort to frustrate the purposes of God. Flesh learns no lessons—terrible thought! It is blind and relentless in the pursuit of its own will, and there is nothing for it but the stroke of God. A movement similar in character to that described in Ezek. 38 and 39 is predicted in Rev. 20:7-9. At the close of our Lord's Millennial reign, when Satan is loosed from his prison for a little season he will stir up a great revolt against Divine authority in the earth, and great hosts will move against "the camp of the saints and the beloved city". The names Gog and Magog re-appear here; but the hosts are drawn, not from Russia merely, but from "the four quarters of the earth". Putting together Ezekiel 38, and Rev. 20 we learn that two desperate attempts will be made by Satan against God's land and God's people; one at the beginning of our Lord's reign, and the other at its close. Even one thousand years of righteous administration, profound peace, and fulness of earthly blessing, will not convince men that it is good to serve God and His Christ. How true are the words, "Ye must be born again". (John 3:7)

God's latter-day judgments will have a two-fold effect: (1) "the whole house of Israel" (ch. 39:25) will experience His mercy, and will know that He is Jehovah (39:22), all false gods being renounced forever; and (2) the nations will learn that the people went into captivity for their iniquity, not because their God was powerless to deliver them (cf. Isa. 37:11-12 with Ezek. 39:23). Twice in connection with Gog's outrageous attack upon His restored people, Jehovah says, "I will bring thee" (ch. 38:16; 39:2). This means that Jehovah, observing the covetous designs of the Northern tyrant, will allow him to come up against His land and people, in order that He may teach a final lesson in a

terrible form to all the nations of the earth. Thus will He vindicate His great Name once for all.

Great changes are impending; mighty convulsions will take place world-wide; and the whole fabric of human organization will come down with a crash which nothing can repair. But the All-wise God will replace it with a new order of things that will bring good to all, and give pleasure to His own heart of mercy. How delightful the transformation when it can be truly said, "O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!" (Psa. 8). The Son of Man enthroned in Zion; Israel reconciled and blessed; the nations subject and also blessed; and the whole creation delivered from the bondage of corruption. The lowly grace of the Son of Man at His first coming has made all this righteously possible, for His precious atoning blood is the foundation of all blessing for men, whether in heaven above or in the earth beneath.

It may be helpful to distinguish the various actors in the world's last crises. I suggest the following:*

- (1) The Beast from the sea—Rev. 13:1
 The Beast from the Abyss—Rev. 17:8; 11:7
 The little Horn—Dan. 7:8
 The Prince that shall come—Dan. 9:27
- (2) The Anti-christ—1 John 2:22
 The Man of Sin, etc.—2 Thess. 2:3
 The King—Dan. 11:36; Isa. 30:33; 57:9
 The Beast out of the earth—Rev. 13:11
 The False Prophet—Rev. 19:20
 The Idol Shepherd—Zech. 11:17
 The Man of the earth—Psa. 10:18
- (3) The Assyrian—Isa. 10; Micah 5:5
 The King of the North—Dan. 11:40
 The little Horn—Dan. 8:9
 The King of fierce countenance—Dan. 8:23
- (4) Gog—Ezek. 38:39
 The treacherous Spoiler—Isa. 33:1.

* The four groups refer respectively to the four World Leaders dealt with in these articles: The 1st., is the "Western Despot" (see Jan. issue); the 2nd., the Anti-christ (April issue), etc. Each leader bears more than one name, as indicated in the references given in each group.