

Hezbollah, Hamas and Israel

July 23, 2006

Ezekiel 38:1-23 (NLT)

This is another message that came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, prophesy against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince who rules over the nations of Meshech and Tubal. [3] Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: Gog, I am your enemy! [4] I will turn you around and put hooks into your jaws to lead you out to your destruction. I will mobilize your troops and cavalry and make you a vast and mighty horde, all fully armed. [5] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will join you, too, with all their weapons. [6] Gomer and all its hordes will also join you, along with the armies of Beth-togarmah from the distant north and many others.

[7] "Get ready; be prepared! Keep all the armies around you mobilized, and take command of them. [8] **A long time from now** you will be called into action. **In the distant future** you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be lying in peace after her recovery from war and **after the return of her people from many lands.** [9] You and all your allies—a vast and awesome horde—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.

[10] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: At that time evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme. [11] You will say, 'Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who live in such confidence! [12] **I will go to those once-desolate cities that are again filled with people who have returned from exile in many nations.** I will capture vast amounts of plunder and take many slaves, for the people are rich with cattle now, and they think the whole world revolves around them!' [13] But Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish will ask, 'Who are you to rob them of silver and gold? Who are you to drive away their cattle and seize their goods and make them poor?'

[14] "Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: When my people are living in peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself.

[15] You will come from your homeland in the distant north with your vast cavalry and your mighty army, [16] and you will cover the land like a cloud. This will happen in the distant future. I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and my holiness will be displayed by what happens to you. Then all the nations will know that I am the Lord.

[17] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: You are the one I was talking about long ago, when I announced through Israel's prophets that in future days I would bring you against my people. [18] But when Gog invades the land of Israel, says the Sovereign Lord, my fury will rise! [19] For in my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day. [20] All living things—all the fish, birds, animals, and people—will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth. [21] I will summon the sword against you throughout Israel, says the Sovereign Lord. Your men will turn against each other in mortal combat.

[22] I will punish you and your hordes with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! [23] Thus will I show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. **Then they will know that I am the Lord!**

I have just read to you what God said was going to happen to the nation of Israel. He spoke these words through the Prophet Ezekiel 2600 years ago.

Let me give you a brief history of the nation of Israel.

Their first king was a man named Saul. He was king for forty years.

Then David became their king. He was also their king for forty years.

Then David's son Solomon became the king. He also reigned for forty.

After Solomon's death, there was a civil war and the nation was divided into two parts. The ten northern tribes retained the name **Israel** and appointed a king who was not a descendant of David.

The two southern tribes became known as **Judah** and their kings were descendants of David.

After years of political and spiritual corruption, **the northern kingdom** was overthrown by the Assyrians and taken into captivity. This happened in the year **721 B.C.** They became known as the lost ten tribes of Israel.

134 years later in **587 B.C.** King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the Temple and the people of Judah were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. For seventy years they were forced to work as slaves in Babylon.

During that time, **King Nebuchadnezzar** had a dream. In it he saw an image of a man with a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

God gave Daniel, who was one of the Jews who had been taken captive, the meaning of the dream. It represented various kingdoms that would rule the land of Palestine for the next thousand years or so. And sure enough it happened just as Daniel said it would.

The **head of gold** represented the **Babylonian Empire**, that was at that time occupying the land.

The **chest and arms** of silver represented the **Medo-Persian Empire** that conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. That empire lasted 229 years.

The **belly and thighs** of bronze represented the **Macedonian Empire** and successors which began in 334 B.C. when Alexander the Great conquered Palestine.

The **legs of iron** represented the **Roman Empire** which conquered Palestine in 64 B.C.

Under Herod the Great the temple was rebuilt . Construction began in 9 B.C. and the main building was finished in 9 B.C. But the entire structure was not finished until A.D. 64. The Jews revolted against the Romans in A.D. 64 and the Romans responded by destroying the Temple that Herod had built. This took place in A.D. 70.

In A.D. 135 the Jews revolted a second time and Jerusalem was destroyed and rebuilt as a Roman city. The Jews were expelled from that land and scattered throughout the nations.

God had said this was going to happen. The prophets repeated predicted it, especially Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 11:14-17 (NLT)

Then this message came to me from the Lord: [15] "Son of man, the people still left in Jerusalem are talking about their relatives in exile, saying, 'They are far away from the Lord, so now he has given their land to us!' [16] Therefore, give the exiles this message from the Sovereign Lord: **Although I have scattered you in the countries of the world, I will be a sanctuary to you during your time in exile. [17] I, the Sovereign Lord, will gather you back from the nations where you are scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel once again.**

The Jews were scattered in countries throughout Europe and Russia. They were in Germany, Poland, Russia, Austria and many others. And the thing that kept them together and kept them separated from the people in those countries where they lived was their religion.

After the Jews were driven from the land God had given them, it was ruled by various world empires.

- **From 313-636** it was under **Byzantine rule.**
- **In 614** the Persians invaded Palestine and thousands of Christians were killed and many Christian Churches were destroyed. **Persia** was the ancient name of what is now called **Iran.** It was conquered by Muslim armies around 650 A.D.
- **In 636** Muslims conquered Palestine and made Jerusalem their third sacred city after **Mecca and Medina.**
- **In 1009** Muslims destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulcher which caused 200 years of wars in what was called the **Crusades.**
- **In 1099** the Muslims in Jerusalem were overthrown by the **Crusaders.**

- **In 1187** it was recaptured by the Muslims.
- **In 1263** the Muslims captured the remaining Crusader strongholds and held the coastal cities for the next 250 years.
- **In 1517** the Turkish Ottoman Empire conquered Palestine and held it for 400 years. That brings us to the year 1917.

Remember, God told the Jews , “I, the Sovereign Lord, will gather you back from the nations where you are scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel once again.”

- **God began bringing the Jews back to their homeland** in the late 19th century.
- Then 1917, during WWI, British forces entered Jerusalem and liberated the city from the Turks.
- In 1922, Great Britain published a mandate to establish a homeland in Palestine for the Jews. The Arabs opposed this and began to attack the Jewish settlements that had been established in Palestine.
- But Jews kept coming back to their homeland. When Hitler came to power, Jews left Europe by the hundreds of thousands heading back to Israel. They were the lucky ones. Hitler killed 6,000,000 of them in his concentration camps.
- During that time period, the Arab nations in the Middle East gained their independence from France and England and, in 1945 they formed the Arab League. Their main objective was to keep Israel from becoming a nation.
- **On May 14, 1947** the British mandate over Palestine expired and the Jewish National Council declared the establishment of Israel.

In less than twenty-four hours the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invaded the newly declared nation of Israel. Israel didn't have much of an army at the time but they managed to defend against the invasion in a war that lasted 15 months.

Over 6,000 Israelis were killed in that war but the invaders were finally defeated and Israel has been in existence as a nation again now for almost 60 years.

They have had to fight to stay alive. During their brief existence, they have fought many battles with their Arab neighbors.

Their goal has always been that their Arab neighbors would recognize their right to exist and stop trying to destroy them. They have made some progress. They signed a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 and a treaty with Jordan in 1994. Those nations recognize Israel's right to exist.

But other nations in the region still refuse to recognize Israel as a nation and are bound and determined to destroy it.

Now, what about Hezbollah and Hamas?

These are two groups that were formed in the 1980's to drive Israel out of what they consider to be occupied territory.

Hezbollah means "**Party of God**". It is a Lebanese Islamist group that was founded in 1982 to fight the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon. It is funded by Iran and follows the Shiite Islamist ideology that was developed by **Ayatollah Khomeini** who led the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Their ultimate goal is to make all the nations of the world into Islamic states. That is their stated goal in Lebanon. That is their goal for the world. They want everyone on earth to be governed by the Koran and to worship Allah.

They look at Jews and Christians as infidels. They call us the great Satan.

Hamas is an interesting word. In **Arabic** it means "enthusiasm, fire, fervor, zeal, fanaticism". In **Hebrew** it means, "Violence, injustice, harsh wrong".

The word is used frequently in the Old Testament.

Genesis 6:11 (NKJV)

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with **violence. (Hamas)**

Hamas was founded in 1987 to oppose the existence of Israel. It regards the territory of the present-day State of Israel, as well as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as land that was given to Muslims by God, which can never be surrendered to non-Muslims.

Both of these groups have a civilian arm and a military arm.

They have been labeled as terrorists groups by the United States and others because of their terrorist activity. And rightly so. They are terrorists that are backed by Syria and Iran.

Hezbollah is the principle suspect in several notable attacks on American forces that were stationed in Lebanon to try to help stabilize that nation: The suicide bombings of our embassy there which killed 63 people, including 17 Americans: The bombing of the Marine barracks which killed 241 American servicemen: And the bombing of the French multinational force headquarters which killed 58 French troops.

South Lebanon was occupied by Israel between 1982 and 2000. During that time Hezbollah fought a guerilla war against Israel. In May of 2000, Israel finally withdrew from Southern Lebanon. This was considered a victory for Hezbollah and boosted it's popularity hugely in Lebanon.

One of the reasons for the popularity of these two groups among the people where they operate is their civilian activities. They are responsible for building hospitals, schools, news networks, and an extensive network of welfare programs.

They have become players in the governments of their countries.

Hamas won 74 of 132 seats in the January Palestinian election and is now the majority party of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Hezbollah holds 23 seats in the 128-member Lebanese Parliament.

Isn't that something? We work and fight and our young men and women give their lives to give those people a chance to vote and what do they do? They vote for the terrorists.

On September 2, 2004, The UN Security adopted UN Security Resolution 1559, calling for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. **Hezbollah** has ignored that resolution and the Lebanese military is too weak to enforce it.

Israel has no choice but to destroy this military force that is on its northern border with 13,000 missiles. It's either destroy them or be destroyed. And the same is true of Hamas. It's either destroy Hamas or be destroyed by Hamas.

So here's the situation that the world faces today.

God has brought the remnant of Israel back to their land just as He said He would. They are very prosperous just as He said they would be. They are a mighty military power in that area just as He said they would be.

The nations of the Middle East are bound and determined to destroy the tiny nation of Israel just as God said they would be.

As strange as it seems, the stage is set for a third World War that will be ignited by what is happening in Israel.

I don't know if this is the beginning of it or if we will settle this conflict and buy more time. But I do know that sooner or later all the nations of the world are going to choose sides and there will be a World War III.

God said that the nations of Meshech and Tubal, along with Persia, Ethiopia and Libya, joined by Gomer, Bethtogarmah and many others are going to roll down on Israel like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.

Who are these nations that Ezekial mentions that are going to come against Israel?

John Hagee in his book, "**Jerusalem Countdown**", identifies them as Russia, Iran and the other Arab states.

What about America's role in this conflict?

Ezekiel 38:13 (NKJV)

Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder?'

England's symbol is a lion and America is offspring of England and therefore a young lion. This is talking about America, England and those other nations that are allied with us.

John Hagee says this indicates that America and England will not actually fight in this battle. They will only talk and try to find a diplomatic solution.

I don't see it that way. I believe that America and England and other Western nations will join with Israel in this battle against Russia, Iran and the other Arab nations.

In the end however, God will be the One who destroys this mighty horde that invades Israel.

Ezekiel 38:18-23 (NLT)

But when Gog invades the land of Israel, says the Sovereign Lord, my fury will rise! [19] For in my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day. [20] All living things—all the fish, birds, animals, and people—will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth. [21] I will summon the sword against you throughout Israel, says the Sovereign Lord. Your men will turn against each other in mortal combat. [22] I will punish you and your hordes with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! [23] Thus will I show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the Lord!

I believe this war that Ezekiel described could break out at any time.

What are we supposed to do?

We must make sure that we are saved and ready to meet God and serving Him and doing His will. If we are, we have nothing to fear.

Luke 21:28 (NLT)

So when all these things begin to happen, stand straight and look up, for your salvation is near!"

Give invitation.