

Study 3 - Planned By God

In this study we will deal with the question of God's planning of the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel.

Ezekiel 38:4 HCSB *I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws, and bring you out with all your army, including horses and riders, who are all splendidly dressed, a huge company armed with shields and bucklers, all of them brandishing swords.*

Ezekiel 38:8 HCSB *After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them now live securely.*

Ezekiel 39:2 HCSB *I will turn you around, drive you on, and lead you up from the remotest parts of the north. I will bring you against the mountains of Israel.*

These three verses tell us that the forces of evil (Gog and Magog) are summoned by God, driven by God and led by God - indeed they are even compelled by God who puts "hooks in their jaws". The Bible tells us that God causes Gog and Magog to invade Israel - where they will be utterly destroyed by God. The hook in their jaw is probably economic, as they are invading Israel in order to gather plunder. Perhaps the oil economies of Russia and the Middle East have collapsed. The hook in the jaw is a fishing metaphor used by the prophets:

Job 41:1-2 HCSB *Can you pull in Leviathan with a hook or tie his tongue down with a rope? (2) Can you put a cord through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook?*

Ezekiel 29:2-4 MKJV *Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. (3) Speak and say, So says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, even I, am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon who lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, My river is mine, and I have made it. (4) But I will put hooks in your jaws, and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales, and I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish of your rivers shall stick to your scales.*

In other words Gog and Magog shall "take the bait" and get "hooked" on the idea of invading Israel and becoming very rich. Someone has said "the cause of all war is unprotected wealth" and there is a grain of truth to this saying. According to Ezekiel, Israel will be prosperous and by all accounts unprotected, living peacefully without walls or gates. Israel will thus be a land of vast unprotected wealth and a target for a coalition of raiders and economic opportunists.

This leads to an obvious question – how can a land of just 6.2 million people (Israel's current population) with no oil, gas or huge natural resources generate enough wealth to excite dozens of nations, with a total population in the hundreds of millions? It seems it would be very thin pickings for such a massive group of people. There are only two alternatives. Either Israel has discovered some vast resource of gold or oil or some valuable metal sufficient for such large nations to share, or the nations comprising the Gog and Magog coalition have become desperately poor.

The comments of the surrounding trading nations indicate that Israel has become wealthy, not in financial terms as in mere cash, but in terms of tangible goods that can be carried away like silver and gold. I think we can expect Israel to become resource rich in the reasonably near future.

Ezekiel 38:13 LITV *Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish, and all its young lions, shall say to you,*

Have you come to plunder a plunder? Have you gathered your assembly to steal a prize, to lift up silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to plunder a great plunder?

That leaves us with an obvious theological question that I hinted at earlier on. How can God be behind theft, war and violence? How can God be behind an invasion of Israel? There is no hint that this is Satan's doing. Satan is a mere puppet. This is God's prophetically predicted war against peaceful Israel. God causes it, directs it, leads it and concludes it. In this instance God is directly behind the actions of the wicked and their destruction.

Job 21:30 LITV *For the wicked is kept for the day of calamity; they shall be brought to the day of wrath.*

Proverbs 16:4 LITV *Jehovah has made all for His purpose, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*

The above two verses indicate that God has a purpose even for the wicked – to judge them and destroy them on the “day of wrath”. Isaiah is very bold and says:

Isaiah 45:5-7 MKJV *I am Jehovah, and there is none else, no God besides Me; I clothed you, though you have not known Me; (6) that they may know from the rising of the sun, and to the sunset, that there is none besides Me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else; (7) forming the light and creating darkness; making peace and creating evil. I Jehovah do all these things.*

Part of the solution is that God only creates evil and wickedness so that it can be brought to a conclusion and destroyed forever. After the Gog and Magog event no one will ever dare to attack Israel again. Israel will be permanently secure. It is somewhat like aversion therapy on an international scale.

The Bible tells us that, during the time of the Exodus, God raised up Pharaoh and that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that Israel could be set free from bondage and enter the Promised Land (Romans 9). It is God who weaves the currents of history so that good eventually results. Even Hitler and the Holocaust may have been used to help establish the nation of Israel.

In a sense the evil is already there in the human heart. It is simply given an opportunity to fully manifest itself. Once it has manifested itself, once its fruits are evident, then it can be brought into judgment.

On a much smaller scale, God may allow you to lose your temper in a big way in front of your friends and family, so that your temper may be obvious to you and to others, so that you will be clearly faced with the anger in your heart, so that you might address the issue of your anger, and repent and deal with it for good, (and even maybe get some help from a pastor or spiritual counselor).

Evil in the human heart or the cultural heart or the national heart, generally has to be made manifest, and dealt some kind of 'mortal blow' before it can be finally dealt with. God often carefully arranges those encounters with reality. After the invasion by Gog and Magog people will realize that the prophecy has come true and that God is the God of Israel, and that His word the Bible is true.

Ezekiel 38:16, 17, 3 MKJV *And you shall come up on My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It shall be in the last days, and I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I shall be sanctified in you, O Gog, before their eyes. (17) So says the Lord Jehovah: Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days, by the hand of My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days and years that I would bring you against them? ... So I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself. And I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah.*