

CHAPTER 15 Gog and Magog

Introductory Remarks

Considerable details of the coming era were given to help God's people hold fast until the time of release from the final troubles and woes, and the inauguration of the first stage of Light and Life. Contrary to fond Christian hopes the Millennium will not be a settled period, nor will it be a time of truth and righteousness. It will be a transitional era, a time to adjust and harmonize manifold aspects of planetary conditions.

If this planet is about to see a new social order the present order will be destroyed. Factories, Schools, Universities, Churches, Houses, governments, religions, economics, philosophies, theologies, and science are all about to disappear to make way for the new order. Great changes will now come to the world.

I shall briefly outline this era, showing the major episodes.

- A period of approximately forty years during which the planet settles down from the cataclysms of the nuclear holocaust and the great geological transitions.
- A period of approximately five hundred years during which civilized social structures are rebuilt.
- The return of the genetic remnants of the Twelve Tribes of Israel to the geologically reformed land of Israel.
- The human birth of the Messiah about midway through the era.
- A steady increase in the length of human life, as biological systems readjust to the new planetary conditions.
- The human birth of the fallen Prince toward the end of this era, and his rise to power as a political figure.
- The marshaling of a huge military force by the fallen Prince to destroy the genetic remnants of Israel, and that holy land.
- Final battles in the holy land, with the destruction of that huge military force, the final death of the Prince, his "fall as any man," and the victory of the Messiah.
- Another geological upheaval as the planet is prepared for entry into the new era of Light and Life.

I shall not proceed in chronological order. Comprehension of the Millennium is easier if I consider major prophecy components, to build the logic of that era.

Revelation on this era was scattered in our traditional text, and also in *The Urantia Papers*. I shall interweave the pieces to show how they cast light on one

another.

As part of this presentation it is necessary to briefly touch on the delusions which beset understanding of this period. Because of the severe limitations placed on the minds of the generations, and the spirit of deep sleep in which God kept us, proper view of this period has not been possible. Most of those who believe in a millennial period view it mythically, as though it is the culmination of human history. They lump all prophecies of future world eras into one grand and final drama. Many of those individuals believe Jesus will return for the Millennium to assume rulership. This is based on the statement in Matt 19:28.

Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This is from the RSV. "In the new world" is understood universally to mean literally, the new earth, the renovated planet. Taking this view, Jesus will return to this world. KJV puts it differently:

And Jesus said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

We can see that now the "throne of his glory" is not on this planet, but on that celestial sphere from which he rules, administrates, and upholds his universe through his Creator powers.

The Greek word for "regeneration" is *paliggenesia*. Thayer's Greek Lexicon offers the following remarks:

- a) The word is often used to denote the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as a renewal or restoration of life after death.
- b) The renovation of the earth after the deluge.
- c) The renewal of the world to take place after its destruction by fire.
- d) The signal and glorious change of all things (in heaven and earth) for the better, that restoration of the primal and perfect condition of things which existed before the fall of our first parents, which the Jews looked for in connection with the advent of the Messiah, and which Christians expected in connection with the visible return of Jesus from heaven.

The regeneration holds for the entire universe, not merely this planet.

Eph 1:9-10

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and

things on earth.

The twelve thrones actually are twenty-four; our historic record has become confused.

Rev 4:4

Round the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns.

Page 513 — THE FOUR AND TWENTY COUNSELORS: At the center of the seven angelic residential circles on Jerusem is located the headquarters of the Urantia advisory council, the four and twenty counselors. John the Revelator called them the four and twenty elders: "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment." The throne in the center of this group is the judgment seat of the presiding archangel, the throne of the resurrection roll call of mercy and justice for all Satania. This judgment seat has always been on Jerusem, but the twenty-four surrounding seats were placed in position no more than nineteen hundred years ago, soon after Christ Michael was elevated to the full sovereignty of Nebadon. These four and twenty counselors are his personal agents on Jerusem, and they have authority to represent the Master Son in all matters concerning the roll calls of Satania and in many other phases of the scheme of mortal ascension on the isolated worlds of the system. They are the designated agents for executing the special requests of Gabriel and the unusual mandates of Michael.

Divine rulership would not be established until the end of the Millennium, when all things become united in heaven and on earth. The unsettled state of the Millennium prevents unification.

Still another element supported a view of the earthly presence of Jesus. It was based on the notion that Jesus was the Messiah figure forecast in Old Testament prophecy. Since he did not fulfill those future forecasts when he lived here as a man he surely must return to do so. This false requirement was then set in the Millennium.

GOG AND MAGOG

Revelation 20:7-10

And when the thousand years are ended Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who

had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

I shall begin my study on the Millennium with this fascinating remark in the *Book of Revelation*. This passage contains important elements for our understanding. It helps to set a timetable.

Who are Gog and Magog?

According to the biblical story Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They were the fathers of the nations. The lists of their sons show “each with his own language, by their families, in their nations.” Japheth had seven sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. See Gen 10 and I Chron 1:5. From these families the coastland peoples spread.

While this may be a fanciful genealogical assignment, it offers insight into the views of the Jewish people of 600 BC.

Four of the seven names can be identified historically. The Gomerites were scattered in the lands of Asia Minor, around the shores of the Black Sea, and into the regions of the Sea of Azov in southern Russia. They were known to the Assyrians as the Gimirrai and to the Greeks as the Kimmerious (Cimmerians). Their name remains to this day in the Crimea (with a metathesis of the syllables). Tubal and Meshech appear in Assyrian cuneiform tablets as Tabal and Mushku on either side of the Taurus mountains in south Turkey. Later they were called Tibarenoi and Moschoi by Herodotus, the Greek historian. He placed them in the mountains southeast of the Black Sea near Lake Van and the famous Mt Ararat. Magog was identified by the Jewish historian Josephus with the Scythians who inhabited southern Russia between the Black and Caspian seas. Some traditions place the Scythians as far east as the Russian province of Kazakh. Herodotus described their location as Rumania and Ukraine. All traditions agree that they lived in regions which are now part of southern Russia.

From these identifications Gog and Magog are widely interpreted to mean modern Russia. This contemporary identification is derived out of the on-again/off-again political ambitions of Russia, godless antagonism to all religious people, and the phrases “the camp of the saints” and “the beloved city,” understood as modern Israel and Jerusalem. Because of the strong similarities to current world conditions there is a tendency to believe that Russia will attack Israel. However, dramatic shifts in world affairs have made such interpretation suspect. Furthermore, the *Revelation* passage presents a devastating difficulty.

For decades many persons drew out parallels with *Ezekiel* 38 and 39 to show the strength of their belief. Then suddenly they became aware that the passage in *Revelation* referred to the end of the thousand years, to the end of the Millennium. It could not refer to current events. As a consequence those biblical interpreters pushed aside and ignored the *Revelation* prophecy; they continued to base their thinking entirely on the prophecy in *Ezekiel*.

The belief in the *Ezekiel* passage as a description of modern events is so

widespread and so deeply entrenched within Christian fundamentalist religious circles, when reminded that the Gog and Magog passages in *Ezekiel* and *Revelation* are parallel, one-for-one, almost all of those foolish interpreters reject the thought that the *Ezekiel* passage might not apply to our day. They cling to their notions of current events; they insist that the Gog and Magog of *Ezekiel* does refer to our day, although they must admit that the Gog and Magog of *Revelation* does not. They are forced to invent two Gog and Magog events, one now at the end of this age, and another at the end of the thousand years.

Could God have arranged events to create such confusion? Does he repeat history? Does the description in *Revelation* mean there will be two judgment events, one before the Millennium and one after?

Indeed, there will be two judgment events, one now, at the end of this age, and another at the end of the Millennium. Because of our state of blindness we could not distinguish between them. Therefore, I shall detail the Gog and Magog passages to show that both refer to the end of the thousand years. There will be two judgment events but the prophecies on Gog and Magog do not belong to our day.

To draw out the full import of the passages I shall list the items from *Revelation* and show how they are duplicated in *Ezekiel* in every detail. Secondly, I shall show why the descriptions from *Ezekiel* do not satisfy current conditions but fit well at the end of the Millennium.

Geographical Parallels:

In *Revelation* they are the nations at “the four corners of the earth,” that is, Gog and Magog.

The list of nations in *Ezekiel* also shows the four corners of the earth. Magog is from the uttermost parts of the north, 38:15, 39:2. Persia (38:5) in the sixth century BC was ruled by Cyrus the Great. His empire extended from India westward to the Mediterranean Sea including Armenia, Turkey, and Media (modern Iran). These lands are north and east of the Holy Land. Cush (38:5) is identified as Ethiopia and is so translated by KJV. It is those lands which today make up the Sudan and modern Ethiopia. They are to the south of the Holy Land. Put (38:5) is identified as Libya; the word was translated as Libya by the Septuagint and KJV. It is to the west of the Holy Land.

Thus we see that the peoples listed in *Ezekiel* are from the north, east, south and west, the four corners of the earth, and show a strong parallel with *Revelation*.

A Huge Military Force:

In *Revelation* “their number is like the sand of the sea.”

In Ezek 38:4 they are described as an army, a great company. In 38:9 they are a cloud covering the land, hordes, and many peoples. In 38:15 they are many peoples, a great host, a mighty army. In 38:22 they are hordes, and many people.

These phrases show the huge army that will march up against the people of Israel; they display strong parallel with *Revelation* on the size of the force.

Mustered for Battle:

In *Revelation* they are gathered for battle.

In Ezek 38:7 the hosts are assembled. In 38:8 they are mustered. In 38:11 they go up against the land of unwallied villages. They fall upon the quiet people. In 38:12 their purpose is to seize spoil and carry off plunder. They want to assault the waste places which are now inhabited. These were the places wasted by nuclear destruction and the great planetary transition.

The passages in *Ezekiel* on the purpose of Gog and Magog show strong parallel to the purpose given in *Revelation*.

Location of Events:

In *Revelation* they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

In 38:18 Gog goes up against the land of Israel. In 39:11 Gog and his multitude are buried in Israel.

From tradition everyone recognizes the camp of the saints as Israel living in the land of promise, and the beloved city as Jerusalem. No one questions such identification from the *Revelation* passage. In *Ezekiel* the land of Israel and Jerusalem are clearly identified. *Ezekiel* parallels *Revelation* on the location of the events.

Fate of the Hordes:

In *Revelation* fire comes down from heaven to consume them.

In Ezek 38:22 Gog and his hordes are destroyed by torrential rains, hailstones, fire and brimstone. In 39:6 Magog and the people of the coastlands fall by fire.

The means of destruction is the same in both *Revelation* and *Ezekiel*. The events would fit within the judgment by fire for our own day. This is another reason the *Revelation* passage was thought by some interpreters to refer to modern events.

The Deceiver:

In *Revelation* Satan comes out to deceive the nations.

In Ezek 38:10 thoughts come into the mind of Gog and he devises an evil scheme. In *Revelation* Gog and Magog are used as one phrase, in an identical sense. But in *Ezekiel* Gog is identified as a personality. In Ezek 38:2-3 he is called the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal, from the land of Magog. In Hebrew the

words for Chief Prince are **nasi rosh**. The word **nasi** means prince. The word **rosh** is used many places in the Old Testament for captain, chief, ruler, and so on. Some translations show the phrase as “Prince of Rosh.” Less informed interpreters then take Rosh to mean Russia; for them Gog is the Prince of Russia. To be consistent the son of Benjamin in Gen 46:21 should be Russia; I Chron 5:7 would have the Russians, Jeiel and Zechariah, and so on. Such ridiculous translation is unjustified in the original Hebrew. Those interpreters will also claim, without any historical or factual support, that Meshech (Herodotus’ Moschoi) means Moscow and that Tubal means Siberian Tobolsh. Such claims are unwarranted and unnecessary because of the historical identifications of Gomer and Magog with the lands of Russia. Those commentators do a disservice to God’s people by such unprofessional and random matching of sounds and names across languages.

This information shows the parallel between *Ezekiel* and *Revelation* on the deceiving personality. Gog is the devil and Satan of *Revelation*. In *Ezekiel* he is described as a leader of human hordes and therefore appears in human form.

Several Old Testament passages state that divine beings will live as men, in mortal form. This is part of a mercy extension to those created divine Sons of God who rebelled. They will be given one final opportunity to prove their true hearts, under the same terms and conditions as the human mortals they betrayed.

Ps 82:6-7

I say, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince.”

Isa 14:12-20

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit. Those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’ All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; but you are cast out, away from your sepulchre, like a loathed untimely birth, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the Pit, like a dead body trodden under foot. You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. “May the descendants of evildoers nevermore be named!

Ezek 28:17-19

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your

wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought forth fire from the midst of you; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more for ever.

In summary we see that the passage from *Revelation* is an excellent outline of the events described in *Ezekiel*. There are two major differences; the deceiver is identified as Satan in *Revelation*; in *Ezekiel* he is identified as a human personality named Gog. Importantly, *Revelation* is explicit that the events will be at the end of the thousand years.

If we consider the thesis that Rev 20 and Ezek 38 and 39 represent two different events we must ask how they could have such identical parallels. Would God provide deeper mystery for us? Would these two unique prophecies be descriptive of two totally different times? It hardly seems possible. If accepted as descriptive of the same event they provide unique insight into the millennial period. They also inform us of the destiny of the former Prince of this world. But only if we can overcome the barriers that our blindness placed upon the interpretation of biblical prophecy.

I shall now draw out the reasons why the *Ezekiel* passage does not satisfy current events but can be understood under millennial conditions.

The Latter Days:

In Ezek 38:8 and 38:16 the phrases “latter years” and “latter days” are given. All students naturally assume these phrases mean the latter years and the latter days of our own age. They could just as well refer to latter years of the Millennium, the latter days of the thousand years, or even as a designation for the Millennium.

The Land of Israel:

References to Israel are many and immediately lead students of the prophecy to assume it means modern Israel. In 38:8, 39:4 and 39:17 are the mountains of Israel. In 38:14 and 39:7 are the people of Israel. In 39:9 are the cities; in 39:7 is the Holy One of Israel. In 39:12 and 39:22 is the house of Israel, understood to mean the people as a nation. However the mention of the “whole house” of Israel in 39:25 creates a problem. In 37:11 the two kingdoms of Israel, Judah and Joseph (Ephraim), recognized as the whole house of Israel, are clearly united as one. Historically they became divided after the death of Solomon and, in spite of efforts to reunite, remained divided until the northern kingdom of Ephraim was destroyed by the Assyrians. The northern tribes were carried off and became lost on the pages of history. Therefore the phrase “whole house” must refer to a future period when the two peoples will again become one. Although some inter-

preters feel the “whole house” refers to all the Jews the passage shows that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the northern “lost” ten tribes of Ephraim will miraculously reunite. The dry bones will be gathered together and the breath of life will come into them, Chapters 34 through 37.

The People of Israel:

The people of Israel will be gathered 38:8, brought out from the nations, 38:8 and 39:27, and gathered from the nations, 38:12 and 39:28. Again it is natural for students of the prophecy to assume this means the miracle of modern Israel with the Jews collected from the nations of the world. After all, this is a most amazing event. How could such a great phenomenon not be portrayed in prophecy? How could it be an accidental episode? Do world political events of today not revolve around that phenomenon? Or is God using modern Israel as the instrument for his Great Judgment? The further remark in 39:28 that none will remain among the nations is assumed to mean the completion of the return of the Jews after the final events at the end of this age. Again this return could just as well refer to events during the Millennium. Then the remark that none shall remain among the nations means that all the people of Israel, both Jew and non-Jew, will be brought back. Their children are the survivors of the judgment events of today, those who obeyed the call of Yahweh and sought shelter in the wilderness and on the mountains.

Restoration of the Land:

The land is restored from war, which had been a continual waste, 38:8. The waste places are now inhabited, 38:12. Interpreters believe the waste places are the desert lands which are slowly being reclaimed by the Jews. They cite cultivation by irrigation with many exports of fruits and vegetables, establishment of many settlements, and so on. Some cite the phrase “the desert shall blossom like the rose” from Isa 35:1. The phrase in 38:8 about a continual waste is understood to mean the desert wastelands from antiquity. But the waste places can be understood differently.

The continual waste described by *Ezekiel* refers to the results of the great devastation that will now shortly take place in our day. If Jerusalem and Judea will be destroyed by nuclear bombs the land will become an utter desolation, a hissing as described in Jeremiah 18:13-17, 25:9, 18, 29:15-19 and Micah 6. The restoration from war will be the rebuilding of the land that was utterly laid waste in the nuclear devastation, and in the great planetary transition. The people of Israel, both Jew and non-Jew, will return and will renew the land.

A Quiet People:

Ezek 38:11 and 38:12 describe a quiet people with many possessions. This is contrary to present conditions. The people of modern Israel are not quiet. They are aggressive in defense of their concepts of the promised return. They do not believe that destruction will come upon them; after all, they are God's chosen people. Although they have many possessions so also will the people who return during the Millennium, in bounty beyond the imagination of people living today.

We should consider that the modern Jews, in their violent self-defense, are not a camp of the saints. They built military forces, vigorously pursuing defense of their nationalistic heritage, with retaliatory strikes and invasions against their neighbors. They have interpreted prophecy for their material aggrandizement and political position. They are not dedicated to God; they are dedicated to the image of their unique position in world history. They are not devoted to salvaging the world; they are devoted to salvaging themselves. They do not have a vision of a world of righteousness; they have a vision of nationalistic pride. Their policies are filled with violence. They are far from being a peaceful or quiet people.

Dwelling Securely:

Ezek 38:8, 11, 14 and 39:26 say the people dwell securely. They were brought out from the nations and now dwell securely, all of them. These verses are a major support for those who believe the *Ezekiel* passage refers to current events.

The remarks could not be farther from present conditions. Although modern Jews were definitely brought out from the nations, they are just as definitely not dwelling securely. For the fifty years of their existence as a political state they have had to fight continually to survive and have been in constant jeopardy. They are not a secure people, in spite of wishful thinking by Christian and Jew to the contrary.

In Daniel 11:13-14 is a statement of events that will take place when the abomination of desolation is set up. KJV and RSV both translate "after certain years" or "after some years" but both give a footnote that show it is "at the end-of-time years." At that time "*the men of violence among your own people shall lift themselves up to fulfill the vision; but they shall fail,*" or "*the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.*" This is an exact prophecy of the state of modern Israel and shows that it was not neglected in God's word to us. It is important information to all who are sincere in pursuit of truth.

The policies of modern Israel are violent; those people have lifted themselves up to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. The people who live on the mountains of Israel during the Millennium will truly dwell securely.

Unwalled Villages:

In Ezek 38:11 we are told that the people live in unwalled villages, without walls, and having no bars or gates.

The people of modern Israel may live in villages but many more live in large cities. Many villages are walled to protect them from terrorist attack. The land is strung with barbed wire and other fortifications to help in defense. Many bars and gates are used to control the movement of people.

The *Ezekiel* descriptions are in vivid contrast to the actual conditions of the land today. No fortifications, walls, or defenses will be needed during the Millennium. From the details we can recognize that the prophecies of *Ezekiel* could not refer to the modern state of Israel. The Jews who now live there are not a quiet people; they are armed to the teeth, they are violent in the pursuit of their national heritage, and they are far from righteous.

Other evidence shows why these two chapters of *Ezekiel* do not refer to modern events.

THE EZEKIEL CHRONOLOGY

A difficult aspect of prophecy was the scattering of pieces of information through a prophet, and from one prophet to another. There was no constant theme or chronology that we could follow along a single thread. From the *Psalms* and *Isaiah* to *Revelation* pieces were intermixed. It was God's purpose to keep us in a spirit of deep sleep; one method was to confuse the prophetic pronouncements to prevent our clear perception. However, a series of chapters in *Ezekiel* is strikingly different. Chapters 38 and 39 fall in the middle of a sequence dealing with the Millennium. This sequence begins in Chapter 33 and goes through to the end in Chapter 48.

A Warning From a Watchman

Chapter 33 opens with a charge to the watchmen of Israel.

Ezek 33:3-7

"... if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people; then if any one who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. . . . if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes, and takes any one of them; that man is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me."

Thus it is with any watchman who would serve God. It is upon his hands to warn God's people. If those people had within themselves the power to recognize the danger they would have no need for a watchman.

The Delusion of the Jews

Did Jews really believe the land belonged to them?

Ezek 33:23-28

The word of Yahweh came to me: "Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.' Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: You eat flesh with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? You resort to the sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife, shall you then possess the land? Say this to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword; and him that is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured; and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. And I will make the land a desolation and a waste; and her proud might shall come to an end; and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass through."

And so the destructions come. The Jews will be scattered. But not for long.

The Restoration of Israel

Ezek 34:11-16

For thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice."

Indeed, it was a day of clouds and thick darkness when God scattered his people. Now, after all the woes of the earth, God will bring them back. Now, in the renovation of the earth he will return them to the mountains of Israel, the new reformed Israel.

The Coming of the Messiah

Ezek 34:22-31

"I will save my flock. They shall no longer be a prey. I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be Prince among them. I, Yahweh, have spoken. I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am Yahweh, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them prosperous plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I, Yahweh their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says Yahweh GOD. And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says Yahweh GOD."

God himself will seek out those who fled to the wilderness and to the mountains on a day of clouds and thick darkness. When he brings them back he will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country, with good pasture, and in good grazing land. He will set over them David their king. He will send down showers of blessing. They shall no longer be a prey to the nations.

Chapter 35 is an extraneous insertion into the sequence telling of the restoration of Israel. Mount Seir is properly the mountain range south of the Dead Sea, but in the Bible it also denotes Edom. Many students believe this prophecy was misplaced from another location. This section continues into 36:7.

They Will Soon Come Home

Ezek 36:8-15

"But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they will soon come home. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown;

and I will multiply men upon you, the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt; and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am Yahweh. Yea, I will let men walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no longer bereave them of children. Thus says Yahweh GOD: Because men say to you, 'You devour men, and you bereave your nation of children,' therefore you shall no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children, says Yahweh GOD; and I will not let you hear any more the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, says Yahweh GOD.

The whole house of Israel will now return, the genetic remnants of all of the twelve tribes, not merely the Jews.

As our God said to us:

Ezek 36:18-36

"So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them.

. . . Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says Yahweh GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am Yahweh, says Yahweh GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

. . . I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.

. . . Thus says Yahweh GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of

being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it.

The people of Israel will soon come home. The whole house will return; the cities will be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt. God will cause the land to be inhabited as in former times. Then he will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. He will take out their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. He will put his spirit within them. They shall be his people and he shall be their God. The land that was desolate will become like the garden of Eden. The "former times" are those days when the earth was bountiful, in that Eden of long ago.

The Resurrection of Israel

A most famous of biblical passages is the vision of Ezekiel in 37:1-10. He saw a great valley, full of dry bones. He was asked if those bones could live. He replied, "Lord, you know." Then, as he looked, he saw a great rattling of the bones. Sinews, and flesh, and skin covered them. The breath of life came into them. They lived, and stood upon their feet, and became an exceedingly great host. They were the lost house of Israel, the whole house of Israel, resurrected, returned, and restored.

Ezek 37:11-14

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says Yahweh GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I have done it, says Yahweh."

The Joining of the Two Sticks

Ezek 37:15-28

The word of Yahweh came to me: "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the children of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write upon it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him'; and join them together into one

stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when your people say to you, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?' say to them, Thus says Yahweh GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him; and I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says Yahweh GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever; and David my servant shall be their Prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I Yahweh sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore."

These are the promises. Now man will know the meaning of the prophecies. Now they will recognize themselves as the true children of God.

Chapters 38 and 39 then go on to describe the events that will take place at the end of the Millennium, and the battles when the fallen Prince of this world reaches his final end.

Chapters 40 to 48 offer exceptional insights into the coming Millennium, yet they also present extreme difficulties. The passages provide explicit details of the New Temple, the duties of the priests, and the plan for division of the lands among the twelve tribes, as well as description of the reformed geology. On the other hand many details carry over from Jewish religious practices in the centuries prior to the birth of Jesus, with animal sacrifices and burnt offerings, and therefore, do not belong to the Millennium. Some students have proposed that a later editor reworked Ezekiel's material to make it palatable to Jewish minds of those days. This may well be. However, it makes exposition complex and difficult.

I shall consider only two topics.

The Reformed Topography

In 47:1-6 Ezekiel describes a very wide river. According to the description this river would be more than two miles wide. Apparently it will issue forth from beneath the temple structure.

The creation of this great river is the result of the geological changes which will take place at the twisting of the earth.

Zech 14:4-11

On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward.

This is an amazing geological description for Zechariah's day, with precise terms for the movement of sections of the earth's crust, called tectonic plates. Other great changes will take place in the earth's surface.

And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then Yahweh your God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter.

This passage in Zechariah compares with Ezekiel for the great river that will flow out from the new Jerusalem.

The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft upon its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.

Here we see an example of the difficulty with the prophetic texts as they have come down to us. While the whole land may be turned into a plain the present city of Jerusalem will not remain; it will be blasted from the face of the earth in the nuclear destructions. Again, it is probable that some ancient editor interposed his ideas.

Other parallels are found between Zechariah and Ezekiel.

The Tribal Allotments

Special areas were specified for

- A Holy district, 45:1
- A place for the sanctuary within the Holy district, 45:2.
- A plot of land for the sanctuary, 45:3
- Another plot as a residential area for the Levites, 45:5. Note that this harks back to the days when the tribes were identifiable, and Levites could be recognized. Such condition will not exist in the future, and again suggests that some editor corrupted the text.
- An area dedicated to the whole house of Israel, 45:6. This is for all of the genetic remnants of Israel, as well as the Jews.
- A section dedicated to the Prince, the Messiah, 45:7.
- A huge tract of land for the twelve tribes, 47:13-23. This will be divided among the tribes, 48:1-8. However, the tribes are no longer identifiable by name or descent; we must view these precise assignments as an interpretation placed there by that editor who still believed in the literal existence of the tribes.
- Land allotments continue to the end of the book.

CONCEPTUAL DIFFICULTIES

In our attempts to understand the physical, social and spiritual environment of the Millennium we must come to grips with the nature of that period. Although the planet has gone into a new rotational mode, weather systems have settled down into a bountiful climate, and the fallen Prince is no longer present as a spiritual influence, still the era is unsettled.

Contrast the good and evil that exist on the planet at the end of that era. Devout people, (the camp of the saints), and those who can be misled by Satan when he is “loosed for a little while,” are both still present in the human population. Some are righteous; others follow deceptive philosophies. This mixture of good and evil is contrary to current popular views about the thousand years.

Another difficulty is that war comes at the end of the Millennium. Much current thought conceives the Millennium as a time of peace and a time of God’s rule. Hardly anyone recognizes that the Millennium will be so unsettled. Everyone assumes that the thousand years will be a time of bliss with God’s saints reigning with him.

As stated in Isa 2:4: “*And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*” If war comes at the end of the thousand years this prophecy cannot be fulfilled until after the Millennium. Our planet will not end with the Millennium; it has a long future before it. Again, the prophecies are counter to current popular belief.

From these factors we can infer that God is not personally present as a world ruler during the Millennium. Neither in the *Revelation* passage nor in *Ezekiel* is there indication of personal divine rulership. Would any person be deceived if God were personally present?

Furthermore, now that the advent of the Messiah is clearly defined, we know that rulership is from a divine being living in mortal form. A great planetary drama unfolds when David, the Prince, and Gog, the Deceiver, are both present in human form, of incarnation equality. The final contest is on terms that can be seen and recognized by ordinary human mortals.

However, God maintains a hand in the events. He administers justice and brings a final end to that fallen celestial personality. Ezek 38:14-23 tells us that God’s wrath will be roused and there will be a great shaking in the land of Israel. Every living creature will quake at his presence, the mountains shall be thrown down, the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. God shall perform his great act to fell Gog and Magog upon the hills of Israel. But Judea is not destroyed; those who dwell in the cities of Israel go forth to clean the countryside, burning the weapons for seven years. They take the bodies of the vast horde of Gog and Magog and bury them in the Valley of Hamongog for seven months, 39:1-16. Therefore, this destruction event is different from that which devastates modern Jerusalem and Judea. There is no indictment here against that holy city.

The passages of *Revelation* and *Ezekiel* on Gog and Magog and the unfolding of the Millennium are highly instructive — if our hearts and minds are open to God’s greater truth. They provide us with deep insight into his plans, and help build a context in which to place our personal commitment to his will. Without such understanding, without better knowledge, and without improved wisdom, we cannot dedicate our energies to his program nor do we know what decisions to make in line with his will. In our present blindness we cannot relate the events of today to the events of the Millennium. We cannot fit our decisions with his work. We cannot properly direct our lives. Only through better understanding can our personal decisions coincide with God’s will, in commitment of heart, and in dedication of life. It is crucially important for us to become educated in reality, and not in blindness. It is time to cast aside the speculations of a blind Christianity. It is time to stop wandering, lost in a world of sin and confusion. It is time to become more mature members of his flock. We cannot grow if we persist in darkness and ignorance. We must open our hearts and our minds to his greater truth, and for his greater glory. Grave decisions await us. Will we become part of his chosen people? Or will we go to destruction with the godless people of this world?

The Great Deceiver will come twice. He will come today as a spirit personality, wrecking his havoc across the world through the minds of those human mortals who have given themselves to him. And he will appear at the end of the Millennium in one final mercy gift from his Creator, as a man of the realm. But he will die like any man, as any Prince would fall, and he will burn to ashes in the sight of all those human mortals who live at that time.