***Prophecy

The Northern Confederacy - PR02-02***

We continue our series on the study of the high points of the prophetic Scriptures. We are going to look at the subject of the Northern Confederacy. You remember we had said that it is our intention to try to take major areas of the prophetic Word. Most of you have heard about these. We want to give us some crystallization of our thinking in reference to the movements of our day as to who's involved and what's going to happen. Well, we've learned certain things thus far. We have learned that the next event that God has in his prophetic program is that moment when the Lord Jesus Christ comes into the air and catches all believers, living and dead, to meet Him in the air and return to heaven with Him. There, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place; our works are evaluated to see how much our lives amounted to human good and how much was divine good; and, on the basis of what is left as divine good, we are rewarded.

Meanwhile, back on the earth a seven-year period of history moves into operation in which Israel comes to the high point of her time of trial and tribulation. During this period, and preceding it, Israel will be back in her land, and that has taken place. Israel will once more possess the city of Jerusalem, and that has taken place. The temple will be rebuilt so that the ancient worship rituals may be resumed. This is under advisement by the nation of Israel now. Jews will return from all over the world, and there are great efforts to bring them together in that way now.

Interestingly enough, one of the greatest sources and pools for the Jewish nationals now lies, of all places, in Russia. There are something like two million Jews in Russia alone. Russia is undoubtedly using this as a point of pressure and of leverage in the Middle East against Israel. Who knows what kind of a deal Russia might make with Israel in order to keep the balance with the Arab nations? Russia is not ready for any confrontations or any wars now. Who knows what interesting deals Russia might meet in order to make some adjustment to permit two million visas for Jews who want to emigrate to Israel out of Russia? In exchange, there are settlements that may be desirable to the Arabs, and Israel may be inclined to yield them in order to expand her population base which she urgently needs.

In any case, Israel is a power to contend with. It didn't seem, 25 years ago, that that would be the case. But to those who had studied the Scriptures, these things that have taken place were already written down in books. You can go back to books written 75 to 100 years ago and read of these very things as Bible students concluded this is what must happen, and indeed they have come to pass.

**The Middle East**

We want to think particularly now about the role of Russia in the Middle East. The Middle East is an area bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. These are the nations generally conceded to be in the Middle East: Sometimes Morocco, Algeria, and even Libya are not included, but Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, (across the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula) Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel are considered to be the basic nations of the Middle East. So this is the area that we're talking about now when we speak about the Middle East.

**Wealth and Oil**

The Middle East is a place of fantastic wealth. It's an economically strategic area because of oil. The reserves of oil deposits that are daily being discovered in the Middle East are absolutely unbelievable. It seems like there are literally rivers of oil running under the territory of the Middle East. It would warm the cockles of any Texas oilman's heart to have a lease on some of these lands. Over a third of the world's oil comes from right here in this area of the world. One third of the oil of the world is produced here in the Middle East. Western Europe uses almost twice as much oil as Eastern Europe, Russia, and China all put together. Western Europe gets 80 percent of its oil from the Middle East. About two thirds of the oil reserves of the world are right here in the Middle East.

Now that's just one factor. It is perhaps the major factor of wealth in the Middle East, but there are many other elements that have made this a very very attractive part of the world, and Israel particularly. Mineral deposits in the Dead Sea are of fantastic economic value.

**Russia**

The superpowers, the United States and Russia, have always been interested in the Middle East to some degree. The United States was not deeply involved until World War II. After World War II, we became a powerful presence in the Middle East. We placed the American 6th fleet into the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean became an American lake. Russia has always been deeply interested in the Middle East. This is primarily because Russia, who is locked up north, would like to get through the Black Sea, through the Bosporus, and through the Dardanelles of Turkey in order to have access to the Mediterranean Sea. Over the centuries, Russia has been interested with that access to the Mediterranean. The result has been many wars with the Byzantine, the Turkish Empire, and the British Empire. It began back as far as the days of Peter the Great when the Ottoman Empire was crumbling. He moved in with wars in order to attempt to gain access to the Mediterranean. Catherine the Great wanted to capture Constantinople, and to establish a new empire around that city. She almost made it, but didn't.

Under communism, the interest in the Middle East has only been very modest. However, beginning in 1955, the interest of Russia in the Arab world increased tremendously. This was in part because the Arabs, who were chafing under the presence now of the new state of Israel, had gone to the communist countries (Czechoslovakia, to be exact) in 1955, and purchased arms. From that time, gradually, Russian presence in the Middle East began to grow. After the United States withdrew from financing the Aswan Dam in Egypt, Russia came in and offered to finance it. In ten years' time, she became an established power to contend with in the Middle East.

When the June war took place in 1967, with the collapse of the Arab armies, and particularly of Egypt, Russia moved in and promised immediately to replace everything that Egypt had lost in the way of war matériel. And she did that very quickly. However, this rearmed Egyptian army and rearmed Arab world also gave Russia an opportunity to enter in, in great numbers, with her advisers and with her people in various strategic positions. Also it gave her the opportunity to use Egyptian ports on the Mediterranean as a base of operations so that the Mediterranean is no longer an American lake. It is now confronted with a superior naval power. We are told by many of our men in Congress that the Russians are now a superior naval power to the United States in the Mediterranean.

The specific goals of Russia in the Mediterranean seem to be self-evident. One: Russia wants control of the Mediterranean in order to pose a threat to what is referred to as the soft underbelly of Europe. Secondly, she wants to gain control of the Suez Canal for the purpose of controlling the vast quantity of oil that the Middle East has. That's the lifeblood of Western Europe. She also wants to keep pressure on Turkey and on Iran, both from the north and from the south.

Russia has a very dramatic role in Scriptures. We find that in Ezekiel 38 and 39. These two chapters deal with a great power which is related as being located to the north of Israel who, with other allies, plunges the world into its final war. The first thing we're interested in, as you look at this prophetic declaration of Ezekiel, is what is the time concerning which Ezekiel is speaking. In Ezekiel 38:8, we have this expression "latter years:" "After many days you will be visited; in the latter years, you shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword," and so on. In Ezekiel 38:16, we have the expression "latter days:" "It shall be in the latter days that I will bring you against my land," and so on. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew scholars tell us that these expressions "latter days" and "latter years" refer particularly to the time preceding, and the events immediately preceding, the tribulation period. Constantly, when this expression is used, it is tied to that time immediately preceding the Lord's return--this seven-year period of the world's history and the events which precede it.

So we have identification number one that we are talking about what is now in the future. These things described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 have not yet taken place. This great power in the north, whoever she is, and her allies, whoever they may be, have not yet swept down upon Israel in conquest. This is something that God says is coming. The preceding chapters, Ezekiel 37 and 38, speak of the final restoration of the Jews to Palestine. As you read through these chapters, 36 and 37, you'll discover that it speaks about a restoration from which Israel is never again to lose or to be removed from. She is to be returned, and she is never again to be removed. Furthermore, we are told that it's a restoration from a world-wide dispersion. Ezekiel 36:24: "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."

This could not apply to the Babylonian captivity. For one thing, it was merely a 70-year period of captivity. Secondly, it was to one nation, Babylon. It was not from all the nations of the world. So this return is a return that must follow this scattering of Israel over 2,000 years since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This return is immediately prior to the tribulation period. Remember that the spiritual restoration of the Jews comes at some time after they have been restored as a nation. Ezekiel 36:25-27 gives you that, and Ezekiel 37 confirms that order. First, Israel is to be restored physically as a nation. Then she is restored spiritually and reborn.

Now this physical restoration and spiritual restoration is to begin the everlasting kingdom that God has promised through the Messiah to the Jewish people--a kingdom which will never end. Ezekiel 37:26 says, "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them (the Jewish nation). It shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. We could go extensively into the Old Testament and see how God made promises to the Jewish people that had this contingency of forever. "I'm going to give you a nation forever. I'm going to give you a king forever. I'm going to give you a throne forever. I'm going to give you a people forever." How long is forever?

Well right away, the millennialists are in trouble. To them, forever means only until God changes his program. Therefore, if you were to sit in most churches in the city of Irving, and if they should by any chance happen to talk about prophecy, which few of them will, you would discover that all that God promised to the Jews, in their view, has been fulfilled and terminated. The great blessings that were to come to this nation have been given to a different group of people called the church. So the church and Israel are mixed together. Nothing could be farther from the truth. This is devastating to your understanding of the Word of God. God has a program for the church and he will bring it to an end with the rapture. God has a program for the Jews and it continues after the rapture, and on into the millennium.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 indicate that after Israel's physical restoration to the land, but before her spiritual restoration, this nation is going to be invaded by a powerful nation and a group of her allies from a territory to the north of Israel. Ezekiel 38:8: "After many days you be visited in the latter years (and there's that expression again 'latter years,' which means just before the tribulation and into the events of the tribulation). You shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword that is gathered out of many peoples against the mountains of Israel which have been always waste. But it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them." Verse 16: "And you shall come up against my people of Israel like a cloud to cover the land (this power from the north). And it shall be in the latter days." Israel in the latter days has been brought back. Israel in the latter days is to be attacked. "And I will bring you against my land that the nations may know me when I shall be sanctified in you, O, Gog, before their eyes."

What is going to happen, as you search these chapters that we can't take time now to read, is that God is supernaturally going to judge this northern invader and her allies. The result is going to be that the Jews are going to turn in faith to the Messiah Jesus Christ who they now reject. We had a speaker recently who was telling us about Israel today, and that the only place he saw the name of Jesus Christ was on a garbage can. That typifies the attitude of the Jews toward the Lord Jesus today. But here when this northern invader swoops upon Israel, and when it looks like all is lost, and suddenly God steps in the picture and He destroys this invader and her allies, and Israel is saved, suddenly, Jews will recognize Jesus Christ indeed as their Messiah.

Ezekiel 39:6-8: "And I will send a fire on Magog and among those who dwell securely in the coast lands (that is, his homeland), and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them pollute My holy name any more. And the nation shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. And, behold, it is come and it is done, said the Lord God. This is the day of which I have spoken."

We have the prediction in Zechariah 12:10 describing this same event of the spiritual rebirth of Israel following the destruction of the invader from the north: "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." So Israel shall be born spiritually in a day.

**The Northern Confederacy**

These fascinating chapters of Ezekiel 38 and 39 are describing a period of history in which we are living today. As you run through Ezekiel 38 and 39, you read these events (and read them in a modern translation), the things that God is preparing to do, remember that it is describing the day in which you are living. These are the final moments of preparation that these things describe. It is naturally a matter of intense interest to us to ask the question, "Who is the northern confederacy?"

First, he is referred to as the king of the North, and he and his allies form the confederacy. Well, the racial background of the northern commander is given to us in Ezekiel 38:2: "Son of Man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him." Because we have these racial backgrounds given to us in Scripture, we're able to trace the migrations of these tribes and identify the modern nation from which these ancient tribes came, and to which they migrated. These tribes migrated to some specific modern nation. We can go back, by archaeological findings, and by a study of ancient history, the scholars have put together the migrations of these ancient tribes, and have traced them from their origins to the location of the modern nation that exists today.

**Russia**

Here in Ezekiel 38:2, the word Gog is a symbolic name for the northern nation's leader. He's called Gog. His country is called Magog. He is the prince also of certain ancient tribes. These tribes are given as Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. The study of history and of archeology enables us to trace these ancient nations to their present location. And guess where they are there. They're in Russia. These nations migrated to what is today the geographical location of modern Russia. So Russia is identified as the leader of this northern confederacy, the power block who is going to attack Israel.

She is further pinpointed by identifying her geographic location in reference to Israel. Ezekiel 38:6 says, "Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters." It identifies them (these again are all Russian groups) as from the north. Verse 15: "And you shall come from your place out of the north parts (this is speaking to the northern Confederacy), you and many people with you, all of them riding upon horses a great company and a mighty army." Now keep that horse business in mind for a moment. Ezekiel 39:2: "And I will turn you back, and leave but the sixth part of you, and will cause you to come up from the north parts, and will bring you upon the mountains of Israel." So the geographic location of this enemy is identified as coming from the north of Israel. All you have do is look at a map and see that the only great power to the north of Israel and to the north of the Middle East here is Russia herself.

It is interesting that in 1968, General Moshe Dayan said that the next war will not be with the Arabs, but with the Russians. Now, he's not a believer. He's an unbeliever. But this is something fantastic that he should have declared and have such insight as to be able to declare such a true statement. The war that Israel will face is not going to be with the Arab world, primarily, as it will be with Russia, who will include the Arab world. It's incredible that Ezekiel, 2,600 years ago could have predicted things which are so accurately coming to pass in our day--the alignment of world powers.

**The Confederacy**

Let's take a look at these allies for a minute. Who's going to join this great power from the north? Incidentally, we could go into some detail. I'm afraid that I would bore you considerably if I were to take the systematic step-by-step identification of these tribes, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal and their migrations, and the historical evidence we have, and the archaeological evidence. I'm afraid it would be very laborious if we were to trace that for you here. But if you're interested, you can look that sort of thing up for yourself and you can follow it step-by-step. We are not speaking about something that is guesswork, but we are speaking about something that has intense scholarly authentication behind it.

**Persia**

Ezekiel 38:5-6 tell us who is going to be aligned with Russia in this final great assault. The allies of Russia in her northern confederacy: First of all, it's going to be Persia. Persia is the country that we call Iran. There's very little discussion or debate about the fact that this word Persia here refers to modern Iran. Interestingly enough today, Russia is trying to gain a foothold in Iran. She's trying to do this through economic aid. Again, if you look at a map, you would see why Iran is very important to Russia. If Russia is going to invade Israel as the Scriptures indicate, then she needs a land access route to be able to move a huge army. Turkey is very difficult to move through because of the Caucasus Mountains there. It is a very undesirable territory to move a large army through. But Iran lends itself very beautifully to moving an army through. Russia needs Iran in order to be able to make the sweep down onto Israel.

So Russia is appealing and seeking to gain a foothold in Iran particularly today. So here's something to watch. As you read the papers and magazine articles and listen to your news, get this country Iran in your mind. Get its relationship to Russia in your mind. Remember what Russia is going to do as the leader of a northern group of nations, and see what the relationships are that develop between Russia and Iran day-by-day as we watch the news. Something is going to develop here, I think.

**Cush**

Secondly, you have Cush. Now Cush is the descendant of Noah's son Ham. He was the first son, and Cush was a black man. The genetic qualities of Ham and his wife were such that when the child was born, he was black. The Cushites, again by archaeological findings and ancient history, the Cushites migrated to the Arabian Peninsula. Then they came across to the Red Sea, and then came south of Egypt into Ethiopia and Sudan, and then moved down the whole African continent. All of the black people, basically, come from Cush. In the Scriptures, we have the word Ethiopia used, which today we call the Abisinia, but it should be Sudan. While Ethiopia contains some of the descendants of Cush, Sudan includes them even more extensively, as well, as the nations of Africa. So it's a considerably greater sphere.

So, what do we have here? We have, first of all, that Iran is going to be allied with Russia. That's part of the confederacy. Secondly, the African nations are going to be allied with Russia in this invasion of Israel. This is certainly in accord with Daniel 11:36-45. This African force is going to join Russia in an invasion of Israel. You can see immediately what the tactics are going to be--a force from the north and a force from the south. While these African nations are going to be in this invasion, they will be part of another power bloc called the confederacy of the south under what the Scriptures call the king of the South who is the Egyptian ruler. Of course, Egypt is the leading Arab nation today rounding up the support of the Arab world against Israel. So this African force is going to be part of the king of the South allied with the king of the north. So this tells you something about Africa in relationship to communism. Africa will in all likelihood go communist. Africa is certainly going to be pro-Russia all the way down the line increasingly.

**Libya**

A third force is going to be Put, which is the nation we call Libya. Put was the third son of Ham, and this tribe migrated to the west. Put migrated to the west of Egypt, and they filled out the nations of Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. These are the North African Arab nations that were descended from Put. Put was the son, and then these tribes were named after the head of the family. So today, what do you have in North Africa, since these nations are again to be as part of this south confederacy? Well, you can expect that the North African Arab nations are going to go pro-communist also, and this is again taking place. That's why we say that what we read here in Ezekiel is what is being fulfilled today. It's talking about today. So these nations all become part of this southern confederacy. They attack Israel from the south as Russia, allied with them, attacks from the north.

**Eastern Europe**

Now there's another group. Ezekiel 38:6 says, "Gomer." This is Gomer and all his hordes. This Gomer was the eldest son of Noah's son Japheth. Gomer was a grandson of Noah, the eldest boy of Japheth. Out of Gomer came Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. These again are tribal family groups which are identifiable in their migrations. Where did these tribes go? Well, they all went north of the Black Sea, and they spread southward, and they spread westward into what is Eastern Europe today. All of the territory of the area of Eastern Europe is where these tribes moved. So they cover the Eastern European nations, all of were behind the Iron Curtain. Basically they include East Germany and the Slavic nations. So these are going to be part of the confederacy of the north.

Again, I want to remind you that there were men of God 50, 75, and 100 years ago who were telling you what I'm telling you now. They were telling the people of God on the basis of Scripture what I'm telling you here, except they didn't have World War II, and they didn't have the inanities of the United States government toward Russia that enabled all of Eastern Europe to be taken under communism. They didn't have these things so aligned that all we have to do is look at them and it's just fantastic how we read Scripture and we say, "That's how it happened. We can see. We're no longer waiting for these things to take place." These Eastern European nations are going to be part of that ball game.

**The Cossacks**

Then there's another one here in verse 6: "Togarmah and all his hordes. Ezekiel 38:6 says that these are to the extreme north of Israel. It says, "Togarmah of the north quarters," and that means the extreme north. In the extreme north, these people end up in southern Russia. If you know something about Russian geography, you know that southern Russia is the place where the Cossacks come from. The Cossacks are the elite cavalry troops of the Russian military, and they have them today.

During the Korean War, there were some terrain areas in which horses were the fastest way to move troops around, and they were used. It is interesting that this territory through Iran and the invasion routes of Russia toward Israel lends itself again to fast maneuverability of horses--of animals. So who knows but what here again we're dealing with the Cossack group, fine cavalry, and we are told here in Scripture as we read earlier that they would come with their horses. Verse 4 says, "I will turn you back and put hooks into your jaws, and I'll bring you fourth, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armor," and so on. Perhaps we're reading something that is again going to be a literal combat weapon in the invasion upon Israel.

Now Ezekiel indicates by the expression at the end of verse 6, "and many peoples with you," that he hasn't fully identified all the nations that are going to be included in this attack. But he does tell us enough to give us some very interesting speculations and observations upon today's lineup of nations. Here's the power to the north. The only one is Russia. The Word of God says that Iran will be aligned with her; the African nations (the black nations) will be aligned; the areas of North Africa will be aligned; Libya will be aligned with her; and, the Arabian Peninsula will find its place, and no doubt Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. These nations will join forces to swoop down upon the nation of Israel in the days immediately preceding the Lord's return.

Ezekiel 38:7 tells us something very interesting in reference to the responsibility of the Russian ruler. It says to him, "Be prepared, and prepare for yourself, you, and all your company that are assembled unto you, and be a guard unto them." Now when it says, "Be prepared and prepare for yourself, you, and all your company that are assembled unto you," he's telling him to equip. The word "prepare" here means to equip for combat. The Scripture is directing the responsibility for arming these nations, who are going to attack Israel, upon Russia. That is fantastic, because that's exactly the nation which is providing the armaments for the Arab world: Russia. She is responsible for taking command, and is in command. What was once an American lake in the Mediterranean is now largely under the domination of the Russian naval forces.

Well, this northern Confederacy is going to attack, but it's going to be doomed. The thing that's going to happen is that her attack will escalate into the final World War. Ezekiel 38:15 gives you the details of that. "You shall come from your place out of the north parts, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. And you shall come up against my people of Israel like a cloud to cover the land, and it shall be in the latter days, and I'll bring you against my land that the nations may know me when I should be sanctified in you, O, God, before their eyes." Then he goes on and tells of the destruction that will come upon them.

This leads to the final alignment of nations in the final great World War. As the nations come to grips, to the point where the Bible says all that human life is going to be exterminated on the earth, Jesus Christ returns. He comes back, shortening the seven-year period a little bit because if he did not, the Scriptures indicate there would be no human life left on the face of the earth. That means that humanity is going to use some fantastically powerful weapons in that tribulation period.

So Russia will never rule the world, but Russia is going to line up the world for the attack upon Israel. I want you to have this aligned, that when somebody says, "Do you know something about the northern Confederacy?" you can say, "Yes. That's going to be led by Russia. The commander is identified as the king of the north. There will be a power block that joins him. Part of it will be the force of the king of the South. It will include the North African nations. It will include the black African nations. Along with the king of the north, there will be allied the Arab nations. The two of them will form a pincers movement from the north and from the south upon the apparently helpless Land of Israel."

Why? Because of the great wealth that is to be found in the Middle East. That's why Russia wants it. Because of the dominating position over the whole world that this would place her in. Remember that around the Mediterranean Sea at the time that this attack takes place, there is another power, the power of the West under the antichrist. At this time, the antichrist has become a power for Russia to contend with. The antichrist is not a world ruler at this time, but with the defeat of Russia the antichrist moves and becomes the dictator of the whole world. So we're going to move him into the picture so that you see how they're related.

For now, listen to the news. See what happens with Iran. Russia has to bring her solidly into her orbit. The Scripture says she's going to be on her side. Watch what happens further to Egypt. Watch what happens to Libya. Watch what happens to these nations on the Arabian Peninsula. You'll see prophecy being fulfilled in your day.

Our Father, we are grateful to you for your kindness to us, your revelation of the Word, and your information. We pray that we would therefore hasten all the more to devote ourselves to the task which is before us to rescue the perishing and to bring the Word of truth into the hearts of those who need it. For we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

[**Back to the Prophecy index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/highlightsofprophecy.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)