

# RUSSIA

## *AND ITS ROLE IN LATTER DAY EVENTS*

*The following class outline was presented in September of 2008 for a class at the Arkansas Bible School “Fall Gathering”, and also as a series of Sunday School classes for the Republic, Missouri ecclesia. This is purely in outline form so we apologize for any gaps in explanation that may be found. Please feel free to direct any questions or comments to [republic.christadelphians@gmail.com](mailto:republic.christadelphians@gmail.com). Please refer to PowerPoint link for associated maps and charts.*

### **PART 1 – IDENTIFICATION**

#### **Read Ezek. 38:1-17**

- I. Preliminary Points.
  - A. In what point of Israel’s history was this prophecy delivered through Ezekiel?
  - B. This is not an isolated prophecy. Verse 13 informs us that a plurality of prophets foretell the events spoken of in this passage. (Prophecies such as Daniel 11 and Joel 3 will be tied in later on). Ezek. 39:8.
  - C. How do we know that this prophecy is dealing with events yet future?
    1. Vv. 8,16 - “in the latter years”
    2. After a regathering and restoration of the land has taken place.
    3. The “heathen” will be made aware of the power of Yahweh (vs. 16)
    4. The events described here and other related prophecies have simply never occurred.
- II. Russia: The leader of this invasion. *But how do we know?*
  - A. GOG – “*to be elevated or to rise up*”.
    1. According to ancient Assyrian cylinders, Gog (Gagi) was a chief of the Scythian peoples (early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC).
    2. Scythians: A fierce, nomadic people who stretched from parts of modern day Germany, through eastern Europe and into what we now know as Russia and into the region of Siberia. The name was given and used by the ancients Greeks to describe this far reaching territory and its peoples.
    3. Gog is the “prince” of the following territories which gives us more conclusive evidence.
  - B. ROSH – “*head or chief*”.
    1. Not in the Authorized Version, appears as: “*the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*”

2. “Chief” was understood by the Hebrew translators of the Septuagint to actually represent a proper noun. Many translations, including the RV, translate it as the proper name of ROSH.
3. Encyclopedia Britannica (along with numerous other sources) explains that Ros is the ancient name of Russia. The geographer Bochart (1640) stated, “*that from Rhos and Mesech, that is the Rhossi and Moschi, of whom Ezekiel speaks, descended the Russians and Muscovites, nations of the greatest celebrity in European Scythia.*”

#### C. MESHECH & TUBAL

1. Both mentioned in the genealogy of Genesis 10:2,3,6 as sons of Japeth.
2. Meshech – the area of Moscovy, and the people Moscovites which gives rise to the city name of Moscow.
3. Tubal – river Tobal, giving rise to the town Tobalsk on the other side of the Ural Mts. in Siberia. Tobalsk is the old capitol of the Siberian region.

#### D. MAGOG

1. Also linked by Josephus to be of the Scythians. (Remember the extent of the Scythian domain.)
2. The ancient writer Diodorus Siculus (100 BC) traced the Scythians as far as the Baltic Sea.
3. We identify this with Germany. (A strengthening relationship between Russia and Germany to be considered).

- E. With these clear indicators in mind we also read in Ezek 38:15 that GOG is – “out of the north parts”. Hebrew texts more specifically read – the *remotest extremities* of the north. RV reads: “*out of the uttermost parts of the north*”.

### III. Those in alliance with Russia

- A. Persia – modern day Iran. Roots trace back to the Medes who were descendants of Medai – another son of Japeth.
- B. Ethiopia – (Hebrew: Cush) Still so named and probably will include the Sudan.
- C. Libya
- D. Gomer – According to the historian Josephus, Gomer’s descendants migrated from Galatia to the area of ancient Gaul – now known as France. (oldest son of Japheth).
- E. Togarmah – Historians identify this area as Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

### IV. Other Scriptural Identifiers

- A. Moscow/Russia considered the “3<sup>rd</sup> Rome”.
  1. 2 legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image correspond with the two divisions of the Roman Empire. (Rome in the West – Constantinople in the East).
  2. Constantinople was considered the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rome and a continuation of the Roman empire long after the Roman empire came to end. When Constantinople fell (Byzantium and the Byzantine Empire) in 1453 the religious authority of the Eastern Orthodox Church transferred to Moscow – where devotion was firmly behind Eastern Orthodox. (Rome continued to be the seat of Roman Catholicism after the fall of the Western Portion of the Roman Empire).
  3. Portrayed in Russian Architecture. (Symbol of the cross over the crescent.)

4. The Russian emperors came to be known as “Czars” (the first was Ivan the Great, 1462-1505 AD) – a form of the ancient title of Caesar. Was previously the title of the emperors of Byzantium. He was viewed as “*God’s Viceregent on Earth*”.
  5. The Czar considered himself the protector of the Holy Places in Palestine. (This is a religious controversy that we see playing out right now and will be part of the motivating factor to bring Russia down against Israel. Religion along with military/political conquest are important matters to keep in mind.)
  6. Russia historically and continues to desire control once again of the seat of its cultural and religious roots – Constantinople/Byzantium/Istanbul. This is an extremely strategic area as well.
- B. Little Horn of Daniel 8:23-25. The first application is of the Roman military power that develops out of the divided Grecian Empire (vv. 9-12) but the full application is to a fierce power that stands against, the “*Prince of Princes*” but “*he shall be broken without hand*”. (Not to be confused with the “little horn” of Daniel 7 – there the religious aspect of Rome, embodied in the development and dominance of the Roman Church, is represented. The little horn of Daniel 8 shows the development of the Roman power from Grecian roots in the east and its final stand against Christ and its destruction.)
- C. King of the North of Daniel 11. This chapter chronicles in further detail the development and actions of this “little horn” of Daniel 8 or the “King of the North”. First in its Greek (Seleucid) form then when it is later manifested as the Eastern military portion of the Roman empire after Constantine had transferred all military/political authority of the Roman Empire to Constantinople. (Remember where this power was later transferred to). This aspect is known as the “King of the North” and its latter day actions against Israel are revealed in vv. 40-45 or “at the time of the end”.
- D. The allegory of Agag and the Amalekites
1. The Septuagint “Gog” is translated as “Agag”.
  2. Agag was a title of the Amalekite king who Samuel killed in the Days of Saul (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 15:32,33)
  3. The Amalekites had tried to destroy Israel when they came out of Egypt. They were the first Gentile nation to attack Israel and there is therefore an eternal enmity. (Exodus 17:15)
  4. Haman, who tried to destroy the Jews during the time of Esther, was an Amalekite.
  5. Balaam, prophesying of the latter days, foretold of the destruction of Amalek at the hands of Christ. (Num. 24:5-9, 20).
  6. Since the Amalekites are long finished as a people, we look to a future Gentile power to fulfill the type of an aggressor against Israel, who will be destroyed by Christ and the saints.
- E. Other related prophecies
1. Joel 3
  2. The latter day Assyrian, Isaiah 10:31
  3. Zechariah 14
  4. The dragon of Revelation 12,13,16

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### PART 2

### ***THE INVASION AND DEFEAT***

Our consideration is only a brief review to reinforce the reality of the coming situation. There are many aspects that we will not be able to consider this morning such as: the Role of the Western European nations and their subversion to Russia's will, the major role of the Pope and the Roman Catholic System in supporting Russia's designs on Israel, etc. Also, the role of Rome before and after Christ's return, as well as the role of the European nations after Russia's destruction. The subject is extremely large and involves a very clearly laid out prophetic plan that is revealed in basic and detailed forms throughout the Scriptures.

- I. The standing of the Nebuchadnezzar's Image (overview)
  - A. The image has never stood as one power, or "Kingdom of Men".
    1. Initially successive powers (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome...) that have long past.
    2. But all (the main four) entangled themselves with the land and people of Israel.
  - B. The vision of Dan. 2 was to reveal "*what shall be in the latter days*" (vs. 28)
    1. The past empires listed give us indicators as to the territories controlled or heavily influenced by the power that will be broken by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (vs. 45).
    2. This is what interests us about Russia's current movements for influence. Russia already controls some of the former Persian Empire and has heavy influence on modern Persia (or Iran). The Persian Empire is identified as a "Bear" in Dan. 7.
  - C. All the metals destroyed as a unified effort (vs. 35).
  - D. The territories of previous powers indicated united for one purpose – to oppose God's people Israel. (See Isaiah 34:8) It will be for *political, economic and religious* reasons.
    1. The Russian Dragon in the East
    2. European nations in the West.
    3. With consent and support from the Papacy – "Babylon the Great" (Head of Gold).
- II. Order and Description of the Invasion (Our main references: Ezek: 38,39; Joel 2; Daniel 11:35-45; Rev. 16). Go ahead and read Daniel 11:35-45
  - A. Israel returned to the land after having been scattered.
    1. Ezek: 38:8 – They are described as living "safely" (Heb. *betach*) or confidently. This does not just represent an attitude but one of economic prosperity, peace and military security.
    2. To "dwell safely" is not a term that is exclusive to the Kingdom.

3. Israel's condition in the wilderness and under certain judges (Ps. 78:63; 1 Sam. 12:11; Lev. 25:18; 26:5); of David at times in his life (Ps. 4:8); Solomon's reign (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4:25); false sense of safety by the nations (Ezek. 39:6; 30:9).
- B. Daniel 11:40 - Russian interests are challenged by the "King of the South". Latter day identification in **Ezek. 38:13**. Sheba & Dedan (Saudi Arabian peninsula), Tarshish (Britain and her "young lions"). Those who are allied with or tolerant of Israel.
- C. The Russian confederacy invades. (Daniel 11 provides detail here that Ezekiel does not).
1. For what purpose? – (Ezek 38:9-12) (Remember the religious aspect as well.)
  2. The great immensity of the invasion effort: (Ezek: 38:15,16; Joel 2:1-10)
  3. The "glorious land". (Daniel 11:41)
  4. Edom, Moab, Ammon "escape" - territories of Jordan avoid the invasion due to the probable presence there of Tarshish (Allied) forces. Becomes a refuge for the fleeing Israelis (Isaiah 16:4). Jews also flee to Egypt but...
  5. Egypt is invaded (vs. 43). Notice who is mentioned as being at "his steps" or as a companion of the northern invader.
  6. Tidings out of the east and north cause Russia to then turn its focus back to Israel and besiege Jerusalem. (Daniel 11:44,44; Zech. 14:1,2)
  7. The Israelis suffer great losses (Zech. 13:8,9)
- D. Tarshish powers protest the invasion (think about Georgia). **Ezek. 38:13**
1. "*Art thou come to take a spoil?*"
  2. Elpis Israel, p. 446 paraphrase – "*Thou shalt not spoil Israel and subdue their country, if we can help it.*"
  3. What military opposition that may be mounted against the invasion will have been beaten back.

### III. Deliverance

- A. During this time, it will have been necessary for the Believers to have been called away and judged (in the region of Sinai) for it will be the first task of Christ and the immortalized saints to rescue Israel from the invader.
1. Habakkuk 3:3-13 (vs. 3 "came" is actually future tense → "shall come in")
  2. This initially involves rescue of Jews from Egypt - after the manner of Moses – (Is. 19:20-22) as well an initial encounter with the front of the Russian forces in Bozrah (Isaiah 63:1-5).
- B. Following a similar path that Joshua and the Children of Israel took they head towards Jerusalem for direct confrontation against the Russian Confederacy.
1. Ezekiel 38:18-23; 39:1-5 → Confusion and natural forces will be used to turn the forces on each other. The confederacy will probably not really see or understand what has hit them. This same method has been used in times past.
  2. The main battle takes place in what is called the Valley of Judgment, called Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) "*heap of sheaves in the valley of Judgment*". This area is between the Mount of Olives and the eastern walls of Jerusalem.
  3. It is here that Christ stands, splitting the Mount of Olives → Zechariah 14:4. (Also consider vv. 12-13)
  4. Joel 2:20; 3:1-15 (vs. 14 – the "valley of decision" or of Judgment.
  5. This will be the smiting of Nebuchadnezzar's Image.

6. Other passages: Dan. 8:24,25; Micah 5:5,6; Zeph. 3:8; Jer. 25:15-26
- C. Christ makes himself known to his Jewish brethren who have been held up in Jerusalem.
  1. Psalm 24:7-10
  2. Zech. 12:10; 13:6
- D. The fate of Gogue. (Ezek. 39:9-16)
  1. Israel takes the spoils of war after being spoiled themselves.
  2. Seven years to destroy the weaponry that was used.
  3. Seven months to bury the dead.
- E. Further events to follow:
  1. The establishment of the Kingdom in Jerusalem
  2. The call for the nations to submit to Christ's reign – “mid-heaven Proclamation” Rev. 14:1-7
  3. Judgments and war upon the Roman Apostasy (“Babylon the Great”, “Man of Sin”, “Harlot”, “False Prophet”, etc.) and the Western European “Beast” Nations.

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## PART 3

### **RUSSIA TODAY & A PREVIEW OF THINGS TO COME**

It has to be understood that we do not interpret prophecy through current events, but we are able to interpret current events through the eye of Bible prophecy. This does not mean that all major events in the world have prophetic significance – some do and some do not. Bible prophecy indicates to us where and who we should be watching. It helps us understand the signs of the times that clearly indicate God's workings in this earth, and of the surety that the world continues to spiral towards the judgments to be poured out when Christ returns again to rule the world in righteousness.

- I. Long held Russian goals (A people that are well aware of their history.)
  - A. Will of Peter the Great (1672-1725)
  - B. Catherine the Great (1729-1796)

*“The sovereign must be autocratic, for no other form of government but that which concentrates all power in his person is compatible with the dimensions of a state as great as ours...Any other form of government would be not only harmful, but utterly ruinous for Russia.”*
  - C. “Autocrat” – according to Webster’s 1828 Dictionary of the English Language “*An absolute prince or sovereign; a ruler or monarch who holds and exercises the powers of government by inherent right, not subject to restriction; a title assumed by the Emperors of Russia.*”
  - D. Such is the kind of ruler necessary to create the brutal dictator that answers to the title of scriptural “Gogue”.
- II. The Rise of an Autocrat in modern Russia. (The actions of Putin to take control).
  - A. Russia tried democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union but had only fell to the level of a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country. With this came embarrassment and frustration.
  - B. Vladimeer Putin elected as President in 1996, this past spring took the so called lesser position of Prime Minister. He still is recognized as the one in absolute control.
    1. “Vladimeer” → “*Master of the world*” or “*possessor of the world*”.
    2. Former KGB agent (in Germany) during the Soviet era.
    3. July 3, 1996 → “*If we go down the road of a parliamentary republic nothing will work out for us.*” “*In Russia, we had a czar, and then he was replaced by the general secretary. Now we have a president. It is in our tradition, and it is all one and the same.*”
  - C. Specific actions that reflect his power.

1. Oversaw government takeover of some of Russia's largest and wealthiest corporations. Even jailing their owners and CEO's.
2. All elections for local governments and provinces/states have been suspended and power centralized in the Federal Government.
3. All private media outlets (broadcast and print) have either been closed or have fallen under strict government control and regulation. There is no more "free speech". Over the past 10 years, 89 journalists have been murdered – those who have been outspoken against Putin.
4. Putin was able to choose his own "successor" – Medvedev.

### III. Russia's relations with its neighbors and the world

#### A. Putin has used the flow of energy (oil and natural gas) as a weapon.

1. Oil and natural gas has been the primary reason for the resurgence of Russia as a power.
2. Russia controls one quarter of the world's natural gas supply.
3. 50% of the natural gas supply for Europe comes out of Russia (ties Europe's hands)
4. Has turned off the supply in the middle of winter when countries did not fall in line with Russian policy.
5. Is extremely interested in the oil pipeline (was to be natural gas in the future) that runs through Georgia and Turkey. This was built as a bypass to Europe away from Russian control. This is an effort also supported by Israel.
6. Russia also had a joint partnership with Israel and built an oil pipeline through Israel (Ashkelon to Eilat) to transport oil to the Far East by tanker. Russia's part in the plan has expired but will certainly be a sore spot.
7. Recent reports indicate that Russia's own oil supply is dwindling.

#### B. Pushing by the King of the South (Tarshish powers)

1. Former Soviet controlled nations now a part of NATO – Poland, etc. This is an extreme sore spot with Russia. Missile defense in Poland.
2. Attempts by the U.S. to make Georgia and Ukraine NATO members. Russia views this as an infringement on their sphere of influence.
3. "Who poked the bear?" → a common media phrase regarding recent Russian aggression.

#### C. The Russian invasion of Georgia – A preview of things to come.

1. A well planned trap by the Russians.
2. Georgia attempted to quiet rebel attacks that were coming out of the break-a-way province of South Ossetia.
3. The Georgian operation was carried out through the cooperation and help of over 1,000 Israeli advisors.
4. Remember that Georgia is a part of Togarmah.

#### D. What do we learn from this? And a chain reaction.

1. Russia is ready to reassert itself on the world stage. And, rectify years of embarrassment. (Similar to Nazi Germany).
2. Russia is making preliminary efforts to build an empire. As Bible students we recognize this and the world recognizes this as well. (Elpis Israel quote).

3. Oil plays a key factor in Russia's motivation.
4. Israel has found itself on the opposite side of Russian interests.
5. The U.S. and the West are basically helpless to stop Russian aggression. Europe is under a stranglehold due to the supply of natural gas and the U.S. is tied up in two major ground wars. Any escalation always carries the threat of nuclear war as well.
6. Russia continues a strategic stranglehold on Georgia with South Ossetia claiming independence and moving towards inclusion into Russia.
7. Other neighboring countries with Russia are now under threat as well. Poland has already been threatened with a military response to their agreement with the U.S. for a missile defense system. The Ukraine is under military threat.
8. Russia is expanding naval operation in the Black Sea and have taken over key ports from Georgia. This threatens Turkey. Russia needs Turkey (the Dardanelle's) to be able to move their southern naval fleet freely into the Mediterranean. This is currently under severe restriction by both the Ukraine and Turkey.
9. Russia is currently expanding efforts to prepare their new naval port in Syria for larger ships. This will expand their naval presence in the Mediterranean. This is of a great concern to the U.S. and Israel (this is on Israel's back door).
10. We are seeing extremely significant moves towards Russia's final destination – Israel and Jerusalem.

IV. What final excuse brings Russia down against Israel? **Zech 12:13** – “a burdensome stone”.

We do not know the answer for sure but it will probably involve a combination of factors.

- Religious – a desire for the “holy places” and making Jerusalem a “Universal City”.
- Economic: Israel would be the only thing standing in the way of Russian domination of oil supplies. Israel is also a very prosperous nation.
- Military/Political: The Arab/Islamic nations have never been able to take care of the “problem” of Israel. Russia will aim to take care of this “problem” once and for all. And, this would be an enormous strategic move against the “Tarshish” nations.
- The world is turning again to anti-Semitism. This would also serve as a “punishment” against the so called Zionist evils and injustices against the Arabs and Israel's supposed influence over the rest of the world.

Closing:

Ezek. 38:23

Zech. 8:23

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