

# CHAPTER 39

This chapter continues and concludes the prophecy against Gog and Magog, in whose destruction God crowns his favour to his people Israel, which shines very brightly after the scattering of that black cloud in the close of this chapter. Here is,

- I.** An express prediction of the utter destruction of Gog and Magog, agreeing with what we had before (v. 1-7).
- II.** An illustration of the vastness of that destruction, in three consequences of it: the burning of their weapons (v. 8-10), the burning of their slain (v. 11-16), and the feasting of the fowls with the dead bodies of those that were unburied (v. 17-22).
- III.** A declaration of God's gracious purposes concerning his people Israel, in this and his other providences concerning them, and a promise of further mercy that he had yet in store for them (v. 23-29).

## ~~391~~ EZEKIEL 39:1-7

### THE JUDGMENT OF GOG AND MAGOG

This prophecy begins as that before (~~378B~~ Ezekiel 38:3, 4, *I am against thee, and I will turn thee back*); for there is need of line upon line, both for the conviction of Israel's enemies and the comfort of Israel's friends. Here, as there, it is foretold that God will bring this enemy *from the north parts*, as formerly the Chaldeans were fetched from the north, ~~301B~~ Jeremiah 1:14 (*Omne malum ab aquilone — Every evil comes from the north*), and, long after, the Roman empire was overrun by the northern nations, that he will bring him *upon the mountains of Israel* (v. 2), first as a place of temptation, where the measures of his iniquity shall be filled up, and then as a place of execution, where his ruin shall be completed. And that is it which is here enlarged upon.

**1.** His soldiers shall be disarmed and so disabled to carry on their enterprise. Though the men of might may *find their hands*, yet to what purpose, when they find it is put out of their power to do mischief, when

God shall smite their *bow out of their left hand* and their *arrow out of their right?* v. 3. Note, The weapons formed against Zion shall not prosper.

**2.** He and the greatest part of his army shall be slain in the field of battle (v. 4): *Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel*; there they sinned, and there they shall perish, even upon the holy *mountains of Israel*, for *there broke he the arrows of the bow*, <sup>-176B</sup>Psalm 76:3. The mountains of Israel shall be moistened, and fattened, and made fruitful, with the blood of the enemies. “Thou shalt *fall upon the open field* (v. 5) and shalt not be able even there to make thy escape.” Even upon the mountains he shall not find a pass that he shall be able to maintain, and upon the open field he shall not find a road that he shall be able to make his escape by. He and *his bands*; his regular troops, and the people that are *with him* that follow the camp to share in the plunder, shall all *fall with him*. Note, Those that *cast in their lot* among wicked people (<sup>-2014</sup>Proverbs 1:14), that they *may have one purse* with them, must expect to *take their lot with them*, and fare as they fare, taking the worse with the better. There shall be such a general slaughter made that but *a sixth part shall be left* (v. 2), the other five shall all be cut off. Never was army so totally routed as this. And, for its greater infamy and reproach, their bodies shall be a feast to the birds of prey, v. 4. Compare v. 17, *Thou shalt fall*, for *I have spoken it*. Note, Rather shall the most illustrious princes (Antiochus was called *Epiphanes — the illustrious*) and the most numerous armies *fall to the ground* than any word of God; for he that has spoken will *make it good*.

**3.** His country also shall be made desolate: *I will send a fire on Magog* (v. 6) and *among those that dwell carelessly*, or confidently, *in the isles*, that is, the nations of the Gentiles. He designed to destroy the land of Israel, but shall not only be defeated in that design, but shall have his own destroyed by some fire, some consuming judgment or other. Note, Those who invade other people's rights justly lose their own.

**4.** God will by all this advance the honour of his own name,

**(1.)** Among his people Israel; they shall hereby know more of God's name, of his power and goodness, his care of them, his faithfulness to them. His providence concerning them shall lead them into a better acquaintance with him; every providence should do so, as well as every ordinance: *I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people*. In Judah is God known; but those that know much of God should know more of him; we should especially increase in the knowledge of his name as a holy name.

They shall know him as a God of perfect purity and rectitude and that hates all sin, and then it follows, *I will not let them pollute my holy name any more*. Note, Those that rightly know God's holy name will not dare to profane it; for it is through ignorance of it that men make light of it and make bold with it. And this is God's method of dealing with men, first to enlighten their understandings, and by that means to influence the whole man; he first makes us to know his holy name, and so keeps us from polluting it and engages us to honour it. And this is here the blessed effect of God's glorious appearances on the behalf of his people. Thus he completes his favours, thus he sanctifies them, thus he makes them blessings indeed; by them he instructs his people and reforms them. *When the Almighty scattered kings for her she was white as snow in Salmon,*  
~~284~~ Psalm 68:14.

**(2.)** Among the heathen; those that never knew it, or would not own it, shall *know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel*. They shall be made to know by dearbought experience that he is a God of power, and his people's God and Saviour; and it is in vain for the greatest potentates to contend with him; none ever hardened their heart against him and prospered.

## ~~308~~ EZEKIEL 39:8-22

### THE JUDGMENT OF GOG

Though this prophecy was to have its accomplishment in the latter days, yet it is here spoken of as if it were already accomplished, because it is certain (v. 8): "*Behold it has come, and it is done; it is as sure to be done when the time shall come as if it were done already; this is the day whereof I have long and often spoken, and, though it has been long in coming, yet at length it has come.*" Thus it was said unto John (~~626~~ Revelation 21:6), *It is done*. To represent the routing of the army of Gog as very great, here are three things specified as the consequences of it. It was God himself that gave the defeat; we do not find that the people of Israel drew a sword or struck a stroke: but,

**I.** They shall *burn their weapons, their bows and arrows, which fell out of their hands* (v. 3), *their shields and bucklers, their javelins, spears, leading staves, truncheons, and half-pikes, every thing that is combustible.*

They shall not lay them up in their armouries, nor reserve them for their own use, lest they should be tempted to put a confidence in them, but they shall burn them; not all at once, for a bonfire (to what purpose would be that waste?) but as they had occasion to use them for fuel in their houses, instead of other fire-wood, so that they should have no occasion to *take wood out of the field or forests for seven years together* (v. 10), such vast quantities of weapons shall there be left upon the open field where the enemy fell, and in the roads which they passed in their flight. The weapons were dry and fitter for fuel than green wood; and, by saving the wood in their coppices and forests, they gave it time to grow. Though the mountains of Israel produce plenty of all good things, yet it becomes the people of Israel to be good husbands of their plenty and to save what they can for the benefit of those that come after them, as Providence shall give them opportunity to do so. We may suppose that when those who dwelt in the cities of Israel came forth to *spoil those who spoiled them*, and make reprisals upon them, they found upon them silver, and gold, and ornaments; yet no mention is made of any thing particularly that they converted to their own use but the wood of the weapons for fuel, which is one of the necessaries of human life, to teach us to think it enough if we be well supplied with those, though we have but little of the delights and gaieties of it and of those things which we may very well live without. And every time they put fuel to the fire, and warmed themselves at it, they would be put in mind of the number and strength of their enemies, and the imminent peril they were in of falling into their hands, which would help to enlarge their hearts in thankfulness to that God who had so wonderfully, so seasonably, delivered them. As they sat by *the fire* with their children about them (their fire-side), they might from it take occasion to tell them what great things God had done for them.

**II.** They shall bury their dead. Usually, after a battle, when many are slain, the enemy desire time to bury their own dead. But here the slaughter shall be so general that there shall not be a sufficient number of the enemies left alive to bury the dead. And, besides, the slain lie so dispersed on the mountains of Israel that it would be a work of time to find them out; and therefore it is left to the house of Israel to bury them as a piece of triumph in their overthrow.

**1.** A place shall be appointed on purpose for the burying of them, *the valley of the passengers, on the east of the sea*, either the salt sea or the sea of Tiberias, a valley through which there was great passing and

repassing of travellers between Egypt and Chaldea. There shall be such a multitude of dead bodies, putrefying above ground, with such a loathsome stench, that the travellers who go that way shall be forced to *stop their noses*. See what vile bodies ours are; when the soul has been a little while from them the smell of them becomes offensive, no smell more nauseous or more noxious. There therefore where the greatest number lay slain shall the burying-place be appointed. In the place where the tree falls there let it lie. And it shall be called, *The valley of Hamon-gog*, that is, *of the multitude of Gog*; for that was the thing which was in a particular manner to be had in remembrance. How numerous the forces of the enemy were which God defeated and destroyed for the defence of his people Israel! 2. A considerable time shall be spent in burying them, no less than *seven months* (v. 12), which is a further intimation that the *slain of the Lord* in this action should be many and that great care should be taken by the house of Israel to leave none unburied, that so *they might cleanse the land* from the ceremonial pollution it contracted by the lying of so many dead corpses unburied in it, for the prevention of which it was appointed that those who were *hanged on a tree* should be speedily *taken down and buried*, <sup><12></sup>Deuteronomy 21:23. This is an intimation that times of eminent deliverances should be times of reformation. The more God has done for the saving of a land from ruin the more the inhabitants should do for the cleansing of the land from sin.

**3.** Great numbers shall be employed in this work: *All the people of the land* shall be ready to lend a helping hand to it, v. 13. Note, Every one should contribute the utmost he can in his place towards the cleansing of the land from the pollutions of it, and from every thing that is a reproach to it. Sin is a common enemy, which every man should take up arms against. *In publico discrimine unusquisque homo miles est* — *In the season of public danger every man becomes a soldier*. And whoever shall assist in this work *it shall be to them a renown*; though the office of grave-makers, or common scavengers of the country, seem but mean, yet, when it is for the cleansing and purifying of the land from dead works, it shall be mentioned to their honour. Note, Acts of humanity add much to the renown of God's Israel; it is a credit to religion when those that profess it are ready to every good work; and a good work it is to bury the dead, yea, though they be strangers and enemies to the commonwealth of Israel, for even they shall rise again. *It shall be a renown to them in the day when God will be glorified*. Note, It is for the glory of God when his Israel do

that which adorns their profession; others *will see their good works and glorify their Father*, <sup><4056></sup>Matthew 5:16. And when God is honoured he will put honour upon his people. His glory is their renown.

4. Some particular persons shall make it their business to search out the dead bodies, or any part of them that should remain unburied. The *people of the land* will soon grow weary of burying the pollutions of the country, and therefore they shall appoint *men of continual employment*, that shall apply themselves to it and do nothing else till the land be thoroughly cleansed; for, otherwise, that which is every one's work would soon become nobody's work. Note, Those that are engaged in public work, especially for the cleansing and reforming of a land, ought to be *men of continual employments*, men that will stick to what they undertake and go through with it, men that will apply themselves to it; and those that will do good according to their opportunities will find themselves *continually employed*.

5. Even the passengers shall be ready to give information to those whose business it is to cleanse the land of what public nuisances they meet with, which call for their assistance. Those that *pass through the land*, though they will not stay to bury the dead themselves, lest they should contract a ceremonial pollution, will yet give notice of those that they find unburied. If they but discover a bone, they will *set up a sign*, that *the buriers may come and bury it*, and that, till it is buried, others may take need of touching it, for which reason their sepulchres among the Jews were whitened, that people might keep at a distance from them. Note, When good work is to be done every one should lend a hand to further it, even the passengers themselves, who must not think themselves unconcerned, in a common calamity, or a common iniquity, to put a stop to it. Those whose work it is to cleanse the land must not countenance any thing in it that is defiling; though it were not the body, but only *the bone, of a man*, that was found unburied, they must encourage those who will give information of it (private information, by a sign, concealing the informer), that they may take it away, and bury it out of sight. Nay, *after the end of seven months*, which was allowed them for this work, when all is taken away that appeared at first view, *they shall search* for more, that what is hidden may be brought to light; they shall *search out iniquity till they find none*. In memory of this they shall give a new name to their city. It shall be called *Hamonah — The multitude*. O what a multitude of our enemies have we of this city buried! *Thus shall they cleanse the land*, with all this

care, with all this pains, v. 16. Note, After conquering there must be cleansing. Moses appointed those Israelites that had been employed in the war with the Midianites to *purify themselves*, <sup><6824></sup>Numbers 31:24. Having received special favours from God, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness*.

**III.** The birds and beasts of prey shall rest upon the carcasses of the slain while they remain unburied and it shall be impossible to prevent them, v. 17, etc. We find a great slaughter represented by this figure, <sup><6827></sup>Revelation 19:17, etc., which is borrowed from this.

**1.** There is a general invitation given, v. 17. It is *to the fowl of every wing and to every beast of the field*, from the greatest to the least, that preys upon carcasses, from the eagle to the raven, from the lion to the dog; let them all gather themselves on every side; here is meat enough for them, and they are all welcome. Let them come to God's *sacrifice*, to his *feast*; so the margin reads it. Note, The judgments of God, executed upon sin and sinners, are both a sacrifice and a feast, a sacrifice to the justice of God and a feast to the faith and hope of God's people. When God *broke the head of leviathan*, he gave him to be *meat to Israel*, <sup><5714></sup>Psalms 74:14. *The righteous shall rejoice as at a feast when he sees the vengeance*, and shall *wash his foot*, as at a feast, *in the blood of the wicked*. This sacrifice is *upon the mountains of Israel*; these are the high places, the altars, where God has been dishonoured by the idolatries of the people, but where he will now glorify himself in the destruction of his enemies.

**2.** There is great preparation made: They shall *eat the flesh of the mighty and drink the blood of the princes of the earth*, v. 18, 18.

**(1.)** It is the flesh and blood of men that they shall be treated with. This has sometimes been an instance of the rebellion of the inferior creatures against man their master, which is an effect of his rebellion against God his Maker.

**(2.)** It is the flesh and blood of great men, here called *rams*, and *bullocks*, and *great goats*, *all of them fatlings of Bashan*. It is the blood of the *princes of the earth* that they shall regale themselves with. What a mortification is this to the princes of the blood, as they call themselves, that God can make that blood, that royal blood, which swells their veins, a feast for the birds and beasts of prey!

**(3.)** It is the flesh and blood of wicked men, the enemies of God's church and people, that they are invited to. They had accounted the Israel of God as *sheep for the slaughter*, and now they shall themselves be so accounted; they had thus used the *dead bodies of Gods' servants* (~~1912~~ Psalm 79:2), or would have done, and now it shall come upon themselves.

**3.** They shall all be fed, they shall all be feasted to the full (v. 19, 20): *"You shall eat fat, and drink blood*, which are satiating surfeiting things. The sacrifice is great and the feast upon the sacrifice is accordingly: *You shall be filled at my table.*" Note, God keeps a table for the inferior creatures; he *provides food for all flesh*. The *eyes of all wait upon him*, and he *satisfies their desires*, for he keeps a plentiful table. And if the birds and beasts shall be filled at God's table, which he has prepared for them, much more shall his children be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple. They shall be filled *with horses and chariots*; that is, those who ride in the chariots, *mighty men and men of war*, who triumphed over nations, are now themselves triumphed over by the *ravens of the valley* and the *young eagles*, ~~1912~~ Proverbs 30:17. They thought to make an easy prey of God's Israel, and now they are themselves an easy prey to the birds and beasts. See how *evil pursues sinners* even after death. This exposing of their bodies to be a prey is but a type and sign of those terrors which, after death, shall prey upon their consciences (which the poetical fictions represented by a vulture continually pecking at the heart), and this shame is but an earnest of the everlasting shame and contempt they shall rise to.

**IV.** This shall redound very much both to the glory of God and to the comfort and satisfaction of his people.

**1.** It shall be much for the honour of God, for the heathen shall hereby be made to know that he is the Lord (v. 21): *All the heathen shall see and observe my judgments that I have executed*, and thereby *my glory shall be set among them*. This principle shall be admitted and established among them more than ever, that the God of Israel is a great and glorious God. He is known to be so even among the heathen, that have not, or read not, his written word, by *the judgments which he executes*.

**2.** It shall be much for the satisfaction of his people; for they shall hereby be made to know that he is their God (v. 22): *The house of Israel shall*



know, abundantly to their comfort, that *I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.*

(1.) He will be so from that day and forward. God's present mercies are pledges and assurances of further mercies. If God evidence to us that he is our God he assures us that he will never leave us. *This God is our God for ever and ever.*

(2.) They shall know it with more satisfaction from that day and forward. They had sometimes been ready to question whether the Lord was with them or no; but the events of this day shall silence their doubts, and, the matter being thus settled and made clear, it shall not be doubted of for the future. As boasting in themselves is hereby for ever excluded, so boasting in God is hereby for ever secured.

## EZEKIEL 39:23-29

### MERCY PROMISED TO ISRAEL

This is the conclusion of the whole matter going before, and has reference not only to the predictions concerning Gog and Magog, but to all the prophecies of this book concerning the captivity of the house of Israel, and then concerning their restoration and return out of their captivity.

**I.** God will let the heathen know the meaning of his people's troubles, and rectify the mistake of those concerning them who took occasion from the troubles of Israel to reproach the God of Israel, as unable to protect them and untrue to his covenant with them. When God, upon their reformation and return to him, turned again their captivity, and brought them back to their own land, and, upon their perseverance in their reformation, wrought such great salvations for them as that from the attempts of Gog upon them, then it would be made to appear, even to the heathen that would but consider and compare things, that there was no ground at all for their reflection, that Israel went into captivity, not because God could not protect them, but because they had by sin forfeited his favour and thrown themselves out of his protection (v. 23, 24): *The heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, that iniquity which they learned from the heathen their neighbours, because they trespassed against God.* That was the true reason why God hid his face

from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. It was according to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions. Now the evincing of this will not only silence their reflections on God, but will redound greatly to his honour; when the troubles of God's people are over, and we see the end of them, we shall better understand them than we did at first. And it will appear much for the glory of God when the world is made to know,

**1.** That God punishes sin even in his own people, because he hates it most in those that are nearest and dearest to him, ~~<100>~~ Amos 3:2. It is the praise of justice to be impartial.

**2.** That, when God gives up his people for a prey, it is to correct them and reform them, not to gratify their enemies, ~~<200>~~ Isaiah 10:7; 42:24. Let not them therefore exalt themselves.

**3.** That no sooner do God's people humble themselves under the rod than he returns in mercy to them.

**II.** God will give his own people to know what great favour he has in store for them notwithstanding the troubles he had brought them into (v. 25, 26): *Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob.*

**1.** Why now? Now God will *have mercy upon the whole house of Israel,*

**(1.)** Because it is time for him to stand up for his own glory, which suffers in their sufferings: *Now will I be jealous for my holy name,* that that may no longer be reproached.

**(2.)** Because now they repent of their sins: *They have borne their shame, and all their trespasses.* When sinners repent, and take shame to themselves, God will be reconciled and put honour upon them. It is particularly pleasing to God that these penitents look a great way back in their penitential reflections, and are ashamed of all their trespasses which they were guilty of *when they dwelt safely in their land and none made them afraid.* The remembrance of the mercies they enjoyed in their own land, and the divine protection they were under there, shall be improved as an aggravation of the sins they committed in that land; they dwelt safely, and might have continued to dwell so, and none should have given them any disquiet or disturbance if they had continued in the way of their duty. Nay, *therefore* they trespassed because *they dwelt safely.* Outward safety is often a cause of inward security, and that is an inlet to all sin, Psalm 73.

Now this they are willing to bear the shame of, and acknowledge that God has justly brought them into a land of trouble, where every one makes them afraid, because they had trespassed against him in a land of peace, where none made them afraid. And, when they thus humble themselves under humbling providences, God will bring again their captivity: and,

**2.** What then? When God has gathered them out of their enemies' hands, and brought them home again,

**(1.)** Then God will have the praise of it: I will be *sanctified in them in the sight of many nations*, v. 27. As God was reproached in the reproach they were under during their captivity, so he will be sanctified in their reformation and the making of them a holy people again, and will be glorified in their restoration and the making of them a happy glorious people again.

**(2.)** Then they shall have the benefit of it (v. 28): *They shall know that I am the Lord their God*. Note, The providences of God concerning his people, that are designed for their good, have the grace of God going along with them to teach them to eye God as the Lord, and their God, in all; and then they do them good. They shall eye him as the Lord and their God,

**[1.]** In their calamities, that it was he who *caused them to be led into captivity*; and therefore they must not only submit to his will, but endeavour to answer his end in it.

**[2.]** In their comfort, that it is he who has *gathered them to their own land*, and left none of them among the heathen. Note, By the variety of events that befall us, if we look up to God in all, we may come to acquaint ourselves better with his various attributes and designs.

**(3.)** Then God and they will never part, v. 29.

**[1.]** God will *pour out his Spirit* upon them, to prevent their departures from him and returns to folly again, and to keep them close to their duty. And then,

**[2.]** He will *never hide his face any more from them*, will never suspend his favour as he had done; he will never turn from doing them good, and, in order to that, he will effectually provide that they shall never turn from doing him service. Note, The indwelling of the Spirit is an infallible pledge of the continuance of God's favour. He will hide his face no more

from those on whom he has *poured out his Spirit*. When therefore we pray that God would never *cast us away from his presence* we must as earnestly pray that, in order to that, he would *never take his Holy Spirit away from us*, ~~Psalm 51:11~~ Psalm 51:11.