

Study 4 - Pathway To Revival

Ezekiel 39:22-29 MKJV *So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward. (23) And the nations shall know that the house of Israel was exiled for their iniquity. Because they sinned against Me, therefore I hid My face from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. So they all fell by the sword. (24) According to their uncleanness and according to their sins I have done to them, and have hidden My face from them. (25) Therefore so says the Lord Jehovah: And I will return the captivity of Jacob, and will have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name; (26) after they have borne their shame and all their sins by which they have sinned against Me, when they dwell securely in their land and no one terrifies; (27) when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God who exiled them among the nations. But I have gathered them to their own land, and have not left any of them there. (29) Nor will I hide My face from them any more, for I have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord Jehovah.*

These verses tell us God's heart and purposes towards Israel and the ultimate reason for the Gog and Magog invasion. God wants Israel to know that He is their God and that he loves them, has forgiven their sins, and will restore them to peace and security and pour out His Spirit upon them.

Now a mighty and terrifying war seems a strange way to do this. Why not send them cute emails or cards with huggy bears on them signed “from YHWH”? (I jest). Sometimes we need a lot more than encouraging words before we really believe that God is for us. We often need to see God in action on our behalf.

Now I do not want to minimize the love God displayed in sending Christ to die for us on the cross. That is, of course, God's preeminent display of divine love. However, due to our humanity, we also like to see God provide for, heal, bless and defend us in the so-called “real world” of everyday existence. Most people need God to “turn up for them” in the midst of their life crises if they are to fully believe that He loves them.

The Gog and Magog invasion is truly a nation-obliterating crisis. The Jews are defenseless as another Holocaust looms and millions of vengeful Muslim troops descend upon them. If ever God needs to turn up it is at this point. Many modern Jews maintain that there is no God because He did not “turn up” during the European pogroms or during the Holocaust. Others simply say that God has abandoned the Jews to their own devices. So as Gog and Magog approach the Jewish nation will be in absolute terror and great danger of total annihilation. Perhaps only a few hardy souls will pin their hopes on an ancient prophecy by Ezekiel!

Then astonishingly the prophecy will come true exactly as predicted. Fire will fall from heaven, a great plague will break out, earthquakes, and all sorts of natural disasters will occur and the invading army will be utterly consumed. It will be evident to all that God has turned up!

If this is to be God at work, then it cannot be Israel's own military defenses such as nuclear weapons, that inflict the damage. Israel does not save itself, rather it is God who saves Israel and in such a way that the Jewish people realize it forever. *So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward.*

Once this happens, and it is finally clear that God loves and protects Israel, all the Jews, all over the world shall return: *when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God who exiled them among the nations. But I have gathered them to their own land, and have not left any of them there.*

Once they have regathered in Israel the Holy spirit shall be poured out and “all Israel shall be saved”: *Nor will I hide My face from them any more, for I have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord Jehovah.*

Romans 11:25-27 MKJV *For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, ..that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations has come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (27) For this is My covenant with them, when I have taken away their sins."*

This helps us with our prophetic time-line. Paul tells us that the salvation of Israel happens after the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in”. So we can see that:

1. The Great Commission is completed, the full number of Gentiles comes in.
2. Those Gentiles that did not believe in Christ become hardened and plot to invade Israel.
3. Israel is spectacularly delivered from the Gog and Magog invasion by God, and finally believes.
4. All the Jews in the world return to live securely in Israel
5. The Spirit is poured out on the Jews and the Valley of Dry Bones vision is fulfilled.
6. The Temple is rebuilt
7. The End of the Age comes fairly rapidly after that point.

God's deliverance of Israel from this overwhelming threat will be so clear and so obvious that anyone who has the slightest inclination to believe will do so. Thus the Gog and Magog event is a massive demonstration that God is there, and that he “turns up” on behalf of those He loves in order to deliver them. This takes us back to our original question about why God would use a massive war to make such a theological point.

The answer is that Christianity is a redeeming faith that is worked out in real life rather an abstract philosophy that is worked out solely in the cogitations of the mind. God is proved by events, not by theorems. It took me a long time to learn this and I wasted many years trying to “prove God” intellectually to people. While there are many compelling intellectual reasons to believe in God, that is not how He is presented in Scripture. In Scripture God is the God of the Exodus, Pentecost and the Resurrection, a God who arrives on the scene and does wonders on behalf of His people, a God who proves Himself in history, and who arrives in the midst of our lives. In many ways a blind man that now sees as a result of healing prayer, or a drunk who becomes sober after a crusade is a better 'proof of God' than all the theorems of Thomas Aquinas.

Part of the turning point for me was the realization that I could not prove, by theorems, even the simplest things concerning existence or non-existence. I could not prove, by unaided logic alone, whether I had a ten dollar note in my wallet or whether water was flowing in the local creek (in Australia creeks can be dry for much of the year). All these issues of existence or non-existence could only be settled by an act of discovery, by 'going and looking' in my wallet or walking down to the creek. I had to go and consult the real world, not just my own thinking. And so it is with the existence of God, He can only be discovered by going and looking at the real world and not in books, logic or philosophy.

It is when God finally turns up in power and transforms our situation that we believe; like the disciples did at the wedding in Cana. Jesus proved Himself to Peter not through a long discourse but by turning water into wine. Yet it took the resurrection and Pentecost to finally convince them.

God's deliverance from Gog and Magog will feel like a national resurrection to the Jews. One day annihilation was certain, the next they are delivered by fire from Heaven and their prophets are at last seen to be true.