

Middle-Eastern Alliance

by Keith Malcomson

The sermon explores the nations involved in Ezekiel 38, revealing that Turkey will play a central role in the invasion, led by Russia.

Scripture: Genesis 10:2, Isaiah 18:1, Ezekiel 38:3, Ezekiel 38:5-6

Topics: "Biblical Prophecy", "End Times"

Description

Keith Malcomson delves into the prophecy of Ezekiel 38, identifying nations forming a military alliance under Gog's leadership. The sermon explores the debated identities of nations like Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah, Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, shedding light on their historical and recent relationships with Russia. The sermon emphasizes the alignment of Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Armenia, and Algeria in a military coalition led by Russia, as prophesied in Ezekiel, signaling a potential future war and the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

Transcript

Ezekiel 38:3, "And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal ... 38:5, Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them ... 38:6, Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee."

In this article we shall seek to identify the nations joined together in military alliance under the leadership of Gog. Some are easy to identify and there is no dispute concerning them. But others are hotly contested. Persia, Ethiopia and Libya are fairly straightforward but Meshech and Tubal, Gomer, and Togormah, are hotly debated. We will endeavour to supply convincing evidence for each of these nations and take a brief look at their recent relationships and associations with Russia.

It is important to note that Russian engagement on the ground in the Middle East during the early 2000's was minimal whereas US involvement in Iraq, Afganistan, and later Libya was major. It was through Iran's nuclear programme that Russia made its big move for full involvement in Middle East politics. This led to heavy involvement in Syria as a counter-balance to American influence which has dramatically introduced a new era of Middle East dominance. During Obama's eight year presidency the US lost strategic influence in the Middle East. Under Putin's presidency Russia has gained it and this is only the beginning. We are fast on our way to the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.

Meshech and Tubal

Meshech and Tubal are mentioned together six times in the Old Testament. They were the fifth and sixth sons of Japheth, the son of Noah (Gen.10:2). Although they were two distinct brothers, who founded two distinct historic peoples, they are joined together in the scriptures in order to identify a specific nation, in a specific place, at a specific time. In Ezekiel 27:13, they were both involved in trading, "the persons of men and vessels of brass" in the markets of the great city of Tyre (Lebanon) just to the north of Israel. This means that they were well known in Ezekiel's day and that they were local enough to the Mediterranean to be involved in competitive trade. Meshech and Tubal are mentioned three times together in connection with Gog in this invasion of Israel in the last days.

I do not believe it is correct to identify Meshech and Tubal with distant Moscow and Tobolsk in Russia which a number of scholars have done over the years. This may give us a simple way to understand the meaning of "Gog" being the "chief prince of Meshech and Tubal", but there is no authentic linguistic or historic evidence that convinces me of this.

The Assyrian historic records of the eighth century BC--just prior to Ezekiel's day--places these peoples in present day Turkey. Josephus, a Jewish historian during the first century, as well as a number of other historians and scholars, have consistently identified Meshech and Tubal as the Mushki (Moschi) and the Tubali (Tibareni) peoples who dwelt in Turkey. The peoples of Meshech were situated in central Turkey in the region of Phrygia. The peoples of Tubal were situated in eastern Turkey in the region of Pontus. In the ancient Assyrian records we read that they were joined together in a military alliance. The Mushki people were led by King Mita, otherwise known as the famous king Midas of ancient legend who turned everything to gold when he touched it.

Picture

TURKEY: The identity of Meshech and Tubal in history reveals that Turkey will take up a leading and central role in Ezekiel's War, under the leadership of Russia. This will fulfil this end-day prophecy. Many things have changed and will change in that nation from year to year but this prophecy will come to pass.

For a long period of time Turkey was not noted in any serious way by most Bible teachers simply because it seemed an unlikely candidate to be involved in end-day events. Turkey was a founding member of the United Nations (UN), an early member of NATO, and since 2005 it has negotiated to be accepted into the EU. It was a Western ally as well as a more liberally minded Muslim nation. When President Recep Tayyip Erdogan came to power in a landslide victory in his 2002 election, Islamic fundamentalism was being carefully held at bay and it was believed that his party would continue in a liberal Western direction.

Prior to the election Erdogan had been imprisoned for four months and barred from public office for life for making radical Islamic statements at public gatherings. After election he championed the cause of the Palestinians, requested that Israel to be barred from the UN, and was known for his anti-Israel and anti-Semitic statements right up until 2015.

From the end of the Cold War Turkey's relations improved with Russia, but Turkey has always been suspicious and careful of Russia. Their relations came under great strain in November 2015 when Turkey shot down a Russian fighter-plane. Some expected war.

After a failed military coup within Turkey in July 2016, which was aimed at bringing Erdogan down, several things solidified within Turkish politics. Erdogan blamed the US secret service (CIA) of being behind the coup. This brought the deteriorating relations with the US and the West to its lowest point yet. Turkey's

relationship with Putin and Russia was restored with great warmth and apologies from Erdogan for the shooting down of the Russian fighter. Russian intelligence had prewarned Erdogan about the coup. In October 2016, Erdogan gave an ultimatum to the EU to accept Turkey into the EU or Turkey would look elsewhere for a different alliance. Turkey's increasing trade, economic, and military alignment with Russia is the progressive result of all these factors working together.

Since the coup Erdogan has restored relations with Israel promoting a peace initiative with them to the surprise of all. He even stated that he 'needs them'. But he is still seeking to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a partitioned land and city in the days ahead.

Gomer

I'm jumping slightly ahead of myself with this section on Gomer but there is a very good reason. In verses 5 and 6 there are five nations specifically named that are in alliance with Gog's army. The fourth in that list is Gomer. We are told of, "Gomer, and all his bands" (38:6).

Gomer is first mentioned in the Bible as the first son of Japheth, and as the oldest brother of Magog, Meshech, Tubal, as well as three other brothers (Gen.10:2). Biblical historians have often spoken of the people of Gomer as being the Gimarraï people of Cappadocia a region in present day Turkey. The Gimarraï were also called the Cimmerians or later the Galatians. Josephus wrote that, "Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians, but were then called Gomerites." In the Assyrian records it is said that the home of the Cimmerians is far off in Hubushna (present day Karadeniz Ereğli). This was a town on the north coast of Turkey, which was on the South coast of the Black Sea. This region was called Gamir by the Assyrians. It was this people that gave the region of Crimea, on the north-east of the Black Sea, its name as well as the Caucasus. After they were pushed out of their homeland in Turkey it is believed that they moved West and became known as the Celts or spread as the Germanic peoples of the Danube. This is why Bible teachers like Hal Lindsey and others once taught that Gomer was East Germany. But the Gommerits or Cimmerians of Ezekiel's day lived in Turkey not Germany.

This three-fold evidence of Meshech, Tubal and Gomer reveal that Turkey must certainly be at the heart of this invasion. One last thing to note: "Gomer, and all his bands" (38:6). Who are "all" his bands? This can mean crowds of troops or alliances with other peoples.

Persia

When the prophet Ezekiel lists the nations involved in, "all" of Gog's "army", he begins with Persia. Within a few decades of Ezekiel prophesying, Persia was led to victory under Cyrus' leadership when they captured the city of Babylon. Persia then became the greatest and largest empire in history until it was defeated by Alexander the Great and his Greek army. Persia is no stranger to Bible prophecy. Daniel had prophesied that the Medo-Persian army would defeat the Babylonians. Isaiah also prophesied concerning the coming of Cyrus and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by his command. The kings of the Persian Empire are frequently mentioned in the story of Israel in the Bible.

Persia began its conversion to Islam in the 7th century AD, and eventually became a strong Muslim nation. It maintained the use of its ancient name, Persia, through until 1935 when it was changed to Iran. After its Islamic revolution in 1979 it officially became known as the Islamic Republic of Iran but it also retained its ancient name Persia.

Picture

IRAN: In 1954 the American and British secret services led a coup in Iran hoping to make it more democratically western. This eventually back-fired leading to strong anti-West sentiments in the nation. In 1979 Iran experienced its revolution as a reaction against Western influence and through the revolution established itself as a Muslim Republic.

In 2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran and since then has remained the face of the nation. Throughout his presidency he has constantly attacked Israel verbally with serious threats of total annihilation, he denies that the Jewish holocaust took place, and he does his utmost to challenge Israel's rights to land in the Middle East.

The greatest fear in international politics in recent decades has been Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities. Up until, 2015, a pre-emptive attack from America or Israel was a possibility. This would have been with the purpose of preventing Iran from gaining this nuclear military capability. The Iran nuclear deal was signed in July 2015 in which Iran promised to limit it's nuclear capability for ten years. This allowed the West to lift their sanctions and America to pour financial rewards into the country.

Iran's long conflict, encouraged by sanctions from the US and Europe, have driven it ever closer to Russia. Although suspicious of each other they have enjoyed improved relations over the previous five years but especially during 2016 including a visit by Putin in November. This new alignment included joint military operations in Syria.

Ethiopia

Next comes Ethiopia. This word is actually Kush in the Hebrew language. Ethiopia is only an English translation and explanation of the Hebrew name. Sadly this mistranslation has made it misunderstood in our own day. We know that Kush, or Cush, was the first son of Ham, and Noah's grandson, and that Cush gave birth to Nimrod (Gen.10:6-7). After the scattering from Babel Cush, the Father of Nimrod, moved south. His son Mizraim founded Egypt and Cush founded the nation to its south sometimes called Nubia. From Ezekiel 29:9-10 we see that Ethiopia (Kush) was on the southern border of Egypt whereas present day Ethiopia is at least 1000 miles from Egypt. We also read of the "rivers of Ethiopia" which marked this land (Isa.18:1; Zeph.3:10). Putting all this together it is evident that this is the nation of Sudan. This land borders the south of Egypt and is noted for its many great rivers that flow in it and that make up the Nile that then flows in and through Egypt.

Picture

SUDAN: Since 1989 it has been called the Islamic Republic of Sudan. It is distinct from South Sudan which in contrast has good links to the West. About 14000 UN troops presently serve in the South to quench the potential of civil war and to maintain peace. South Sudan gained its independence in 2011.

The radical Muslim terrorist, Osama Bin Laden, took refuge in north Sudan from 1991 to 1996. Since 1996 UN diplomatic sanctions have been in place against the nation. It is known for its radical and extreme anti-West sentiments, its promotion of terrorism, and its sworn hatred of Israel. As Africa's third largest country it is an ideal place to hide the many terrorist training camps which function within its borders.

Iran supported its coup in 1989 that brought Omar al-Bashir to power in north Sudan. He established the nation as an Islamic theocracy in alliance with Iran. Iran sent 2000 men to train and supply their army and

granted millions in finance in order to arm them with Chinese and Russian weaponry. They now maintain close and warm ties with each other. Al-Bashir stands accused of genocide and crimes against humanity by the world community. Sudan has strongly supported terrorist attacks against Israel and Israel has responded accordingly. Sudan has accused Israel of making several secret air strikes against their arms-plants within their country as well as upon boats on their way to smuggling arms into the Golan heights.

Since the end of the Cold War relations with Russia have improved. Russia has supplied 87% of Sudan's armaments. Russia broke the UN's arms embargo against Sudan by supplying tanks, planes and helicopters. Putin maintains a close relationship with Sudan and al-Bashir. The two countries signed 14 agreements at the end of 2015 in order to work towards joint action on many fronts.

Libya

Libya, or Puwt in Hebrew, has also been called Phut in our English translation of the Bible. Ezekiel mentions it three times, in 27:10 when it supported Tyre (Phoenicia), in 30:5 supporting Egypt, and in 38:5 when it will support Gog. Phut is mentioned third in the list of Ham's sons, and was a grandson of Noah (Gen.10:6; I Chron.1:8). This people that sprung from Phut populated north Africa and were situated on the Mediterranean Sea. Ancient Libya was larger than present day Libya and may have covered Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco as well.

Picture

LIBYA: During the 1970's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi purchased weapons from Russia and brought Russians to work in Libya building missile bases. For a period of ten years Beginning in 1976 over 11,000 Russian soldiers worked and served in Libya. Gaddafi also visited Russia and in 2008 Putin was the first Russian President to visit Libya to meet with Gaddafi .

Gaddafi stood militantly against the West and opposed Israel. He was considered one of the US's great enemies. Libya was the key target of the US's massive aerial strike in 1989. At the beginning of the Arab Spring, in 2011, Gaddafi was overthrown and killed. Since then the country has been terribly divided and strife-ridden with different factions fighting for supremacy.

The foremost contemporary military leader within Libya is General Khalifa Haftar. He helped Gaddafi come to power in 1969 and was one of his top military chief of staff. While fighting within the border of Chad, in 1987, he along with several hundred men were captured by the enemy but Gaddafi disowned his military actions and left him to rot in prison. The US came to his rescue bringing him to safety in America. It is believed that he was then recruited by the CIA. In 2011 he was actively involved on the ground in the overthrow of Gaddafi. In 2014 he again returned to Libya to work with the Libyan National Army (LNA), supported by the West in fighting Muslim extremists. Since then he has gained much influence, popularity, and power. His forces have now regained the national oil fields and reopened production.

In August 2016 he opposed UN and US plans within Libya by refusing to support the fragile unity government. In September 2016 he asked Russia for weapons and warplanes. He also asked them to intervene in Libya as they had already done in Syria. This is no surprise at all. As a young man he received military training within Russia and he speaks Russian. He paid a personal visit to Russia in June 2016 just before this major change of direction. At this moment he is a major hot potato for the West. Talks have continued throughout 2017 planning Russia's definite intervention in Libya.

Picture

ALGERIA: Algeria is another country that could be included in ancient Libya. Since 1960 it has had strong ties with Russia. The Soviet Union provided arms for it to fight its war of independence. Upon gaining independence it granted citizenship only to verified Muslims. The majority of Jews, one million in number, fled the country and went into exile in France and Israel. The remainder of Jews left the country in the 90's.

In February 2016, the Algerian government sought a new military and economic alliance with Russia. It has stood with Russia in its ongoing goals in Syria and its government officials recently travelled to Syria for official talks with Russian leaders. It has acted as a political mediator between Russia, Syria, and Turkey, with plans to mediate between Iran and Turkey. It has the strongest armed force in the north of Africa and it is continuing to strengthen itself as a military power.

Morocco and Tunisia: During the cold War Morocco was one of Russia's closest trading partners in Africa. Putin visited the country in 2006 to strengthen economic and military ties. In 2016 their king visited Russia. They have also maintained a close tie to the US and UN with the US promising them \$7 million of military aid in 2016 for their army. But since Trump's election this connection has been endangered and Morocco is now looking towards China and Russia and made a request in 2016 to Russia for help with military equipment. At the end of 2016 it made a dramatic move to open diplomatic negotiations with Israel in promoting a solution to the conflict with Palestinians. At present the US and Russia are competing for influence in Tunisia while it has sought help from both nations in its fight against terrorists. Russia has signed vital deals with the country throughout 2016.

Togarmah

"...the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands" (38:6). Togarmah was one of the three sons of Gomer, the son of Japheth (Gen.10:3). Togarmah as a people were noted in Ezekiel's day for their trading of horses (27:14). Gomer's people were situated in Turkey so we would expect the people of Togarmah to be close at hand. A city called Til-garimmu was mentioned by the Assyrian's in Ezekiel's day as being in eastern Anatolia (modern Turkey). Various prophecy Bible teachers in recent years have suggested that it was specifically situated in the south-east of Turkey near the Syrian border. Because of this they have suggested that Turkey is the ancient homeland of Togarmah. If this was so it would only strengthen the belief that Turkey will be central in this attack on Israel. But others have suggested that Togarmah actually represents Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan which are all slightly to the north in the Caucasus between Turkey and Russia.

It is interesting that Togarmah is the only nation apart from Magog that is mentioned as being to the north. It is said to be "of the north quarters" (38:6). The Hebrew word used here for "quarters" or "parts" can mean the uttermost part, the far north, or the furthest coast. This certainly must mean that it is further north and closer to Magog than any of the others. Those who have spoke of the city of Til-garimmu as the dwelling place of this people in Turkey do not take into account that it was actually situated in the north-east of today's Turkey. This area was actually the very heart of the ancient kingdom of Armenian. Ancient Armenia was much bigger than the Armenia of today. It included a eastern and southern portion of Turkey as well as a portion of north Syria. In Ezekiel's day it was known as the Kingdom of Armenia and that generation of Armenian's claimed that they descended directly from Togarmah. This belief has continued right down to our own day within Armenian culture with them continuing to claim this. The

kingdom of Armenia was well known for its horse breeding and trading with Persia and Babylon just as it was stated concerning Togarmah in the scriptures.

Picture

ARMENIA: Although Armenia broke free from the Soviet Union in 1990, and then gained its full independence, it is still a strong ally of Russia. When given the choice of closer ties between the EU or Russia they chose Russia. There are about one million Armenians living within Russia which gives an added strength to their ties. As part of their military alliance agreement Russia has placed military bases within Armenia. They signed a binding defence agreement that will last until 2044. Russia has heavily armed and supported Armenia's military. In June 2016 they signed a joint air defence agreement.

About 95% of Armenians claim to be Christians and members of the State Church. To the north of Armenia is Georgia but to its east is Azerbaijan which is a Muslim nation. Armenia has been involved in constant military clashes with Azerbaijan over the past three decades including a six year war. Surprisingly Israel has been a close ally of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan is its only long standing ally among Muslim nations. At the latter end of 2016 it was noted that Israel was supplying arms to them in their renewed conflict with Armenia. Russia has said it will act on behalf of Armenia in the event of another armed conflict. It is believed by most that Israel's secret service, Mossad, operates a base within Azerbaijan. The Iranian's have accused Israel of using this base for surveillance of the bordering nations. The Jewish synagogue in Baku, the capitol of Azerbaijan, is said to be bigger than any other in Europe. This whole scenario would of course make Armenia a potential enemy to Israel in the future.

Finally...

If we are correct in what we have said then Turkey, Iran, Sudan, and Libya, as well as Armenia and Algeria, will all be joined in a military alliance led by Russia. This will be an army equipped by Russia and of such a strength that only weak protests will come from the outside world and from other nations seeking to protect Israel. One last statement we are given is, "...and many people with thee" (38:6). After listing these specific nations we are given this further fact. It would seem that other peoples (soldiers), from other nations, may join this army although in no official national capacity.

Right now before our very eyes we are watching these specific nations move into position and into alliance with one another. This is either a remarkable coincidence or it is the very preparation towards a future war. This prophecy given 2600 years ago with its exact names and details is remarkably similar to our recent breaking news across these many nations named. Only time will tell if this is the hour and the time.

As we watch these proceedings we stand in awe of a Mighty God who foretold all of these things. We look up with hope knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Jesus is coming again.

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