

THE PEREMPTORY NEMESIS

MY FRIENDS, we are currently considering the wonderful and, perhaps, topical prophecies of Ezekiel.

We are placing these prophecies beside the present new–old state of Israel and we are noting the one in the light of the other and the other in the light of the one.

We make no dogmatic blending of the two for we fear that, as Jerrold well says, dogmatism is puppyism come to its full growth! If the twain must merge and blend let time and history arrange the fateful fusion; we have neither the authority nor the power to engineer the amalgamation, but we do have the wisdom to watch for such a possibility. Do you capture what I mean?

Now! Back to Ezekiel's thirty–eighth and thirty–ninth chapters in which our current theme is embedded.

Here is a crucial drama, the character and magnitude of which defy all merely human power of description or apprehension.

A sudden attack with whirlwind violence by a mighty confederacy upon a small and comparatively defenceless nation is an appalling crime, but when such a spectacular monstrosity is immediately followed by an equally sudden Divine inburst in indignant intervention and interposition into human affairs the word “spectacular” is no longer adequate to describe the phenomenon, particularly when attended by unmistakable judgemental manifestations of the most severe and awe–inspiring quality.

As we face our subject let us remark the source, the sequence, the scene, the scale, and the season of this mighty movement.

Something in the nature of the blithe tranquillity of Beethoven's “Pastoral Symphony” would be an apt introduction to the theme. Israel is at rest in the Promised Land. Israel is reasonably prosperous. Israel is minding his own business. The Israel sky is cloudless.

But a vicious storm is brewing. Follow the Divinely–enlightened eyes of Ezekiel and we shall observe its SOURCE; for God, through His prophet, addresses Gog in these terms:

ובאת ממקומך מירכתי צפון

“And you (Gog) shall come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north . . .” (38:15a)

Yes, the north is the prophesied source of restored Israel's peril! Glance at the map. Look into a land far north of Israel. That is Gog's “place”; that is the habitat of Israel's arch–enemy; that is the grotto of the grisly Gog. The uttermost part of the north is the source of the violent storm that threatens Israel's hard–won tranquillity.

Now observe the SEQUENCE.

ועלית כשאה תבוא כענן לכסות הארץ

“You shalt ascend and come like a storm, you shalt be like a cloud to cover the land . . .” (38:9)

At this juncture I find it advisable to remind you of a previous message in this very series to which I have the subtitle: “THE CANON OF DOUBLE SENSE” and in which I drew your attention to a proven principle of prophetic interpretation in which it is recognized that, where Divine predictive prophecy is concerned, a first historic accomplishment, chronologically nearer the prophet’s time, employs some of the terms and properties of the ultimate total prediction without necessarily absorbing or exhausting them, but leaves the prophetic total itself to an occasion chronologically more remote.

Thus the earlier historic movement becomes married to the initial predictive prophecy preceding it to combine with it in forming an even more formidable attestation and assurance of full historic fulfilment of the total content of the prediction in the more remote occasion.

I feel it is now competent for me to proceed by suggesting to you that, in the prediction immediately before us, the prophet employs language which not only fits the times in which he himself lived but which is equally capable of perfect adaption and adoption to our current generation.

Listen again to these words addressed to Gog:

“You shalt ascend and come like a storm, you shalt be like a cloud to cover the land . . .”

My friends, just ponder this language but for a moment. What does it suggest to our modern mind? Is it not the language of the skies? The more I turn these suggestive words over in my mind the more I seem to hear the roar of aeroplane engines and to behold the skies above clouded over with squadron after squadron of aircraft overshadowing the land beneath like some sinister umbrella clouding out the light and life above it.

Did the prophet himself realize the aptness and adequacy of his language to our modern times? Did the Divine Mind Who inspired the prophet’s language share with His prophet the full possible content and implication of His words? I know not but, be that as it may, we must admit that the language is apt and also adequate to such a modern movement as sudden air attack implies.

Let us clearly note that the prophet does not predict that Gog will launch an air-invasion of Israel, nor do I venture for a moment to incur the prophet’s displeasure by asserting that he did say so. Ezekiel merely predicts the invasion and I merely suggest that his language conjures modern thoughts of aerial activity, so that if the invasion did comprehend, in part, that character we would not be doing any violence to Ezekiel’s language.

Having said all this, I am not discounting the possibility of modern aviation being well within ancient predictive prophecy for I am aware of the amazing words of the ancient prophet Isaiah as recorded in the sixtieth chapter and eighth verse of the Divine book bearing his name. Listen to these striking words in the Hebrew tongue:

מי־אלה כעב תעופינה וכיונים אל־ארבתיהם

“WHO are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves . . . ”

Do you not think it exceptional that the prophet, speaking thousands of years ago, should have associated the personal pronoun “who” with aerial activity resembling that of clouds and doves? Such an association is at least noteworthy, isn’t it?

The SCENE of the impending storm–burst next claims our attention. Of course, we are already aware that the **“land of Israel”** is to be the scene of the strife; but I want to invite your attention to something that the same Scripture says of this land and its inhabitants:

“Thus saith the Lord God: In that day when My people Israel dwells safely, shalt you not know it? . . . and you shalt come up against My people Israel . . . and I will bring you against My land, that the nations may know Me, when I shall be sanctified through you, O Gog, before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 38:14, 15)

Here — you see — is another personal pronoun that is worthy of your intent observation:

“MY people Israel,” “MY land.” Yes, indeed! God’s people and God’s land.

In a sense, then, Gog INVADES GOD! It is an invasion of God’s land and God’s people!

My friends! There can be only one outcome to such a folly. That outcome is surely obvious. Divine retribution. The rolling ages of history testify that every individual and every nation that has raised a hand against God’s people, the Jewish people, have come, sooner or later, under the condign punishment of the Almighty.

As we follow, in succeeding messages, Ezekiel’s prophetic drama we will discover that Gog, like Hitler, is to be no exception to this Divine dispensation.

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(1900–1964)

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This article is an extract from the very popular radio series, “Treasures From Tenach”, which are also transcribed. Both audio (click MP3 tab, then “014peremptorynemsis.mp3”, and transcriptions are available for free download at www.thevineyard.org.au