

EZEKIEL 38-39

Message 5

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Reading:

INTRO: We are looking at much more than Ezekiel 38-39. These chapters are much on the mind of Christians today. We are going through a few of the high points of the tribulation to put these chapters in their context. We have briefly gone through those two chapters and looked at the reasons why some believe the Ezekiel war and Armageddon cannot happen at the same time. We are now going through the tribulation in order to show where I see this battle taking place in the tribulation.

What we have looked at is the big picture. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream God revealed the four great world empires by an image of a person with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay. And then we say how the rock, representing Jesus Christ, smashes the image on the feet and all human governments come to an end and this will bring in the millennium.

In a little more detailed look we saw this: **(Power Point: The details of the tribulation 1-6. Show)**

Let me add something here for you to keep in mind. If you are like I have been, I viewed the return of Christ and Armageddon all taking place in a day. The world gathers against Christ, He defeats them, and it is over in a short time. That is a picture one must remove. There are so many events prophesied that happen towards the end of the tribulation until the tribulation is over that they cannot possibly happen in a day or a week or maybe even a month. Christ will return in a day but the events that follow before the millennium cannot be done in a day.

I personally see Russia going to Israel, China and the Kings of the East, Christ's return, and Armageddon taking place over a time of possibly about a year. You can imagine for Russia to come down to Israel with war equipment and the battle against Jerusalem itself will take some time.

In the last message I made a proposition that will seem unbelievable to those who have studied Daniel's 70th week. It was this: The Jews accept the antichrist as God. Do you think that is possible? We began to look at this in the last message. We

are now briefly going through the tribulation to give us the context of Ezekiel's war.

I am on holidays and went over this message and in adding a few things I think it will become too long. So, we'll go until my time is up and make a conclusion and begin next time where we left off in this message.

6. Antichrist breaks his covenant? **#6**

b. Causes sacrifice and offering to cease cont'd

Turn to Revelation 13. We are looking at the point that the antichrist causes sacrifice and offering to cease. How does the antichrist get the Jews to accept him as God? In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 we saw that the antichrist's working is according to the working of Satan and that he deceives with all power, signs, and lying wonders. He works with all unrighteous deception. We are now in the middle of the tribulation when Jesus instructed the believing Jews to flee Jerusalem without turning back to get anything out of their homes. They have no time. After this they will die by the millions.

Here is what Revelation 13:1-8 says:

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the

beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

Here is what we are told about the Jews as well as all the rest of mankind: they will all worship the antichrist! I ask you, does that not mean the Jews also will worship him as God? I think it does. I think that is how he causes sacrifice and offerings to come to an end in the middle of the tribulation! As I see it, the Jews have accepted the antichrist as God.

Ezekiel 39:25-26 says:

25 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name—

26 'after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid.

Note it says, "After they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness." What is this shame and unfaithfulness? Could it be their acceptance of the antichrist as God?

When these unbelieving Jews recognize at the end of the tribulation that Jesus Christ is their Messiah and they repent of their shame and all the unfaithfulness which they showed during the time the antichrist was their protector, then they will be forgiven and cleansed.

But let me give some further evidence that the Jews accept the antichrist as their god from none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Turn to John 5. You will want to see these words with your own eyes. We will read 5:38-44. Jesus said this to the Jews.

38 *"But you (the unbelieving Jews) do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.*

39 *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

40 *"But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*

41 *"I do not receive honor from men.*

42 *"But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.*

43 *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.*

Here we have a clear reference to the antichrist and the time when he comes and Jesus said the Jews would receive the antichrist. This refers to the unsaved Jews, those that are not the true Israel! Now if I am correct here, it will give us an answer to a matter most think gives evidence that the Ezekiel war and Armageddon cannot be the same war.

So, I am suggesting that the antichrist does not break his covenant. By smooth deception he

becomes their god and this is what causes sacrifices and offerings to cease.

At this time Satan has been removed from heaven and he has one great drive now and that is to kill these Jewish believers and all Christians. His greatest effort is not against traditional Judaism. He has them in his hand. They are worshipping the antichrist. His battle is against the true believers. Satan now either indwells or is directly in control of the antichrist. Under this influence the antichrist now sets himself up as God in the temple. So, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 said this:

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

When the antichrist sits in the temple of God, showing himself to be God, we have the abomination of desolation. Now listen to Jesus in Matthew 24:15-20:

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 *"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*

In Israel, if their flight was to happen on the Sabbath, transportation comes to a standstill and fleeing would be almost impossible.

Verse 21:

21 *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

22 *"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

So here is what I suggest: The antichrist does not break his covenant with the Jews. They accept him as their god and he sets himself up as God in the temple and this is what causes sacrifice and offering to cease. The Jews are willing to receive him as God! That is an abomination above all abominations! It is a greater abomination than believing the universe evolved!

I was reminded the other day that I once thought the lie of 2 Thessalonians 2 might be an explanation of how millions of believers disappeared. It may be. But after doing this study and seeing that the Jews might receive the antichrist as their god, this seems to me a much bigger lie. I would not be dogmatic about this and you can ponder it.

c. The two Israels

Let me make another proposition that you might have to ponder. The NT refers to two Israels. Let me explain. There are Jews who are Jews by blood only. Then there are Jews who are Jews by blood and by faith. These are the two Israel's I am referring to. Go first to Romans 2:28-29.

It says this:

28 *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;*

29 *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

Paul calls the true Jew one who is one inwardly. That means he is a Jew by birth but he is also a born-again believer in the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. Today they are sometimes referred to as *finished* Jews. What you also have then is Jews who are not believers. So, these are the two Israels I am referring to.

Listen now to Romans 9:6-8:

6 *But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,*

Just because one is Jewish by birth does not mean one is a true Jew by the new birth. They are not all Israel, the true Israel, who are of Israel. So how many true Jews would there be today? Not too many.

Verse 7:

7 *nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."*

8 *That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.*

The true Israel is called in Isaac, that is they are true believers. The true Israel is made up of those who are true believers in Jesus Christ. So, you have two kinds of Jews. There are those who are Jews by birth and those who are Jews but also born again. These are true Christians.

Turn now to Matthew 24. In the middle of the tribulation Jesus speaks of the abomination of desolation. That is right where Daniel 9:27 takes place. We begin in verse 15:

15 *"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),*

16 *"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*

17 *"Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.*

18 *"And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.*

19 *"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!*

20 *"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*

21 *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Why is it important to understand that there are two Israel's? It is sometimes believed that all Israel are commanded to flee Jerusalem when the abomination of desolation takes place. But I am firmly convinced that Jesus is speaking here to the believing Jews. This is the true Israel. Not all Jews are instructed to flee in the middle of the tribulation. Unbelieving Jews will not be reading Matthew 24, but without doubt, believing Jews will.

We go now to Revelation 12.

1 *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.*

2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

The woman speaks of Israel and the male child is Christ. Here we are at the birth of Christ and then the ascension of Christ. It is not new in prophecy to skip a lot of time. That is what happens in this verse so we skip forward in time to the middle of the tribulation. Verse 6:

6 Then the woman (the true Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,

8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Right in the middle of the tribulation Satan and his host are forever removed from heaven. Up until now they have had access to heaven.

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom

of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Right here at the middle of the tribulation the biggest persecution of believers begins. They will now die by the hundreds of thousands.

Verse 12:

12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

Satan is now cast to the earth and he persecutes the woman who gave birth to Christ. This woman he persecutes, I propose, is the true Israel. Verse 14:

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

17 *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

It is believed that the place prepared for her by God is possibly Petra. **(Pictures?)** But it could be anywhere in that area. When Christ comes down to earth He goes first to Bozrah, which is in this area and I believe it is somewhere in this area where the believing Jews are hidden by God.

d. Flight to Petra

So, when these Jewish believers flee from Jerusalem, the place of refuge may be Petra or some place in that area. If the Psalm 83 war takes place at the time of the red horse, then Petra is no longer in Jordan, but in Israel.

Now some prophecy teachers believe that it is all the Jews that are instructed to flee Jerusalem. I believe that the Lord is only speaking to the true believers. The Jewish believers then flee into the wilderness where they have a place of refuge divinely prepared. Here they are protected for the last 3 ½ years or 1260 days.

Now over the years many evangelicals have believed that these Jews flee to Petra. I do not know exactly where it is they flee to, but when Jesus returns to earth, from Isaiah 63 it seems that the first place Jesus goes is to Bozrah. That is in the area of Bozrah. He goes to deliver these believers. Isaiah 63:1-3 says this:

1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength? – "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

2 Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

3 *"I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.*

4 *For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.*

Revelation 12:10-17 then goes on like this:

10 *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

11 *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

Now in verse 11 we have a pronoun that must be identified. It is the pronoun "they." Whom does it refer to? Well, no doubt these are the true believers and in the context it refers to Jewish believers. At this point a horrendous harvest of martyrs begins to take place. We will see this later. And we note here that these Jewish believers overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. These are most certainly saved Jews.

Verse 12 then goes on like this:

12 *"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

13 *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.*

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

Again, who is this woman? I believe it is the true Israel, the Jews who have been saved. Here are the true Christians. We note that these believers are divinely protected. She is given two wings of a great eagle and that she is nourished there for 3 ½ years.

15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

If the Jews who flee Jerusalem in the middle of the tribulation go to Petra, it is understandable that the devil seeks to destroy them by a flood. When flash floods happen, this narrow gorge is filled with rushing water.

Verse 16:

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In this passage we have more evidence that the woman is the Israel of God. Verse 17 says that the devil went after the woman to make war with the rest of her offspring. Note carefully the words, "the rest of her offspring." Well, we are not left to wonder who that is. It goes on to say it is those who keep the commandments of God. Who are those? Those who were converted to Jesus Christ! Then note as well, and this is most key, they are those that have the

testimony of Jesus Christ! That leaves no room for doubt about their identity. This is none other than true believers in Christ and most certainly does not refer to unbelieving Jews!

Concl: So why did I give all this? One of the major reasons why the war of Ezekiel 38 is seen as not being possible at the end of the tribulation is that Israel is dwelling securely when they come. If the peace covenant is broken then they would not be dwelling securely when Gog and Magog come. We see that numerous times in Ezekiel 38-39. And all prophecy teachers I know teach that the antichrist breaks his covenant in the middle of the tribulation, and from then on, they do not have peace. I believe the peace agreement is kept until Christ comes and the whole world meets in Israel to defeat Him.

7. The persecution of Christians

I want to add a point here on the persecution of Christians in the tribulation. I have recommended that the antichrist may have promised the Jews that he would eliminate the two witnesses and all those who name the name of Christ. I do not find much about the persecution of believers until the middle of the tribulation, then, as the saying goes, all hell breaks loose! Christians seem to have had pretty much free reign until the middle of the tribulation. But at that time things become drastic very fast.

First, regarding the two witnesses, Revelation 11:7 says of them:

*7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make **war** against them, overcome them, and kill them.*

Notice that to kill these two witnesses they have to make war against them. Do you need a war to kill these two witnesses? Well, let me say this; even an army couldn't do it but their ministry was completed! The amazing thing is that after they

have been dead for 3 ½ days they get up on their feet and ascend to heaven. Their ministry is done.

Now listen to Revelation 13:7:

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Does it takes an army to kill defenceless sheep? Yes! It does. They are all over the world! From this point on the life of a Christian is not worth a plugged nickel. They are hunted down and killed, I expect by millions.

And when does this happen? Here is what Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-22:

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

We are looking especially at the middle of the tribulation. So let me give you a brief tour of the

book of Revelation in light of this subject. What I am giving you is my interpretation of the book of Revelation. I find it one of the most chronological books in the Bible.

CONCL: You may be wondering what all of this has to do with Ezekiel 38-39. I am giving an overview of the seven-year tribulation. We are not in any way going through it in detail. There is so much that happens in these 7 years I hardly know how it all fits in and I am sure we are not given all of what will happen.

What we have seen so far of the tribulation is that the rapture happens just before it begins. Then the antichrist is revealed and after this the tribulation begins. I feel that the red horse which pictures bloodshed may speak of the Psalm 83 war. I see the early tribulation as a place it could happen. Then we looked at the middle of the tribulation where most feel the antichrist breaks his covenant. I do not think he does. If he does, and there is no peace in Israel after the middle of the tribulation then Ezekiel's war cannot happen at the end of the tribulation and it then does not take place at Armageddon. So all of this is crucial to understand if one takes the view that Ezekiel's war takes place at the end of the tribulation.