

THE PISCINE NARRATION

MY FRIENDS, have you any happy recollections of a pleasurable vacation in the course of which you passed through delectable valleys, rich in verdure, on your way upward to a restful eminence from which you commanded a sweeping and rewarding vista of the country through which you had just passed? I guess a lot of us can recall just such a delightful experience.

Well, that is our happy lot right now. We have reached an eminence, a high and lofty peak, in our messages thus far. Now sit down for a moment and view the wonderful areas through which we have together travelled in these messages.

There, in the distance, we see that our pathway wound through the entrancing regions of Scripture prediction and we were convinced that there actually was such a phenomenon as Divine predictive prophecy.

Moreover, we were stabbed alert with irresistible interest when we discovered that a restoration of Israel as a nation was a subject within the content of this Divine predictive prophecy.

Our eager steps then led us through the oracles of Ezekiel and we found that he prophesied a national restoration of Israel to be followed by an impressive invasion of the Holy Land on the part of a great godless power, the seat and centre of which was indicated as being geographically north of Israel.

This lawless invasion, Ezekiel reveals, would be abortive because God intervenes and sends the invaders reeling under the unexpected blow of His sudden Divine interposition.

Ezekiel further shows that this Divine inburst into human history is of such an unmistakable character that all mankind becomes fully convinced that God Himself has manifestly interposed His power and protection in behalf of His people Israel.

Whilst we were thus examining the picture of restored Israel painted by Ezekiel and framed within the Scriptures hanging upon the solid wall of Divine predictive prophecy, we could not help shifting our gaze to the picture of restored Israel portrayed by the brush of time and within the lurid framework of two World Wars hanging upon the equally factual wall of contemporary history.

Admitting freely that curiosity is not an exclusively feminine trait we wondered if there was any proximate and pertinent relationship between the prophetic picture of Ezekiel and the present position of Israel.

This is a most enticing enquiry but we find ourselves roped off from dogmatism because, in describing the other national actors in the prophetic drama, Ezekiel calls them by names tied back to their early origins rather than by names linked on to their future actions.

However, since we seem to be quite justified in relating Ezekiel's prophecy to a time yet future, perhaps we are also justified in seeing if we can discover the identity of the nations mentioned by the prophet as they exist today.

This is, admittedly, a most alluring quest and we will not hesitate to descend from the pinnacle to which we climbed to view the backward panorama of our subject in order to penetrate into the speculative realms now before us and beckoning our exploration.

However, before we set off together in the enjoyment of these new regions, let us remind ourselves that they are new regions, distinct and distinctive regions.

Hitherto we have been moving in the sure and certain realms of Divine revelation. Now, however, we venture into the precarious province of human speculation where our foothold is less sure and our pathway certainly less defined.

I find I must be emphatic in drawing a clear line of positive distinction between the actual revelation of Holy Scripture and the accumulated results of human speculation.

Let me say with every emphasis that Holy Scripture is one thing and human speculation is quite another. Where express Scripture statement is concerned we dogmatize; where human speculation is concerned we merely deduce.

With regard to what I have said in preceding messages so far, in the degree that I have been faithful to the Scripture, I am justified in just that degree of dogmatism.

Now, however, in trying to ascertain the present nomenclature of the nations mentioned by Ezekiel, I venture out into unknown waters. That is why I call your attention to it; not dogmatism but deduction constitutes this particular section of my messages.

If my deductions should prove to be incorrect they are, after all, merely my deductions and I make no claim to infallibility.

Moreover, if I make incorrect inferences your quarrel will be with my inferences and not with the Scriptures.

Before we leave the sure ground of Biblical statement for the uncertain domains of human opinion, let me make reference to the tenth chapter of Genesis.

Ranke says of this section of Scripture:

“It is impossible to read this chapter without seeing that there is something here different from all other history, and that the national pride and separation which we see everywhere else has here been entirely subjugated by the religious idea that all the different tribes of the earth are related to one another by their common descent from Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Yes indeed, we must remember that after the Great Deluge the whole human race descended from Noah and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth; but this broad river of Gentile humanity had become so sullied with sin that God is about to tap off a select stream in Abraham and his descendants in order to carry on His loving redemptive purposes for all mankind.

Before turning to Israel, however, God appears to take a loving temporary farewell of all the Gentile nations of the earth, so He leaves in this tenth chapter of Genesis a Divine record of their origins and the chapter concludes with this statement:

“Now these are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.”

My friends, if we cast our inquisitive fishing line into that pristine pool of Divine revelation we may haul in some interesting specimens because among the seventy different national fish swimming about in that ancient ethnic reservoir we observe not a few bearing names identical with the thirteen designations employed by Ezekiel! Let’s cast our line and see what we can catch!

Ah! Here’s our first ethnic ichthos! A big fish named Magog. Turn him over and let’s have a look at him. In Genesis chapter ten, verse two, he appears as the second son of Japheth and Ezekiel uses the name as a country or people of which the gargantuan Gog is the leader.

Of Magog, Pliny says: “Hierapolis taken by the Scythians was afterwards called ‘Magog.’”

The Scythians and tribes beyond the Caucasus Mountains were known to the Arabs as “Rus,” and to the Greeks as “Ros.” The region of ancient Scythia is today part of the Soviet Union! Our first fish seems to be branded with the hammer and sickle, doesn’t it?

What of the Caucasus Mountains area into which this Japhetic fish ultimately swam? Well, your atlas will show you that the Caucasus Mountains stretch from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea. I

am informed that the word "Caucasus" is derived from two Oriental words meaning "Gog's Fort" or "Gog's Fortified Place." It is interesting to observe that the Caucasus Mountains are in the South Soviet Union and constitute a natural fortress guarding present day Russia. Rather an interesting fish we've landed, haven't we? In our next message we'll cast our line into this pool again. I think we shall be sure to catch some more rather notable specimens! I do hope you'll be present when we land them.

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(1900-1964)

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