

## THE PRESUMPTIVE NIHILISTS

MY DEAR FRIENDS, in my last message we went fishing together. Do you remember what it was that set us off upon our piscatorial peregrinations? It was those thirteen titles used by the prophet Ezekiel in his wonderful oracles regarding the invasion of Israel by Gog in the latter days.

In the Bible the first mention of the number thirteen is in בראשית, Genesis, chapter fourteen, verse four, where we read these words:

**“Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.”**

Thus, my friends, the proven principle of Scripture interpretation known as the Law of First Mention associates the number thirteen with rebellion.

In Ezekiel's thirty-eighth chapter we are given a prophetic view of what really amounts to a rebellion against God's theocratic rule as it is about to become manifested on this earth through the restored and regenerated nation of Israel.

We must never forget that the honour of the Eternal God of the Universe is associated with the destiny of the Jewish people, Israel; indeed it is the very same Divine principle which caused Israel's temporary national rejection which guarantees Israel's ultimate redemption.

It is therefore interesting and perhaps significant that the number of names supplied in this chapter should be thirteen. Here they are in the Hebrew:

גוג מגוג ראש משך תבל פרם כוש פוט גמר תוגרמה שבא דדן תרשיש

Now, since we believe these are the ancient names of peoples or nations on the earth today and since they appear in the future prophetic drama described by Ezekiel, we went fishing in that alluring pool of divine revelation known as בראשית, Genesis, chapter ten.

We saw seventy fine big national fish swimming in that pool and we landed a big one called מגוג (Magog) and found he was branded with the hammer and sickle and associated with the gargantuan גוג (Gog) similarly branded.

This Scripture pool of Seventy was quite a good place to do our fishing, now wasn't it? I guess you will be interested to know that the Midrash Tanchuma (Korach, end.) points out that the numerical value of the Hebrew phrase גוג מגוג (Gog and Magog) is exactly seventy, the supposed number of nations in our Biblical pool.

Oh! Just a minute, please, our fishing line is tugging violently. We've got another bit! Indeed all three hooks have snared a most interesting trio of national fish. Three beauties! Let's examine them carefully.

This big one is ראש (Rosh).

I have, of course, studied the Hebrew text of the Scriptures relative to the Hebrew word רֹשׁ (Rosh) and find myself in full agreement with Bochart, Fuerst and Gesenius all of whom, among other authorities, regard Rosh as a proper name. Gesenius has no doubt that Rosh refers to a people from the neighbourhood of the Volga and that in the name and tribe of Rosh we have the first trace of the Russ or Russian nation.

Now what of our next fish, מֶשֶׁחַ (Meshech). I see it is also Japhetic and swims about in Scriptural waters with Tubal, Magog and other northern allies of Gog, hence both the name and the associations favour the identification of Meshech with the people known as the Moschi early located east of the Black Sea and the ancestors of the Muscovites who built Moscow, a city together with Leningrad, in the very same longitude as Jerusalem!

All these anti-theocratic fish we've caught so far are branded with the hammer and sickle.

Turn that next fish over let's have a look at it. Why! It's a Japhetic fish, too, and it has got the same brand on it! It is named תּוּבַל (Tubal).

The historian Josephus identifies the descendants of Tubal with the inhabitants of an area between the Caspian and Black Seas, so once again these national fish from the ancient pool of generic national nomenclature have directed our thoughts to modern Russia. Indeed, a conjecture later than Josephus' attributes the derivation of the modern name Tobolsk from this ancient word Tubal, and there is more than mere assonance upon which to base this conjecture.

Restored Israel's peril is prophetically shown to be lurking in the north countries where Gog, Magog, Rosh, Meshech and Tubal have their national associations.

This is undoubtedly the express declaration of Holy Scripture — which is one thing; human opinion — which is another thing — makes the deduction that these ancient national designations have current reference to the modern Soviet Russia.

The deduction seems a reasonable one in my opinion and it is well worthy of our sober consideration, because indubitably Russia is a "great anti-theocratic power" in the world today.

I think we do well to remind ourselves that Russia created the Anti-God Movement which had its origin in Moscow. Zinovieff is reported to have said,

"We will grapple with the Lord God in due season: we shall vanquish Him in His highest heaven and wherever He seeks refuge, and we will subdue Him forever."

It is a pleasure to end that quotation.

What a babble of bombastic balderdash by a baneful buffoon.

Was it not Stalin who signed the official Russian decree in 1932 ordering the Eternal God to pack His few remaining belongings and get out of the Soviet empire?

Anti-Godism, as a deliberate premeditated national policy, is a psychosis receiving special observation in the Scriptures. The Second Psalm is particularly enlightening on the subject. I suggest you read it all at your leisure. However it begins:

למה רגשו גוים ולאמים יהגוריק

יתיצבו מלכי־ארץ ורוזנים נוסדו־יחד עליהוה ואל־משיחו

**“Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Eternal, and against His Messiah.”**

Do you enquire what the Divine reaction is to this settled policy of premeditated official rejection of God and His Anointed One?

My friends, the Divine reaction is paralysing arresting — laughter! The settled policy of human rebellion invokes the sinister peal of divine laughter. The wrath of God is terrible to contemplate; the judgement of God is unpleasant to experience; but the derisive laughter of God is in a class incapable of description. May neither your ears nor mine ever hear so dreadful a sound!

יושב בשמים ישחק אדני ילעג־למו

**“He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”**

I think this is the only place in Holy Scripture where we read of this awful divine gesture of derisive laughter. The redemptive love of the God of Israel occupies so great a part of the divine revelation that the introduction of such an unexpected Divine reaction catches us unawares.

That Divine love is found abundantly in that same Second Psalm, for God warms against the folly of a rebellious attitude and urges homage to His Anointed One:

נשק־בר פְּרִיאֲנָה וְתֹאבְדוֹ דֶּרֶךְ כִּי־יִבְעַר כַּמַּעַט אִפּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־י כִּלְיֹהוּסֵי בּוֹ

**“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way ... Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”**

Surely, the sign of the Soviet is the clenched fist; but the sign of the Godhead is the pierced palm and blessed indeed are all they that put their trust in Him.

If God's calling is spurned, Gog's challenge is accepted and this can be translated into a principle which has individual, as well as national, application.

The Eternal God and His Messiah has called the Jewish people and nation to the performance of a great and glorious spiritual task and they will need all your love and goodwill to help them onwards and upwards to its ultimate achievement.

Gog surely depicts the anti-God, anti-Jew forces of Satan himself and it is into such ears that the blood-chilling derisive laughter of God will resound with the ghastly resonance of doom!

May our hearts prepare our ears for happier sounds? Coming fishing with me again? We shall have more fish to catch in my next message.

**Dr Lawrence Duff-Forbes**

**(1900-1964)**

**Founding Director of David House Fellowship Inc.**

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