
EZEKIEL 38: 1 the LORD's word came to me, saying,

The sublime prophecy contained in this and the following chapter relates to Israel's victory over Gog, and is very obscure. It begins with representing a prodigious armament of many nations combined together under the conduct of Gog, with the intention of overwhelming the Jews, after having been for some time resettled in their land subsequent to their return from the Babylonish captivity, Eze 38:1-9. These enemies are farther represented as making themselves sure of the spoil, Eze 38:10-13. But in this critical conjuncture when Israel, to all human appearance, was about to be swallowed up by her enemies, God most graciously appears, to execute by terrible judgments the vengeance threatened against these formidable adversaries of his people, Eze 38:14-16. The prophet, in terms borrowed from human passions, describes, with awful emphasis, the fury of Jehovah as coming up to his face; and the effects of it so dreadful, as to make all the animate and inanimate creation tremble, and even to convulse with terror the whole frame of nature, Eze 38:17-23.

EZEKIEL 38: 2 Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

Verse 2

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog - This is allowed to be the most difficult prophecy in the Old Testament. It is difficult to us, because we know not the king nor people intended by it: but I am satisfied they were well known by these names in the time that the prophet wrote.

I have already remarked in the introduction to this book that there are but two opinions on this subject that appear to be at all probable:

1. That which makes Gog Cambyses, king of Persia; and,
2. That which makes him Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria.

And between these two (for one or other is supposed to be the person intended) men are much divided.

Calmet, one of the most judicious commentators that ever wrote on the Bible, declares for Cambyses; and supports his opinion, in opposition to all others, by many arguments.

Mr. Mede supposes the Americans are meant who were originally colonies of the Scythians who were descendants of Magog, son of Japheth. Houbigant declares for the Scythians, whose neighbors were the people of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, that is the Russians, Muscovites, and Tybareni or Cappadocians. Several eminent critics espouse this opinion. Rabbi David Kimchi says the Christians and Turks are meant: and of later opinions there are several, founded in the ocean of conjecture. Calmet says expressly, that Gog is Cambyses, king of Persia, who on his return from the land of Egypt, died in Judea. The Revelation David Martin, pastor of the Waloon church at Utrecht, concludes, after examining all previous opinions, that Antiochus Epiphanes, the great enemy on the

Israelites, is alone intended here; and that Gog, which signifies covered, is an allusion to the well-known character of Antiochus, whom historians describe as an artful, cunning, and dissembling man. See Dan 8:23, Dan 8:25; Dan 11:23, Dan 11:27, Dan 11:32. Magog he supposes to mean the country of Syria. Of this opinion the following quotation from Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. v., c. 23, seems a proof; who, speaking of Coele-Syria, says Coele habet Apamiam Marsyia amne divisam a Nazarinorum Tetrarchia. Bambycem quam alio nomine Hierapolis vocatur, Syris vero Magog. "Coele-Syria has Apamia separated from the tetrarchy of the Nazarenes by the river Marsyia; and Bambyce, otherwise called Hierapolis; but by the Syrians, Magog."

I shall at present examine the text by this latter opinion.

Chief prince of Meshech and Tubal - These probably mean the auxiliary forces, over whom Antiochus was supreme; they were the Muscovites and Cappadocians.

EZEKIEL 38: 3 and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal:

EZEKIEL 38: 4 and I will turn you around, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, with all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords;

Verse 4

I will turn thee back - Thy enterprise shall fail.

EZEKIEL 38: 5 Persia, Cush, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet;

Verse 5

Persia - That a part of this country was tributary to Antiochus, see 1 Maccabees 3:31.

Ethiopia, and Libya - That these were auxiliaries of Antiochus is evident from Dan 11:43 : "The Libyans and Ethiopians shall be at his steps."

EZEKIEL 38: 6 Gomer, and all his hordes; the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts of the north, and all his hordes; even many peoples with you.

Verse 6

Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah - The Cimmerians and Turcomanians, and other northern nations. - Calmet.

EZEKIEL 38: 7 Be prepared, yes, prepare yourself, you, and all your companies who are assembled to you, and be a guard to them.

EZEKIEL 38: 8 After many days you shall be visited: in the latter years you shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out of many peoples, on the mountains of Israel, which have been a continual waste; but it is brought out of the peoples, and they shall dwell securely, all of them.

Verse 8

In the latter years thou shalt come - This was fulfilled about four hundred years after. - Martin. The expedition of Cambyses against Egypt was about twelve years after the return of the Jews from Babylon. - Calmet.

EZEKIEL 38: 9 You shall ascend, you shall come like a storm, you shall be like a cloud to cover the land, you, and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

Verse 9

Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm - It is observable that Antiochus is thus spoken of by Daniel, Dan 11:40 : The king of the north - Antiochus, shall come against him (the king of the south is the king of Egypt) like a whirlwind.

EZEKIEL 38: 10 Thus says the Lord GOD: It shall happen in that day, that things shall come into your mind, and you shall devise an evil device:

Verse 10

Shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought - Antiochus purposed to invade and destroy Egypt, as well as Judea; see Dan 11:31, Dan 11:32, Dan 11:36. This Calmet interprets of Cambyses, his cruelties in Egypt, and his evil design to destroy the Israelites.

EZEKIEL 38: 11 and you shall say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to those who are at rest, who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates;

EZEKIEL 38: 12 to take the plunder and to take the prey; to turn your hand against the waste places that are inhabited, and against the people who are gathered out of the nations, who have gotten livestock and goods, who dwell in the middle of the earth.

Verse 12

To take a spoil - and a prey - When Antiochus took Jerusalem he gave the pillage of it to his soldiers, and spoiled the temple of its riches, which were immense. See Josephus War, B. 1. C. 1.

EZEKIEL 38: 13 Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions of it, shall tell you, Have you come to take the plunder? have you assembled your company to take the prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?

Verse 13

Sheba, and Dedan - The Arabians, anciently great plunderers; and Tarshish, the inhabitants of the famous isle of Tartessus, the most noted merchants of the time. They are here represented as coming to Antiochus before he undertook the expedition, and bargaining for the spoils of the Jews. Art thou come to take a spoil, to carry away silver and gold, cattle and goods?

EZEKIEL 38: 14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and tell Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: In that day when my people Israel dwells securely, shall you not know it?

EZEKIEL 38: 15 You shall come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you, and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army;

EZEKIEL 38: 16 and you shall come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: it shall happen in the latter days, that I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in you, Gog, before their eyes.

Verse 16

When I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog - By the defeat of his troops under Lysias, his general. 1 Maccabees 3:32, 33, etc., and 6:6.

EZEKIEL 38: 17 Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for years that I would bring you against them?

Verse 17

Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time - This prophecy concerning Antiochus and the Jews was delivered about four hundred years before the events took place. - Martin. Calmet maintains that Cambyses is spoken of, and refers to ancient prophecies, especially Isaiah 14, Isa 15:1-9, Isa 16:1-14, Isa 20:1-6, 21.

EZEKIEL 38: 18 It shall happen in that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, that my wrath shall come up into my nostrils.

EZEKIEL 38: 19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

EZEKIEL 38: 20 so that the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and the animals of the field, and all creeping things who creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the surface of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

EZEKIEL 38: 21 I will call for a sword against him to all my mountains, says the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother.

Verse 21

I will call for a sword against him - Meaning Judas Maccabeus, who defeated his army under Lysias, making a horrible carnage. - Martin. Cambyses had no wars in the mountains of Israel.

EZEKIEL 38: 22 With pestilence and with blood will I enter into judgement with him; and I will rain on him, and on his hordes, and on the many peoples who are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire, and sulfur.

Verse 22

Great hailstones, fire, and brimstone - These are probably figurative expressions, to signify that the whole tide of the war should be against him, and that his defeat and slaughter should be great. Abp. Newcome supposes all the above prophecy remains yet to be fulfilled. Where such eminent scribes are divided, who shall decide!

EZEKIEL 38: 23 I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the LORD.
