

Ezekiel 38 - Israel dwelling safely...past, present or future?

Many students of prophecy are still looking for a time when Israel is dwelling in peace and safety. They might see the present conflict in the Middle East as a **prelude** to those conditions that appear to be existing at the time of the Gogian invasion. My view is that the period of peace and safety has been and gone and that the chronological clock is far more advanced than many would believe.

The last decade has seen some unprecedented moves towards peace, brokered largely by the Americans, but agreed to by sworn enemies. No one will forget the incredible pictures of Rabin and Arafat, or Rabin and King Hussein warmly shaking hands on the lawns of the White House. This was a time of hope and confidence. They lived alongside Arab without walls or bars or gates. But the peace talks eventually foundered because the parties could not agree on how to divide up Jerusalem. Tensions have now increased and are resulting in the present bloodbath that is causing great anxiety over the future of the entire region.

There are those who think that Israel must win another battle to remove the immediate Arab nations surrounding Israel as a prelude to making peace with its neighbours. Israel's barrier that is being built must be dismantled they say.

However, it is surely dangerous to be actively looking and waiting for something that has already occurred. It can all too easily take our focus off the true significance of present events. So let us now look at Ezekiel 38 to see whether we have had the peace and safety and whether there has to be safety when Gog comes down.

It is my belief that when Gog does come down, **war against Israel may have already begun.**

8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, **and they shall dwell safely all of them.**

It looks at first sight that when Gog comes down, those regathered in Israel **are** dwelling safely. **This verb to 'dwell', however, is written in the Perfect form.** So what does that mean? Well there are no tenses in Hebrew eg Past, present or future. Time is expressed as Perfect or "completed" and imperfect or "incomplete". **The Perfect or "completed" action is usually PAST.**

So to say they are dwelling safely when Gog comes down may not be true. In fact Young's Literal Translation puts it as follows:

8 After many days thou art appointed, In the latter end of the years thou comest in unto a land brought back from sword, A people gathered out of many peoples, Upon mountains of Israel, That have been for a perpetual waste, And it from the peoples hath been brought out, **And dwelt safely have all of them.**

They have dwelt safely!! So Israel has been gathered and dwell in the land and at some point in the PAST they have dwelt safely!
Then what happens?

9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. 10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that **at the same time** shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

So at what time did Gog think this evil thought? *NB the evil thought must be BEFORE they ascend and come like a storm.*

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; **In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?**

God tells us that this onslaught was prepared well in advance. Even when Israel were dwelling safely. This is typical of Russian strategy. They are the master chess players planning many many moves ahead.

Putin came to power early 2000 – even then Israel were still living in "safety" the Al Aqsa Intifada had not begun the walls were not built.. It could have been at this very time that Gog thought this evil thought when Israel dwells safely.

So what is the evil thought?

11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, 12 to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

So the evil thought is to take a spoil from them which are at rest and dwell safely. That is Israel. But the point is this. It is planned when Israel are dwelling safely. However as verse 8 makes clear in Young's Translation when they do come down they (Israel) had dwelt safely at some point in the PAST. Therefore Israel may not be dwelling safely when Gog invades.

So this is a possible explanation? Firstly, Russia sees Israel living safely (confidently) 1980's to 2000; secondly at this time they have an evil thought to come down to Israel and take a spoil; thirdly this plan is put together when Israel IS living safely - 2000; fourthly the time of safety may have passed when they do come down 2006+. In other words war may have already broken out in the Middle East (possibly an attack on Israel sparks the final conflict this may well cause Israel/America to attack Syria hence no mention of Syria in Ezekiel 38) which then makes Russia put her plan into action to come down and take a spoil. This is surely far more likely. Why would Russia come down when a peace agreement had been agreed? After the recent Lebanon conflict, European navies and troops have been gathered to the border of Israel. When war finally breaks out surely Europe would quickly become embroiled in it along with Russia that also now has troops stationed there!

We can see how war could break out soon in the Middle East. Many now predict this event. When war begins we can see how very quickly all nations will become involved especially those listed in Ezekiel 38. America and Britain and the young lions could well be still embroiled in Iraq, and the onslaught from Russia, Europe and Africa leave them in the weakened position. They are only able to ask if these nations have come to take a spoil!

A spoil can readily be taken from the ruins of a nation that has already been defeated in war.

The sudden destruction spoken of in 1 Thessalonians after they shall SAY peace and safety is also worthy of note in this context. This passage does not lead us to expect a literal time of peace and safety. It doesn't say 'when there IS peace and safety' but 'when they shall SAY peace and safety (security)'. To be speaking of peace and safety does NOT mean that there IS peace and safety.

There is then a real possibility that the time of safety in Ezekiel 38 is over and war is imminent. War, not peace, could be the trigger that brings down the northern hordes into Israel. It may be sooner than we think!