

OPENING THE 6TH SEAL

A GREAT WAR IS COMING

(Revelation 6:12-17; Ezekiel 38 & 39)

SESSION #4 – WORKBOOK

Intended For

“KINGDOM WARRIORS IN THE ARMY OF GOD”

Unveiling Mysteries in the “Book of Revelation”

Based upon the Book:

GOD'S ANOINTED WARRIORS

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THE OPENING OF THE 6TH SEAL

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was **a great earthquake**, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "**Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb**, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" *Revelation 6:12-17*

Obviously this terrifying 6th seal event is yet future since nothing this extraordinary has occurred in human history since the time that John received this vision.

Key Points:

Observe those who are hiding themselves and trembling in fear of Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ whom they now recognize as the King of the universe.

- Many of them are the powerful ones of the world, strong in authority, who control the world's finances and dominate the social and political direction of mankind.
- They are also among those strong in wisdom – yet, people who have always denied the Christ in their worldly philosophies and who in their egotistical minds, ridiculed the people of the Lord who believe the message of the gospel.

However, this is not yet their end, for eventually this powerful group of worldly leaders, who are seen quaking in fear, will acclimate to this season of chaotic events and will organize, like ancient Babel, to fight against the Lord and His people.

- Only this time they will understand that they are aligning with the world and fighting against the almighty God of Christianity.
- Even though they now have no doubt that God is real, they will refuse to submit to Him. They plan to organize the entire world to fight against the Lord and His people.

Now in the past when significant disasters struck different nations of the world, the great majority of people did not see the hand of God in it, but simply assumed them to be natural disasters. But here they recognize that this great earthquake is from the Lord.

Okay, so what is it about this catastrophe that causes mankind to realize that it evolves from the wrath of God and is not simply a natural disaster?

- An obvious answer is that this sixth seal catastrophe is triggered by another event designed to strike at the heart of the Lord.
- A worldly event so massive and powerful against the Kingdom of God that only the Lord Himself could possibly bring about its defeat.

For Example:

- Approximately 3,500 years ago, the Lord brought ten plagues against Egypt, the most powerful nation in the known world and subsequently, drowned their mighty army in the Red Sea in the process of delivering His people from the world's bondage.
- This divine deliverance was known throughout all the Middle Eastern countries and they came to realize that the God of Israel was truly, the most powerful God, but they refused to submit to Him and give up their idolatrous lifestyle.

Although this awareness of God brought about a great fear upon these nations, nevertheless the great majority of them continued to oppose the people of God rather than unite with them.

Now a great event is about to take place that will grab the attention and concern of the entire world.

- An event that may possibly trigger the opening of the sixth seal as well as the subsequent trumpet judgments that we'll address in a future session.

Also it is very probable that there is a parallel connection between:

- The 6th seal event and the coming trumpet series.

Now let's look at a coming war that could well be the event that launches an era of great tribulation.

- **A mighty army is about to descend upon the nation of Israel.**

Notes:

A GREAT WAR BEGINS IN THE MIDDLE EAST (Ezekiel 38 & 39)

Approximately 2600 years ago, the Lord spoke to his prophet Ezekiel **concerning a great army from the north that was going to descend upon the nation of Israel in the “latter days.”**

The name “Gog” appears to be a title of the leader of these nations. Listen to the Lord speaking to the leader (Gog) of these nations who will come against Israel:

After many days you will be mustered. **In the latter years** you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them.

You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you. Ezekiel 38:8-9

Key Points:

This is an army made up of a coalition of several nations, being led by one of the largest and most powerful nations in the world.

- Ezekiel was told that this attack would occur in the “latter days” when the inhabitants of Israel have been gathered from many nations and have resettled in the land.

Since 1948 Israel has been an established nation whose citizens of Jewish descent have been gathered from various other nations around the world.

- Now, Israel is quite a small nation with a population approximating seven million yet, it is also a prosperous nation that is well-armed and nuclear capable, thanks to the United States who, together with Great Britain, has been its chief ally since its formation sixty years ago.
- However, as a nation, the great majority of the Jewish people and their government are virtually secular and though they respect their ancient heritage, they have little concern for the Lord who, through their father Abraham, established them as a nation

Some folks may wonder then, why does God care for them as a nation?

Notes:

(Slides # 11 & # 12)

OUR LORD'S UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

It goes back to His “Unconditional Covenant” over 4,000 years ago when He made the following promise to Abraham, the father of Israel:

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse**, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." *Genesis 12:2-3*

However, that covenant was not made because the Lord holds Israel to be a righteous nation, for He says,

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and **which you have profaned among them**.

And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. *Ezekiel 36:23-24*

(Slide # 13)

GOD'S HISTORICAL PURPOSE FOR ESTABLISHING ISRAEL

That through the Israelites and their testimony and/or their circumstances, **God will reveal Himself unto all the peoples of the earth.**

Now a “Great War” is about to be launched in the Middle East:

- The Lord Himself will initiate this Great War by putting “hooks” into the jaws of the enemies of Israel and dragging them to a place where He will pour out His wrath to such an extent, that the entire world will tremble,
- And like the ancient Egyptians, they will come to realize that the Lord of Israel is surely the one true God. **Yet, the majority of peoples will continue to hate Him.**

Notes:

A MIGHTY ARMY DESCENDS UPON ISRAEL

Now let's look at the nations that comprise this massive coalition that descends upon Israel with the intent to wipe out the Jewish race.

Key Points:

Modern day Russia, known as Magog in the bible is described as the leader of this “Axis of Evil” and Iran (Persia) is mentioned first among the countries that align with Russia.

A summary of the nations is as follows (Ezekiel 38:2-6):

1. Russia
2. Iran
3. Sudan
4. Ethiopia
5. Libya
6. Algeria
7. Tunisia
8. Turkey
9. Gomer = possibly Southeastern Europe
10. Many peoples with you = possibly Palestinians, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS

Note that these nations (with the exception of Russia) are mostly Islamic that have harbored a deep hatred for Israel since their formation as a nation.

- Ezekiel's description of this army suggests that it will be one of the largest and best equipped military forces ever assembled and by viewing their weaponry in modern terms, it appears to consist of a countless number of infantry troops & weaponry armed to the maximum.
- Ezekiel goes on to state that these powerful forces will advance on Israel like a “storm” and like a “cloud covering the land”. This certainly sounds like a massive onslaught of ground and air forces.

Notes:

ORACLE OF DAMASCUS

Isaiah 17:1

It is interesting to note that Syria who has historically been an enemy of Israel is not on the list;. One can surmise that this war will occur when Syria no longer has the military capability to join their allies in their mission to destroy the nation of Israel.

Key Points:

The absence of Syria presents a very interesting scenario for those who are familiar with “The Oracle of Damascus” where it was prophesized by Isaiah that a future time was coming when “**Damascus will cease to be a city and will become a “heap of ruins”**”. (Isa.17:1)

- This “Oracle of Damascus” goes on to describe the terror that will confront Israel and what will happen to their enemies. (Isaiah 17:12-14)
- Now, it may be that a war between Israel and Syria will **precede** the invasion of Israel by the military forces led by Russia and Iran.
- In fact, the destruction of Damascus and the defeat of the Syrian army may be the episode that ignites the Russian invasion of Israel.
- This could well be the “hook” in the Soviet’s jaws that the Lord uses to draw them into the war for there currently exists a Syrian-Soviet treaty where Russia has pledged to provide military support in the event that Syria becomes engaged in battle with Israel over the Golan Heights.

Notes:

RUSSIA'S MOTIVE FOR INVADING ISRAEL

Why would Russia be motivated to commit all of its forces to assist the Middle Eastern countries against their enemy, Israel?

Key Points:

Ezekiel tells us that Magog (Russia) desires “to seize spoil and carry off plunder”; which in our modern day makes a lot of sense since the Middle Eastern countries control the majority of oil resources which drive the world's economy.

- Russia definitely wants to regain its super-power status among the nations of the world and this alliance with the Middle Eastern nations may be an opportunity to unseat the United States as being the strongest and most influential political and economic power in the world.
- Now comes an opportunity to become the greatest and wealthiest nation on earth – this is definitely a “hook” that the Lord could use to draw Russia into this devastating conflict.

Iran's goals for the war are certainly different than Russia's, so why would Iran and other Middle Eastern countries welcome Russian support in their mission to wipe out Israel from the face of the world?

- Because Russia possesses the military capability and technology that these countries need in order to subdue Israel. The Islamic nations have warred against Israel since its formation and have met with hardly any success. **They need military help.**

Notes:

THE UNITED STATES WILL ABANDON IT'S SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

In his prophecy, Ezekiel rules out the possibility that any country will come to Israel's defense once Russia and Iran and their allies launch their invasion from the north.

Key Points:

So what is it that will cause our country to abandon its support for Israel at the moment of their greatest crisis?

- Obviously, the United States of today is a politically divided country. As Americans tire more and more of our Middle Eastern conflicts, the leftist voices grow louder in their support of a Palestinian State with no concern for the consequences to Israel.
- It is most probable that this war will occur when America is completely governed by leftist Democrats; a government that may decry an invasion of Israel, but would not militarily attempt to stop it.
- Ezekiel's prophecy indicates that there will be a verbal protest from Saudi Arabia and nations in the west (Tarshish) but obviously, they will not lift a hand to interfere.¹

It is obvious that without the intervention of the United States or a united Europe (which is becoming very anti-Semitic), there is no one else on the planet who could possibly stand against these tremendous forces that will soon be mustered against the nation of Israel.

In short, the kingdom of this world hates the nation of Israel and its citizenry wherever they are living; **but in reality, it is a hatred for the God of Israel.**

For Israel, even though it is primarily a secular culture, is still the nation that God uses to make His name known throughout the world:

"And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." *Ezekiel 39:7*

Notes:

¹ Ezekiel 38:13

THE INVASION FROM THE NORTH AND THE LORD'S RESPONSE

Ezekiel's prophecy reports that this military alliance will descend toward the mountains known today as the Golan Heights, which is Israel's northern border adjacent to Syria, Lebanon, and northern Jordan.

Ezekiel describes the following devastations that will be poured out upon these enemies of Israel when they reach the Golan Heights:

Ezekiel 38:18-23

But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger. For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare,

On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

- The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence.
- And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.
- I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother.
- With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and
- I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur.

So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

Such a shaking of the earth has never yet occurred throughout the history of mankind.

Notes:

THE INVASION FROM THE NORTH AND THE LORD'S RESPONSE

Note: The “great earthquake” described in this war may be the same “earthquake” that strikes the earth when the Lord opens the “sixth seal”.

To Summarize these devastations:

- The mountains and cliffs fall upon this invading army (Sounds like avalanches).
- Hailstones, fire, and sulfur rain down upon their heads.
- Deadly diseases sweep through their ranks
- Tremendous panic and confusion will eliminate discipline among the troops and they will begin to fire their weapons against one another causing a great massacre within their own ranks.
- This sudden devastation is so great that all the nations of the earth, will quake at the presence of the Lord as His fury is poured out on the armies of the enemies of His people.

When this occurs, there will no longer be any doubt that the God of Israel and Christianity is the one and true God.

Key Points:

This is a similar scenario to that ancient time when God delivered His people from Egypt and provided safe passage through the Red Sea and then, He wiped out the entire Egyptian army which was, in that period of history, the most powerful military force in the world.

- All the nations of that day knew that the God of Israel was God; but, this event will be so much more catastrophic.
- All the nations shall know that the God of Israel is the Lord and will not allow His name to be profaned anymore.
- That doesn't mean that they won't hate Him, but they certainly will be more careful in their future plans for world domination.

Notes:

A TIME OF CLEANSING OF THE LAND

Following the earthquake and the devastation that took place on the Golan Heights, the people of Israel who are unharmed will go out to clean up the land where they will gather all the wreckage of the weaponry for burning.

Key Points:

- It will take seven years of constant fires to cleanse the land of the residue of the planes, helicopters, artillery, tanks, trucks, jeeps, trailers, small arms, supplies, and all other equipment that is destroyed.
- The birds of the air and the beasts of the field will eat the flesh of this once mighty army and drink the blood of those previously considered “princes of the earth.”
- As for the remaining carcasses, we are told that all the people of the land of Israel would assist in burying the bodies in a massive graveyard east of the Dead Sea. Even though the entire population of Israel will be locating and transporting the bodies to this burial site, it will be seven months before the land will be completely clean of all the carcasses.
- The former leader of this army, identified as Gog will also be buried. Gog is not a personal name, but more likely a title like prince, or czar, or president, or general. The burial site will be called the Valley of Hamon-Gog.
- It appears as if hundreds of thousands will be killed during this coming day when the Lord magnifies His holiness as a Defender of His people in Israel.

Now - all the peoples of Israel shall know that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is truly their God who stands against their enemies.

This great earthquake will be the most catastrophic, worldwide event ever witnessed by mankind since the flood, but the end is not yet; events are about to intensify.

Notes:

CATASTROPHIC EVENTS WILL FOLLOW THIS WAR

There is another very significant event that takes place following the devastation resulting from this great earthquake. The Lord is not yet done, for Ezekiel receives this additional prophecy from the God of Israel.

I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the Lord. *Ezekiel 39:6*

This implies a sending of “fire” upon two groups of people - Russia and those on the coastlands. Sounds very much like a nuclear war.

Two Possible Scenarios to Consider:

First - World-Wide Nuclear War:

- When God’s earthquake hits Israel, fear, confusion, and chaos will cause exchanges of fire within the Russian forces. Escalation will ensue and the Russians may well think that the west is attacking them. It is possible that a nuclear exchange will begin inadvertently.
- Ezekiel does not identify the people inhabiting the “coastlands in security”; but he does say they will also be on the receiving end of this nuclear war. The United States is the only nation capable of engaging the Soviets in a major nuclear war and thus, it’s possible that Russia may launch the first strike against the west who will then retaliate.

Second – Coordinated Islamic Acts of Terrorism

The Muslim world has been anxiously waiting 1,200 years for the coming of their messiah, known as the Mahdi.

Now the chief sign which announces the coming of their Islamic messiah is a “massive earthquake” which is intended to launch a global war to kill and/or to subjugate Jews, Christians, and other “infidels.”

- This Islamic belief may very well cause them to launch an internal nuclear attack on various cities in the western world following the great earthquake that the Lord releases in the Golan Heights believing that this will initiate the return of their Mahdi messiah.
- Also, these Muslim terrorists on both the western and eastern continents could possibly detonate nuclear “suitcase bombs” in various cities in retaliation for what they see is an attack upon the Middle Eastern world.

This catastrophic effect of a probable nuclear attack may be what John describes in greater detail in the series known as “the seven trumpets which destroy 1/3 of the world”.

A PROBABLE NUCLEAR WAR - THE 6TH SEAL

Now, nuclear weapons were initially produced in our country for the purpose of protecting our freedoms. However today, they are also considered to be of great importance to an evil segment of mankind who desire worldly control.

Throughout history, God has used various nations to bring judgment on those nations who have forsaken Him or have done great evil against His people. This appears to be a judgment from God, as the 6th seal is opened - yet it is not the final judgment.

This is a war that God allows man to bring upon himself AND this is a war that will end national sovereignty among the nations and bring about a New World Order

Key Points:

The Probability Of A Nuclear War Being Launched By The Opening Of The 6th Seal.

The Great Earthquake

- It is probably the same earthquake that launches the destruction of the invading army from the north on the Golan Heights.

The sun becomes black as sackcloth & the moon becomes like blood

- This appears to be the result of the detonation of hundreds of nuclear warheads that will cause smoke to be launched into the atmosphere resulting in a miles-thick, dark curtain throughout the skies.

The stars fell to the earth as a fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale

- Nuclear hail is formed when large quantities of earth and water are sucked into the fireball and become vaporized.
- Subsequently, they gradually descend to the earth in what we call "fallout." At first, this fallout is generally the size of marbles, but over time - lighter particles continue to fall like dusty snow.
- However, - this could also be a vision of a fiery streak of rocket exhaust from nuclear tipped missiles as they sour through the atmosphere.

The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up

- A nuclear detonation will result in strong updrafts just seconds after the explosion. It then rises several miles into a darkening sky.
- Eventually, a gigantic mushroom shaped cloud is formed which gives the visual impression of the "sky vanishing like a scroll that is being rolled up."

It is possible that this catastrophic effect of a probable nuclear attack may be what the apostle John describes in greater detail in the series known as "the seven trumpets which destroy 1/3 of the world".

(Slide # 28)

THE GOG MAGOG WAR – A SECOND ONE COMING?

The Book of Revelation does speak of another Gog Magog war that occurs at the end of time.²

Key Points:

However, this is a second war that is yet further into the future, not this war that is recorded by Ezekiel. We know this for several reasons:

1. First, Ezekiel's war occurs relatively soon after the rebirth of the nation of Israel and the ingathering of the Jewish people from around the world. The second Gog Magog war occurs after Jesus has reigned on earth for 1,000 years.
2. Second, Ezekiel's war involves a fearsome, but limited coalition of countries that surround Israel. The war in Revelation involves all the nations from "every corner of the earth" coming to attack Israel.
3. Finally, after Ezekiel's war, life continues; bodies are gathered and buried for seven months; weaponry is gathered and burned for seven years. By contrast, the war in Revelation is followed immediately by the end of this world and the coming of a new heaven and earth. (This scenario will also will be addressed in a subsequent session)

(Slide # 29)

SUMMARY OF EVENTS CONCERNING WORLD-WIDE WARFARE

This Great War in Ezekiel 38 & 39 triggers an earthquake that may be the same earthquake in the 6th seal event.

- This earthquake, together with other catastrophic events destroy a mighty army and all those who survive do know that it was the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob that intervened and defeated the enemies of His chosen people.
- Yet, most of those who are seen trembling in fear of God will later arise to establish a one-world government much like ancient Babel, with the objective of wiping out the people of God from the face of the earth. However, following this war, they will make a seven-year covenant with the nation of Israel which they will break after 3 ½ years.

² Revelation 20:7-10

- Following this earthquake and the Middle Eastern War, there is an exchange of “fire” upon two groups of people - Russia and those on the coastlands.

It is highly probable that this is a nuclear war which is more specifically revealed in the coming judgments known as the “Seven Trumpets.”

(Slides # 30 & # 31)

WORLD WAR AND THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE

True followers of Jesus Christ may be the only friends Israel and the Jewish people will have left as this terrible war approaches.

- The Jews in America will undoubtedly be maligned & persecuted during this scheme of events. We must, with all of our heart, align ourselves with them and show our solidarity for their people and their nation.
- At the same time, we must remember that God loves the Muslim people of the Middle East as well as the Russians and others living in the former Soviet Union.
- Lovers of Christ must love and show compassion to all people. This doesn't mean excusing the actions of anti-Christian governments, **but it is believer's hard work to demonstrate and communicate Christ's love during mankind's darkest hours.**³

Jesus Christ is the one and only way to eternal life, and those who receive Him as their eternal Savior, are redeemed by this precious blood of the “Lamb of God”----- He is also the “Lion of Judah.” He is so mighty and powerful, yet possesses such a deep love for His people, that it is just incomprehensible.⁴

Notes:

³ Joel C. Rosenberg, *Epicenter : why the current rumblings in the Middle East will change your future*, (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2006) p. 250

⁴ Revelation 1:12-18; Daniel 10:5-12

THE NEXT SESSION:

First Read: Revelation 7

An Interlude that Precedes the Trumpet Judgments

GOD'S END-TIME WARRIORS = 144,000

- 144,000 “Servants = Army of God in the Last Days
- Who are the Sons of Israel Reflected by the Twelve Tribes?
- A Brief History of the Northern Kingdom of Israel
- Israel (Ephraim) Now Living Among the Nations
- Is America home to the descendants of Ephraim
- The Meaning of the Number “144,000”
- The Identity of the 144,000 Sealed Servants of God
- A Numberless Multitude Worshipping Before the Throne
- Leadership Qualities that Identify the “144,000”

Additional Notes:

THE LAMB OF GOD - OUR TRUE "COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF"

The days are rapidly approaching when a tremendous separation will take place among mankind.

Yet, during this present era of warfare, He reigns as our Commander-in-Chief and His Name continues to be the battle cry for those warriors who fight daily for righteousness and truth.

His name is Jesus, Our Lord, Our King,
Our Commander-in-Chief

- A truly mighty Leader who would never delegate assignments to His people that He Himself wouldn't readily embrace.
- A Commander that Christian warriors will readily follow not matter the danger or what costs have to be paid.
- These are warriors whose deepest desire is to hear Jesus welcome them with the following words when they enter into His presence:

..... 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' *Matthew 25:21*