

Study 5 - The Judgment Of God

Ezekiel 38:19-22 MKJV For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great quaking in the land of Israel, (20) so that 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 earth, and all the men on the face of the earth, shall quake at My presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. (21) And I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains, says the Lord Jehovah. Each man's sword shall be against his brother. (22) And I will judge him with a plague and with blood. And I will rain on him, and on his bands, and on the many peoples with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.

When the Lord pours out His judgment upon Gog and Magog it will include:

- a) An earthquake
- b) Hailstones, fire and brimstone
- c) "Blood"
- d) A plague
- e) Men turning against each other in battle

It appears that the entire army or close to it is wiped out so that the clean-up and burial takes seven months (Ezekiel 39:14). This annihilation of millions of people by God raises some fairly deep theological questions about the nature of God and of His wrath such as:

1. Aren't we in the "age of grace" when this is not supposed to happen?
2. Cannot God achieve His purposes without killing millions of people in the process?
3. Isn't this just plain barbaric and ruthless and unworthy of God?

The answer is complex. In part God's judgment is an 'equal and opposite' reaction to the massive army that is assembled against Israel. It is not disproportionate to the size of the crime. Also this is the 'beginning of the end', the age of the Gentiles has come to closure and all the Gentiles who can be saved are now saved, or very close to it. The age of grace is winding down and only the Jews remain in God's plan of salvation. It is now time for judgment to begin on the Gentile nations who have refused to believe the gospel.

The other part of the answer is that God is complex, indeed He is very, very complex! God is so complex that He cannot be put in a neat tidy theological box such as 'God is always nice'. God is truly a God of love, but He is also a God of justice. Then He is a God of mercy, whose mercy triumphs over judgment, and then He is a God who punishes down to the third and fourth generation of those who do iniquity.

I will freely admit that part of me recoils from the idea of God leading hundreds of millions of people into judgment and destruction. There is a terrible severity to God when His grace and patience are finally exhausted and this should lead us to fear Him. Even in the New Testament we are told to revere God with "fear and trembling".

Philippians 2:12-13 MKJV (12) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, cultivate your own salvation with fear and trembling. (13) For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Hebrews 12:25-29 MKJV See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape, those who refused him that spoke on earth, much more we shall not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven, (26) whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will not only shake the earth, but also the heavens." (27) And this word, "Yet once more," signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, (29) for also, "Our God is a consuming fire."

God is not always pliable nor is He indulgent. God disciplines even those He loves (Hebrews 12) and we are not to be overly casual in our relationship with Him. Now in our hearts we know God's love, and it seems impossible that God could be anything but love, but now and then we glimpse some of the "terribleness" of God Almighty. For instance we see the ruined life of a fallen Christian leader and tremble - knowing that sin does not go unpunished forever.

Yet God is not a sadist and He does not get any pleasure at all out of such judgment:

Ezekiel 18:23 MKJV Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked? says the Lord Jehovah. Is it not that he should turn from his ways and live?

Ezekiel 33:11 MKJV Say to them: As I live, says the Lord Jehovah, I have no delight in the death of the wicked, except in the turning of the wicked from his way, and so to live. Turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

However there comes a point where sin and rebellion prevail and people muster forces against God. They become hardened and defiant and unrepentant. Their minds become filled with evil plans and sin reaches a point where it simply MUST be dealt with. If Gog and Magog repented they would live. But they refuse to repent. Greed and hatred and darkness overtake them and they charge headlong into doom and destruction.

Gog and Magog is I believe the third greatest judgment that God will ever apply. The greatest being Armageddon, then the biblical Flood (both of which destroy all remaining life). Gog and Magog is not the same as the judgment that is found in Zechariah chapter 14 that involves an earthquake and a plague. This judgment seems to be much later in the prophetic calendar, and simultaneous with the return of the Lord with His Holy Ones. The Gog and Magog invasion is limited to Israel and it is Israel alone that experiences the great earthquake and there is no mention of heavenly signs such as it being "light at night". As I understand things Gog and Magog is not Armageddon but is a precursor to it. The "End of the Age" does not come immediately after or simultaneously with Gog and Magog, just a major political realignment and the spiritual revival of Israel. The Second Coming involves the elements of the earth being consumed by fire. Gog and Magog is just the destruction of a large army and the land continues afterward.

2 Peter 3:10-13 MKJV But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. And the earth and the works in it will be burned up. (11) Then, all these things being about to be dissolved, what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness, (12) looking for and rushing the coming of the Day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will melt away, and the elements will melt, burning with heat? (13) But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The judgment of Gog and Magog is designed to make the whole earth fear God. If this massive, but partial judgment is ignored, then the next judgment (the Second Coming) can justly be total and entire.