

Lecture 7 — Israel and the Assyrian.

Rom. 11; Ezek. 36 - 39.

Behold the Bridegroom!

Ten lectures on the second coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

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The question with which the apostle opens the 11th of Romans is an exceedingly important, and interesting one, not only to Israel but to us. Of course, when he says, "Hath God cast away his people?" he is not talking of Christians now, but of His ancient people Israel. At once the apostle says, "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Then he states most emphatically, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." Now, by casting them off, what the apostle has before his mind, clearly, is their being, as a nation, irrevocably rejected by God, to be no more taken up by Him. It is not a question of individual salvation here, in this part of Scripture; it is as a nation they are spoken of. Has He then cast them off? The answer is most distinct. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew," and the apostle goes on to quote a remarkable bit of their history in connection with Elijah, who, when he thought he was the only man standing for God, is reminded, that God had seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (ver. 5).

The apostle says they have fallen (verses 11, 12), but they have not been cast off — they have fallen, and God has allowed them, in the meantime, as a nation, to stay where they have fallen. They have fallen under the power of the Gentiles, and by their fall salvation is come to the latter. This fall refers, clearly, to their national captivity. You remember how they were carried off. Two and a half tribes were first carried into captivity, by the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings 15: 29), because of their idolatry. Then seven and a half tribes, the rest of Israel, were carried away to Assyria, by Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17: 6), and, about a hundred and forty years afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar carried off Judah, and Benjamin, the other two tribes, to Babylon, so that, in three sections, Israel as a nation was swept out of the land. A little remnant might, and did return in the days of Ezra, and Nehemiah; still, speaking broadly, Israel has fallen, they have been rejected, they are not in the land God gave to their fathers, and the question is this, Is God going to restore them? We shall see, clearly, that God is going to restore them, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11: 29).

Very beautiful is the way in which the apostle brings in, in this 11th chapter of Romans, our relation to Israel. The blessing of God comes to us Gentiles in the moment of, and because of, their rejection. He says in verse 11, "Through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles."

Why, beloved friends, you and I ought to go down on our knees, and thank God for what has happened. We should never have heard of the Saviour, if it had not been for the sin of Israel. When the Messiah came, had He been accepted, the kingdom would have been established in Jerusalem, and we should not have had the Gospel, as we have it now, but "through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles." You see the Gentiles, the nations of the earth, were, in no sense, in relationship with God. Sinners of the Gentiles are stated to be "afar off," but first, as a consequence of the sin of Israel, that compelled God to judge them, and cast them out of their land, and secondly, because the remnant, when restored, rejected their Messiah, — God, as you know, had the temple destroyed, the city burned down, and the Jews were scattered to the four winds of heaven. God has, so to speak, dropped them for the time being, and He has turned round to the Gentiles. Thank God, indeed, for the news, that "Through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles."

I should like to pause a moment, and ask whether you are saved? If you are not, you have somehow escaped what God is presenting to you, for "salvation is come unto the Gentiles." The Messiah crucified by Israel, God has raised and glorified, and the Holy Ghost has come down, and for eighteen centuries has the blessed Spirit of God been carrying out the testimony about Jesus, the exalted Saviour in glory, and been turning the eyes of sinners, on earth, to that Saviour in glory. But God is about to replace His ancient people in their land, and establish them there, for He promised Abraham, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." That event is preceded by all the Lord's evangelists being called home. The Gospel of God's grace then ceases, but the Lord Jesus is still in heaven as I speak, the sweet note of the Gospel still rings out in this world, and if there should happen to be, in this room tonight, only one unsaved person, I would earnestly say to that soul, join now the company of those that know the heavenly Saviour, who have believed, through infinite grace in Him, and received God's salvation. I know perfectly well you may reply, Nobody can know they are saved. But that reply is a mistake, for here the apostle says, "Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." Salvation you may, know, you ought to know. The blessed news is this, that there is forgiveness, peace, pardon, and access to God, through Jesus Christ, for any poor sinner that is on earth at this moment.

There are fuller, and deeper, because heavenly, blessings to be had now, through the rejection of the Lord Jesus, than ever Israel will know, in the day of their revived glory, and their restored kingdom, under the King, of whom I will speak a little further on. Therefore, if there be a soul in this hall, that has not yet been saved, pause, think, and ask these questions, Why has God sent the Gospel to me? Why has God not yet sent back His Son, the Lord Jesus, to reestablish Israel in their land? Why is He tarrying? He is tarrying because "blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (ver. 25). What does He mean? This. He delays till the last Gentile has been brought into the Church of God, till the last member of the body of Christ has been called, reached, converted, and baptized, by the Holy Ghost, into that body. Were you ever struck with the expression, "the fulness of the Gentiles"? We saw, on a previous evening, what was meant by "the times of the Gentiles," the time when the Gentiles rule, and the Jews are nowhere. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," has, however, a different significance, viz., that Israel will not be blessed until the Gospel has reached the last soul, that will listen to the testimony of this heavenly Saviour, and thus the body of Christ completed, the Bride of Christ is also complete, and the Bridegroom comes into the air and catches up His own people, to meet Him there.

The fulness of the Gentiles has then come. God will begin to put His hand upon the Jew once more, and the long night of their sorrow, and dispersal, will end in a morning of joy, and gladness, for here it is stated distinctly, "So all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (verses 26, 27). And the reason is this, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (ver. 29). He has let them drop for the time being, and they are under the chastening hand of the Lord, but the time is coming, and I believe in my heart rapidly drawing near, when God will show how true is His word, how faithful is He to His promises, and how blessedly His Son "Jesus Christ was" (and yet will be) "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15: 8). Not one promise, that God has made, shall ever fail.

I now turn to some scriptures, to show the way in which the Word of God informs us, that He will yet gather, and lead His people, and plant them in the land, given to their fathers. The kingdom of Israel was broken up in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, clave to the house of David, and they are spoken of in the Old Testament as Judah. The ten tribes who revolted, under Jeroboam, are spoken of constantly, in the historical books, as "the house of Israel," and in the prophets, under the title of Ephraim. Judah, and Ephraim, are the technical terms, used in the later books of the Old Testament Scripture, to express the two divisions of the nation. Now, we have already seen, that' it was at the hands of the representatives of the two tribes, that the Lord Jesus died, and therefore, that in the judgment of God, the heaviest end of His lash must fall upon these two tribes, who were guilty of the murder of their Messiah. We have observed on a previous occasion, these words: "It shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13: 8, 9). I have already pointed out, that we have presented to us there, the little company spoken of in the Psalms, and in the Prophets as "the remnant" of the two tribes, who, gathered back into their own land, will be looking to the Lord for deliverance. They are chastened in the land, purged, so much so, that two-thirds will die. Only one-third shall escape the tribulation, which, elsewhere, is spoken of as God's "indignation," at that moment.

And what of the other ten tribes? It would appear that they are not restored to Palestine till a later date. So far as I can see from Scripture, the return of the Son of Man in power, and majesty, to the earth, will really take place before the mass of the ten tribes is recovered, and restored. Look at Matthew 14: in confirmation of that statement. Speaking of His return, the Lord tells His disciples this: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24: 30, 31). With this statement agrees that of the prophet Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the

holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isa. 27: 12, 13). It appears to me that only the remnant of repentant Judah will welcome the Messiah, when He does return in glory, but, having returned, He will have the great trumpet blown by His many angels, and thus will regather His elect of Israel.

By way of confirmation of these passages, turn back to the 11th of Isaiah, where we find a fuller prophetic statement by the Spirit of God (ver. 10). "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim" (Isa. 11: 10-13). The two tribes and the ten are to dwell together in amity.

Now go to the last chapter of Isaiah, and you will find further testimony to the same point. It contemplates the moment when the Lord has come to the earth. You read at the 18th verse — "It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory: and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66: 18-21). Again, you have indicated that He gathers His people Israel from all nations, and, therefore, I think the idea, that the British nation is the ten tribes, is foreign to Scripture. I think this expression, "out of all nations," should at once dispel the illusion. The truth is that no one knows where they are, save God Himself, and when the time comes, He will find them, and bring them, in His own way.

The Book of Ezekiel gives us, in much detail, the subject before us. "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you; and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury. poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God. . . . I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered: and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up

mine hand to give it to your fathers" (Ezek. 20: 33-39, 41, 42). The statement is clear. God is going to gather them out, and bring them into their own land; but, observe, He purges them on the way. There is this difference between the two tribes, and the ten. The two tribes go into Palestine in unbelief, and are purged in the land. The ten tribes are brought out of the nations in unbelief, but they are purged, by God, on their way to the land. just as their fathers fell in the wilderness, so will God test the children, in the time to come.

Turning now to another prophet, we find that the truth Ezekiel affirms, Amos glowingly corroborates. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9: 8-15). He is going to gather them out of the nations, and, although He chastens them, "the sinners shall die," — that is the very moment that He raises up the tabernacle of David, and closes up the breaches thereof. He restores Israel to their pristine glory — even greater glory than under the reign of Solomon.

I would like now to turn to Ezekiel once more, to see the elaborate care that God takes, by His Spirit, to make all this plain and certain for the faith of His ancient people. I am going to ask you to look at the close of this prophecy, a little in detail, because it is exceedingly interesting. Let us look at the 34th chapter, and you will read, "For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezek. 34: 11, 12). Oh what a cloudy and dark day has Israel known, for over two thousand five hundred years, but if I could only speak to those twelve tribes, I would say, There is a good time coming for you — there is at hand a moment when the Lord will redeem this wonderful statement on His part. "And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture. [Oh, friends, God is a wonderful God.] And upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost" — blessed be His name — "and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment" (verses 13-16). God will break down and judge the guilty in Israel, just as He does the

Gentile. You will find that God will break you down, hardy sinner that you are, very soon, if you are not brought to repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, in the midst of beautiful promises, I find God saying, "I will destroy the fat and the strong." I know perfectly well that expositors want to apply these scriptures to Christians. Nay, they do not belong to us. I do not object to the application of a scripture, but I want the meaning, and interpretation, of those blessed, and beautiful promises, which are to me exquisitely lovely.

Pass now to Ezekiel 36 and 37, which run together, even as 38 and 39 go together. I do not say they are absolutely consecutive, though I conclude they are, for I do not see how that which Ezekiel 38 and 39 bring out, could take place, until that which chapters 36 and 37 unfold has transpired. To them I now turn your attention, assured that you will be filled with admiration of the goodness, the mercy, and the long-suffering patience of God, as you look at what He states there.

"Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha! even the ancient high places are ours in possession: therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despightful minds, to cast it out for a prey." God says, I know what you think. You think you are going to possess the land. I will tell you what I am going to do — "Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy, and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." That is like God. It is better at the end, after Israel has sinned, than before they sinned. It is exactly the same with us. After we have sinned, and are on our road to hell, what does God do? He opens up heaven, and says, Come this way.

But, in continuation of God's words to the land, we read, "Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord God, Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations: therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 36: 1-

14). You recollect that when the spies went up to the land (Num. 13: 31-33), they, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, said it was "a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" — so barren that people could not live on it. You see that is exactly what Palestine is now. Many cannot live therein, as they do not yet get "the first and the latter rain," and, until that comes, it will not be able to feed the people. But the Scripture says, "I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" (Deut. 11: 14), It will yet bring forth abundantly, for the curse will be removed, and Jesus will be there. In that day "the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." It is a very remarkable statement, but it is only God's way of showing how wonderfully fruitful everything is to be in the day here spoken of.

It is the land that the Lord first addresses, and further down in this chapter He talks to those who shall be the people thereof. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I give to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (verses 24-28). I know that people say, We thought that was only a figure of what the Gospel is. Does not the Lord Jesus make allusion to this scripture when he says to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" I have no doubt that the Lord did allude to this, along with other scriptures, when He said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). That is exactly what will take place in Israel.

Scripture abounds in figures, hence I do not understand by water, either in this scripture, or in Isaiah 44: 3, what we are accustomed to think of as the material water that men wash in. It is a figure of the Word of God, applied in the energy and power of the Spirit of God, by which men will be blessed. New birth is ever, and only, by the Word of God, of which water is the figure, and that such is so is abundantly plain in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Some have thought that to mean baptism. I do not believe it at all. There is no word about baptism in either chapter. In Ezekiel 36, what God says is, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." He takes away the heart of stone, and gives them the Spirit. It is the new birth through which they are to pass — even as you and I have to pass through it now, if we are to enter God's kingdom. It is plain that it is not baptism, by the fact of our blessed Lord taking water, and washing all His disciples' feet, and then saying, "Ye are clean, but *not all*" (John 13: 10). Later on the same eventful night He says to His disciples, "Now are ye clean" — through the water I used before Judas went out? *No*. "Now are ye clean through *the Word* which I have spoken unto you" (John 15: 3).

With this also fully agrees that which we read in Ephesians, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5: 25, 26). Again, in James we read, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1: 18), and in Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of

incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1: 23). In plain language the water is the figure of the Word of God, by which the Lord converts the soul, whether of the godless Gentile now, or of the repentant Israelite in the day yet to come. The word enters and is the means of cleansing. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Ps. 119: 9). It is only by the Word of God that the soul is new-born. Whether you are new-born I do not know, but I desire to remind you of the universal applicability, of what the Lord says to Nicodemus, as well as to you, and to me also, "Ye must be born again." Doubtless the Lord knew it would surprise his listener a bit — and many others since — and therefore He said, "*Marvel not* that I said unto you, *ye must be born again.*" Whether in the day of Israel's restoration, or in the present day, the new birth is an absolute moral necessity if we are to be blessed of God. Jesus tells you how it can be. The Son of Man is lifted up on the cross, and you have to believe in the dying Saviour, in order to get life to your dead soul.

Well, now, it is perfectly plain what God will do. Israel will be converted to God, new-born, and they will possess the Holy Ghost — not in the same way as the Christian does now, but the Spirit of God will be within them. Thus the new birth, and the possession of the Spirit will lead them into relationship with God, known in grace. "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (ver. 28).

Passing now to Ezekiel 37, we come to a passage familiar, I doubt not, to everybody in this room. The valley of dry bones has been, no doubt, before you many times, as the subject of a Gospel address. I should like, however, to show you what I believe to be God's meaning in the scripture. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about; and, behold there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry." *Dry*, that is exactly what the sinner is; you are very dry, you have not got a bit of life, or sap in you. Dry bones may very well describe your spiritual state, if you are an unconverted sinner, no matter what your profession may be. "And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." I have no objection at all to the extraction of the Gospel here, and I know that dear old Dr Guthrie preached lovely sermons from this chapter, and got many a conversion through it too, but then you see the application, and the interpretation of a scripture, are two totally different things. Well, "hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are" — what? Poor Gentile sinners converted, by the Gospel? No. "Son of man, these bones are *the whole house of Israel*: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost:

we are cut off for our parts." That is what they are saying today, We are cast off, we are rejected of the Lord. "Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Ezek. 37: 1-14).

The grave here, clearly, is their national grave, and corresponds exactly with the last chapter of the book of Daniel, where you recollect it says (Dan. 12: 1), — "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." That is, in that day, I do not think all will be saved, but when the word of the Lord comes out, the nation will be revived, and the people, whom nobody can put their hand upon now, God will put His hand upon, and will find them, and restore them, and the whole house of Israel will be replaced, by the hand of the blessed God, in their own land.

It is very beautiful to note the way that God repeats a truth, thereby to cause the faith of His people to be confirmed. In the 36th chapter you have the doctrine of Israel's restoration, in the 37th you have a striking figure of their national resurrection, and then you get another view of it in the two sticks. God comes to great detail, in the latter half of chapter 37: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God." Oh! glorious promises, for this ancient, and down-trodden people. But more: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd. . . . And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein: even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. 37: 15-25).

But, who is David? I have no doubt he is the Lord Jesus. You say, Why David? and why not Solomon? David is a type of Jesus as a king, but a king who is patient with his enemies. Solomon judged his immediately. I have no doubt that when the Lord reproduces the kingdom, He will do as David did, He will not put His hand on His foes, in the tremendous hurry, that you, or I, would do. He is patient. Why it is David, is this, that it is more in the shepherd character, and because he did not deal with, and judge all his enemies, when he might have so done. There were several enemies left when David died, and it was Solomon, who executed righteous judgment, upon those godless men.

Our chapter concludes, "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek. 37: 27, 28). They are re-established in the land, and Christ reigns over them, and every promise of God is fulfilled. What a happy, and glorious day, for Israel will that indeed be!

No sooner is Israel possessed of the land in peace, than they are again, and finally, assaulted by Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38, 39). These must not be confounded with those spoken of in Revelation 20. The Gog, and Magog, of Revelation are not brought into view until the millennium has passed by. And they come, "from the four quarters of the earth." Here, clearly, Gog and Magog are a huge host, gathered from comparatively contiguous lands to Palestine, and led on, I have no doubt, by the antitype of Israel's ancient, and ruthless foe, the Assyrian, or "King of the North." You, who are conversant with the Old Testament, will remember, that as long as Israel were in outward relationship with God, and were owned by Him as His people, and were living in the land He had given them, when they were Ammi, *i.e.*, my people (Hosea 2: 1), it was the Assyrian that oppressed them. It was when they were cast off by God, and called Lo-Ammi, *i.e.*, not my people (Hosea 1: 9), that the power of Rome came in. at length completely subjugating the Jews, destroying their city and temple, and scattering them to the winds of heaven, as we have seen. The beast and the false prophet, the fourth empire, revived in Satanic energy, will yet again oppress the Jews, who get back to Palestine, before Messiah returns. The Assyrian oppressed Israel while they were in, and before they, as the fruit of their sins, lost, the land, at the time of their captivity. The Spirit of God gives us here a prophetic picture, of what will be yet attempted, by the old foe. No sooner are they replaced in their own land, than the old desire of the Assyrian, to despoil God's people, and possess their land, breaks forth again, and the remarkable details of the 38th, and 39th chapters, come before us.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (Ezek. 38: 1-3). The expression rendered in your English bible, "chief prince," is the Hebrew word (Ros), which learned, and perfectly competent men, of all nations, and schools of thought, agree in telling us, is the old proper name for Russia. Gog is the name of the leader, of this threefold band of Gentiles, from the north, and east, and south, while his territory is called the land of Magog — the Scythia of the ancients. Impelled by territorial greed, this Prince of Rosh (Russia, Meshech (Muscovy), and Tubal (Tobolsk), the three great divisions, of the vast European, and Asiatic possessions, of the Russian empire, leads his countless hosts against the Holy Land, saying, "I will go up to the land of unwallled villages" (ver. 11). He goes, but only to

his utter destruction, as we shall see. You know that the great desire of Russia is territorial aggrandisement, and for centuries she has been making her plans to get possession of India. Peter the Great said his children were never to rest, until they possessed India, and Constantinople, with Turkey in Europe. There are remarkable reasons for that; it is not only that they would have the countries named, as added bits of land, but then, he thought, they would be able completely to dominate the Holy Land. To possess the land where the Lord Jesus lived and died, would gain for them a character for sanctity, which would admirably suit a power, whose superstition is as notorious as its greed. That land has for nearly two thousand years been a bone of contention. It was the cause of all the. crusades. It, however, specially belongs to God, and His earthly people, Israel, and they will yet enjoy it.

"Thus saith the Lord God, In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army" (Ezek. 38: 14, 15). Lured by the apparently defenceless condition of Israel, and ignorant that God is there, Gog puts forth his mighty hand, with a desire to annex that land, and the history of the invasion is given in these two chapters, telling alike his folly, and utter overthrow. Gog comes with his hosts and allies, an overwhelming army, and God cuts off five-sixths of them (Ezek. 39: 2). So mighty is the multitude, with bows, and arrows, that we read: "They that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests: for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God" (verses 9, 10). Tremendous, indeed, must be the number of warriors that come against them, since Scripture says they will not need to cut firewood for seven years, and it will take seven months to bury the dead in their appointed graveyard, the valley of Hamon-gog (verses 11-15).

In conclusion, let me, at this point, connect one or two passages, to show you the place which the Assyrian — who is the forerunner and type of Gog — holds in Scripture. In Isaiah 10 you find this mighty power spoken of in relation to Israel: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in thine hand is mine indignation" (ver. 5). God used this power, as His rod, to chasten His people. Again: "It shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood" (verses 12-15). God, so to speak, says to this mighty power, I am using you to chastise my erring people, but if you lift up yourself against Me, then I must bring you down. Again: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff

against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction" (verses 24, 25).

With the fall of the Assyrian, with the crushing of the power of Eastern Europe, in that day put down by the Son of Man, will cease the chastening, by the Lord, of His people. The last foe to be judged is the one who was their earliest — the Assyrian. This is fully predicted in Isaiah 14: "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden from off their shoulders" (ver. 25). Then there is further testimony in Isaiah 30: "For the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king also it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (verses 30-33).

The prophet Micah, also, speaks of the Assyrian being overthrown by Christ. "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the lands of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when, he treadeth within our borders" (Micah 5: 4-6).

We get further light on this in Daniel 11: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over" (ver. 40). "The king" spoken of in verse 36, is antichrist, reigning in the Holy Land. Against him comes, first "the king of the south," or Egypt, which lies south of Palestine. He is soon followed by "the king of the north," that Syrian district, north of Palestine, now belonging to Turkey in Asia, but which will eventually fall into the hands of the great north-eastern power — Gog — which we have been looking at in Ezekiel. These two powers both oppose antichrist, "the king," and each other, but "the king of the north" appears to be victorious, for "he shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but there shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon" (ver. 41). "The king" we hear no more of here. His fate we have seen elsewhere (Rev. 19: 20). "The king of the north" seems to triumph everywhere, but Edom, Moab, and Ammon escape his clutches. Why? The answer is found in Isaiah 11: 14. Blood relations, and among the earliest enemies of Israel, God will not let their chastisement come from any hands but from those they have so needlessly injured. They are shortly after entirely subjugated by the victorious Israelites.

"He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps" (verses 42, 43). This

clearly shows that "the king of the north" is inimical to "the king of the south," and in fact ravages his kingdom, apparently much changed from what it now is — Egypt, then, being as rich, as she is now notoriously poor. "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (verses 44, 45). What the tidings are, out of the east, and out of the north, that trouble him, we are not told. Whatever they be, he hastens back from Egypt, plants the tabernacles of his palace "between the seas" — the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas — and there comes to his end, cut off, not by man, but by God.

With this scripture, I would just connect, what we get in the close of Zechariah (Zech. 12 and 14), where Jerusalem is made "a burdensome stone for all people." Against it all nations gather — and at first victory seems to lie with the foe, for the city is taken, and half of the city goes into captivity. This may be possibly connected with the downward march of the king of the north. Thereafter the Lord appears, and goes forth "to fight against these nations." Then it is, that "his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14: 4), which will be cloven in twain — and the word shall be fulfilled, "At evening time it shall be light" (ver. 7).

The way is now clear for the reign of the Son of Man. All is indeed wonderful that has led up to it. The Church is gathered out, and the Lord coming in the air, every believer is caught up. The sleeping saints raised, the living changed, are all caught up in His likeness. And what is the next thing? The Jews restored, and purged, are seen waiting for the coming of the Son of Man. The Son of Man comes, and then all Israel is brought back to the land, and every foe is set aside. The moment is drawing near now when many a prophetic scripture will have its fulfilment, and at that time the Lord will fill the earth with gladness. We may well say in our hearts, Lord, hasten that day. If you are not on the Lord's side, let me once more implore you now. Do not hesitate, because the Lord is coming. Perhaps this is the last Gospel call that you will ever hear. Before tomorrow's sun rises, we may have gone up, and you who are not His, will be left behind, to mourn your folly for ever.