

day usage. It depends on identifying the peoples and areas they referred to when the prophecy was given. The ancient names of Rosh, Meshech, Tubal and also Magog can undoubtedly be linked to areas roughly covered by parts of present-day Russia and its environs. For a thorough analysis of the names in Ezekiel 38 and discussion of their possible link to modern names we recommend reading *Ezekiel* by Brother John Allfree (published by the Christadelphian Scripture Study Service).*

We would agree that the present situation in Israel does not fully match the criteria required by Ezekiel 38. Many Jews looking at their personal local circumstances at present cannot feel that they “dwell safely”. However, as a nation Israel is in a much safer position than in former years. Through agreements brokered by the Americans it has made peace with several of its neighbours. In addition it is generally agreed that it has military superiority in the region. Israel feels confident that it can deal with any future Arab aggression which may occur. Despite recent violence in Israel the overall trend is working towards the situation required in Ezekiel 38.

Ezekiel 36, 37, and 38 overlap each other. For example, in chapter 36 we read: “and they shall know that I am the LORD [Yahweh]” (v. 38). In 37:28 it is written: “And the heathen shall know that I the LORD [Yahweh] do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore”. 38:23 states: “Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD [Yahweh]”. The chapters arrive at the same point but do so from different perspectives. Note in particular that 38 and 39 are addressed to Gog and Magog. They are manifestly new sections separate from what has gone before.

Brother Davison’s own summary of the chapters is obviously correct as far as it goes, but it does not make sense if taken chronologically. For example, in his summary the restoration and spiritual renewal of Israel comes before the valley of dry bones. If Israel are restored and spiritually renewed how can they still be represented by dry bones? In chapter 37 he says we have “the advent of King Jesus”. However, if the summary is chronological, Israel has already been restored and spiritually renewed before his advent. But this will not happen before the advent of Christ (Zech. 12:10). In 36:35-38 and 37:24-28

the Kingdom is clearly established. But according to Brother Davison’s chronology the Kingdom is not established until chapter 39.

When Gog comes it will be from “the north parts” (38:15). When we move north of Israel it is not until we come to Russia that a country which matches 38:2 is found. When we look at Israel over the past few years we see a country moving slowly but surely, through treaty and trade, towards the safety and prosperity spoken of in Ezekiel 38. The evidence of history and current events confirms that the traditional interpretation of Ezekiel 38 is correct.

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Frogs, prophecies and the false prophet

Regarding Brother Roger Evans’ letter (Dec. 2000, p. 455), as an ex-Roman Catholic I would ask him to consider the following.

As a child I was taught that I had an immortal soul which was lozenge-shaped and lived within the chest diaphragm. If I died with a venal sin (small spot) on it I would go to purgatory. If I died with a mortal sin (soul completely black) on it, I would go to hell for ever and ever. I will spare you the details of what hell was supposed to be like.

I was taught that the church was one, holy, catholic and universal. All matters relative to salvation were completely within the province of the priesthood who were sanctified and ordained. Forgiveness of sins was only available by absolution at the confessional.

I never heard of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, Israel, the promises, the eternal covenant, or the covenants with Abraham and David. I never heard that marvellous word ‘righteousness’. I never knew that God had a Name, that wonderful Name, which is above every name.

Furthermore, the church claimed the power of intervention in the invisible world, and intercessory power in the realm of heaven. So many tellings of rosary beads or praying for the intentions of ‘our Holy Father, the Pope’ would guarantee so many days ‘plenary indulgence’, that is, a lessening of the days spent in purgatory.

Brother Evans’ use of the term “Victorian negativity” betrays a lack of historical perspective. As far as we can trace records, there have been

* See review, Jul. 2000, p. 281.

protests against Roman dogma and power, and many of those who did so lost their liberty or life (see page 7 of the second edition of *The Protesters*).

Our brother seems to have lost sight of the fact that to be successful a false prophet must look like a true one. The present pope may be personally genuine, we just do not know. But what cannot be denied is that he and his church do not teach truth. If the political power which they so ardently seek is given to them again, will they act in the future as they have acted in the

past, that is, as a dragon in lamb's clothing?

In the late nineteenth century the Protestant writer Grattan Guinness asked the cardinal inquisitor of Rome what the future held. The reply was, "*Semper aedem*" (we never change).

I would point out that I have Irish blood relations who are pious Catholics and whose lives, in relative terms, are good lives. Nonetheless, what they believe is not God's Truth, and they remain in thrall to Rome and its priests.

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Science

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Science and the Creator

The birds make their nests

David Burges

"The trees of the LORD are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, where the birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees" (Ps. 104:16,17, NKJV).

AS WORSHIPPERS of the living God, it seems only right that we should appreciate the beauties and wonders of His Creation around us. In particular, many of us derive great pleasure from observing birds, whether the common varieties that visit our gardens or the less familiar species found in the countryside, in the mountains or by the sea. It is clear that this fascination was shared by some of the inspired writers of the Scriptures, including the psalmist quoted above, and especially Jeremiah, whose prophecy contains at least eighteen references to birds.¹

"The birds of the air have nests"

The Lord Jesus, too, drew some of his lessons from the birds and their behaviour, including their building of nests: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58). There are several references to nests in Scripture, including the prohibition in the Law against taking both a mother bird and her eggs or young from the nest for food (Deut. 22:6).

Perhaps we give little consideration to the materials that birds utilise in their nest construction. It might be thought that any types of twigs and leaves would do. Recent research² has been revealing, however, that birds deserve the title of nature's apothecaries, and that many species actually fumigate their nests with specific plants in order to protect their offspring and assist in their survival. Birds' plumage offers an attractive environment to a wide variety of microbes and blood-sucking parasites, which can take refuge in the nest and infect the vulnerable chicks when they hatch. Defences against such organisms are therefore vital.

It has been known for a long time that birds add fresh green foliage to their nests, and there

1. 4:13,25; 5:27; 7:33; 8:7(×4); 9:10; 12:4,9(×2); 15:3; 16:4; 17:11; 19:7; 34:20; 48:28,40; 49:16,22; 50:39. This list was compiled and sent to the author by a Sunday School scholar, following a passing remark made during a Sunday evening Bible address.
2. "Kills all known germs", Bryant Furlow, *New Scientist*, 22 Jan. 2000, pp. 36-9.