

Purim and Ukraine's Mordecai

The Russian [invasion of Ukraine](#) has started a war that we can only hope and pray will remain somewhat contained.

But one acre that is bombed is one acre too many.

Sadly, whenever there are imperial aspirations, aggression seems to lead the way.

It is nothing new. The rise and fall of empires have been chronicled throughout history as well as the rise and fall of their leaders. Every now and then a Godly leader will rise up, like Queen Hadassah (Esther) whose influence saved the Jewish people in Persia.

But right now, we are witnessing firsthand a ruthless leader who does not care whether or not he has to destroy every square inch of land in Ukraine and kill thousands upon thousands in order to win his selfish war.

There is more going on with this war than many people realize. The region north of the Black Sea is very much indicated in Biblical prophecy, and we should not be surprised at all with these current events. I recently wrote [this post](#) discussing Ezekiel's prophecies that relate to the war against Ukraine.

Of note, Russia's invasion happened just weeks before the [yearly commemoration of Purim](#).

As you will see, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy can be likened to a modern day Mordecai.

Purim – a celebration of victory over antiSemitism

Purim was established in ancient Persia by Queen Hadassah (Esther), Mordecai, and the Jews following the [terrifying](#)

persecution devised by the evil Haman to “ruin and destroy” everyone of Jewish descent. You can read all about it in the book of [Esther](#).

Like imperialism, anti-Semitism is nothing new, either. But through prayer and fasting and reliance on the God of Israel, the Jewish people of Persia lived to celebrate victory:

Mordecai recorded these events and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, urging them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar every year as the days when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into celebration. These were to be days of feasting, celebration and sending presents of food to one another and giving gifts to the poor.

So the Jews agreed to continue the commemoration they had begun, and do what Mordecai had written to them. For Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the pur—that is, the lot—to ruin and destroy them. But when it came to the king’s attention, he issued a written edict that the wicked scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. (For this reason, these days were called Purim, from the word pur.) Therefore because of everything in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, the Jews established and took upon themselves, upon their descendants, and upon all who joined with them, that they would commemorate these two days in the way prescribed and at the appointed time every year. These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family and in every province and every city. These days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor their remembrance perish from their descendants.

Then Queen Esther the daughter of Abihail, and also Mordecai

the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. He sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of *shalom* and truth, to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them and just as they had established for themselves and their descendants, matters regarding their times of fasting and lamentations. Esther's command confirmed these regulations about Purim and it was written into the records. (*Esther 9:20-32, emphases added*)

Ukraine's Jewish heritage

According to the *Museum of Jewish Heritage*, 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

1.5 MILLION.

That's like every single resident of San Antonio. Gone.

Or Philadelphia. Gone.

Prior to the war started by Russia, the [European Jewish Congress](#) estimates that somewhere between 360,000 and 400,000 Jews were living in Ukraine. Some believe those estimates are too high, however. In any case, there were far fewer Jews in Ukraine following Hitler's regime than there were one hundred years ago, but the numbers were gradually and steadily rising. Jewish influence had become more embraced in Ukrainian culture.

Proof? The Ukrainians elected their first Jewish President in 2019. The Prime Minister is also Jewish. No where else on earth are a nation's top leaders all Jewish except Israel!

Leading by example and refusing to

flee

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was a comedian before being elected president. No one imagined he would have to be a wartime leader and when the conflict began, I'm sure he had his doubters. He probably even doubted himself.

But when you fear the LORD, He grants favor, agility, bravery, and wisdom. I pray for President Zelenskyy. That the LORD will continue to protect him and his family. But I am not naive to think he is not in grave danger.

The people of Ukraine as a whole are brave. It is so obvious by watching the news. Civilians who have never held a gun before are now fighting to protect their country and their families. I really am a pacifist at heart, but I do commend those who have taken up arms as a last resort.

Their President has also demonstrated resilience and valor. The United States offered to help him leave, but his now famous response, "I need ammunition, not a ride," demonstrates incredible leadership. President Zelenskyy could have easily escaped to safety, abandoning all Ukrainians left behind. But he refused. He chose to stay.

When the edict was made to annihilate the Jews in Persia, Esther's cousin Mordecai didn't flee, either. Instead, Mordecai turned to the LORD. He ["went out into the middle of the city crying out in a loud and bitter voice"](#) (Esther 4:1) and inspired fasting in every province [\(Esther 4:1,3\)](#).

None of us know the personal spiritual life of President Zelenskyy, but I would not be surprised if prayer and fasting are helping him get through this crisis. He, too, goes out into the middle of the cities and we know he posts selfies to both encourage and bolster his reinforcements. A modern day Mordecai.

Purim highlights contrasts between good and evil

At its core, Purim highlights contrasts. While Purim is a celebratory feast, it wouldn't exist without the misery that was first afflicted upon the people.

Purim shows the stark differences between the forces of good and evil. The differences between those who pray versus those who rely on their weapons and brute strength.

I commend President Zelenskyy and the others who are so courageous to stand up in the face of such danger. I do not think I would be so brave, though I wish I were. We all must continue to pray for all of the people of Ukraine as they are under fire. There is no shame for those who had to flee. But for those who have bravely stayed – the world must truly respect their commitment and perseverance.

This Purim, may we pray most especially for all of the families who have had to leave their homes behind and for those who have lost loved ones. May we pray for all of the innocent children who are suffering and had nothing to do with any of this. May we pray for a nation in great need. And may we learn from the brave men and women who are on the frontlines willing to protect their families and friends and fight for their nation. May the LORD work in their lives as we continue to pray for an end to the fighting.

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[Ukraine in Ezekiel's prophecy](#)

Ukraine in Ezekiel's prophecy

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Ezekiel 38 & 39 describe an invasion from the north

The [invasion of Ukraine under orders from the President of Russia](#) has raised many questions as to whether or not these current events relate to [Ezekiel's](#) prophecies.

[“You will come from your place **out of the extreme north**—you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and mighty army. **You will come up against My people Israel** like a cloud covering the land. **It will happen in the last days.** I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me—when I am sanctified through you, Gog, before their eyes.”](#) Ezekiel 38:15-16 (*emphasis added*)



"You will come from your place out of the extreme north—you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and mighty army. You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud covering the land. It will happen in the last days." Ez.38:15-16b

Who is Gog? And Magog?

["The word of ADONAI came to me saying: 'Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.'" Ezekiel 38:1-2a](#)

Scripture does not give many details about Gog, but it is clear that Gog is allied with Magog. The Bible does not specifically state that Gog is the leader of Russia. However, most scholars reasonably interpret Gog as Russian due to Ezekiel's prophetic declaration that Gog would come from the "extreme north."

Gog is the ancient name for an historical king who was a foe of Israel. According to *Tyndale's Old Testament Commentary on*

Ezekiel by John B. Taylor, it is most probable that Gog was Gyges of Lydia (a portion of modern day Turkey). However, scholars do not have consensus as to his exact historic identity. Everyone can agree, though, that Gog makes unholy alliances serving *hasatan's* (satan's) evil purposes.

Josephus wrote about Magog

The reputable Josephus wrote about Magog and the Scythians: "Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but **who are by the Greeks called Scythians**" (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 1.6.1; emphasis added).

You may recall from history class that the Scythians were nomadic Iranians. Their tribes spread as far as Mongolia, Siberia and Ukraine. If you take out a map and look at the amount of terrain they covered, you will be astounded.

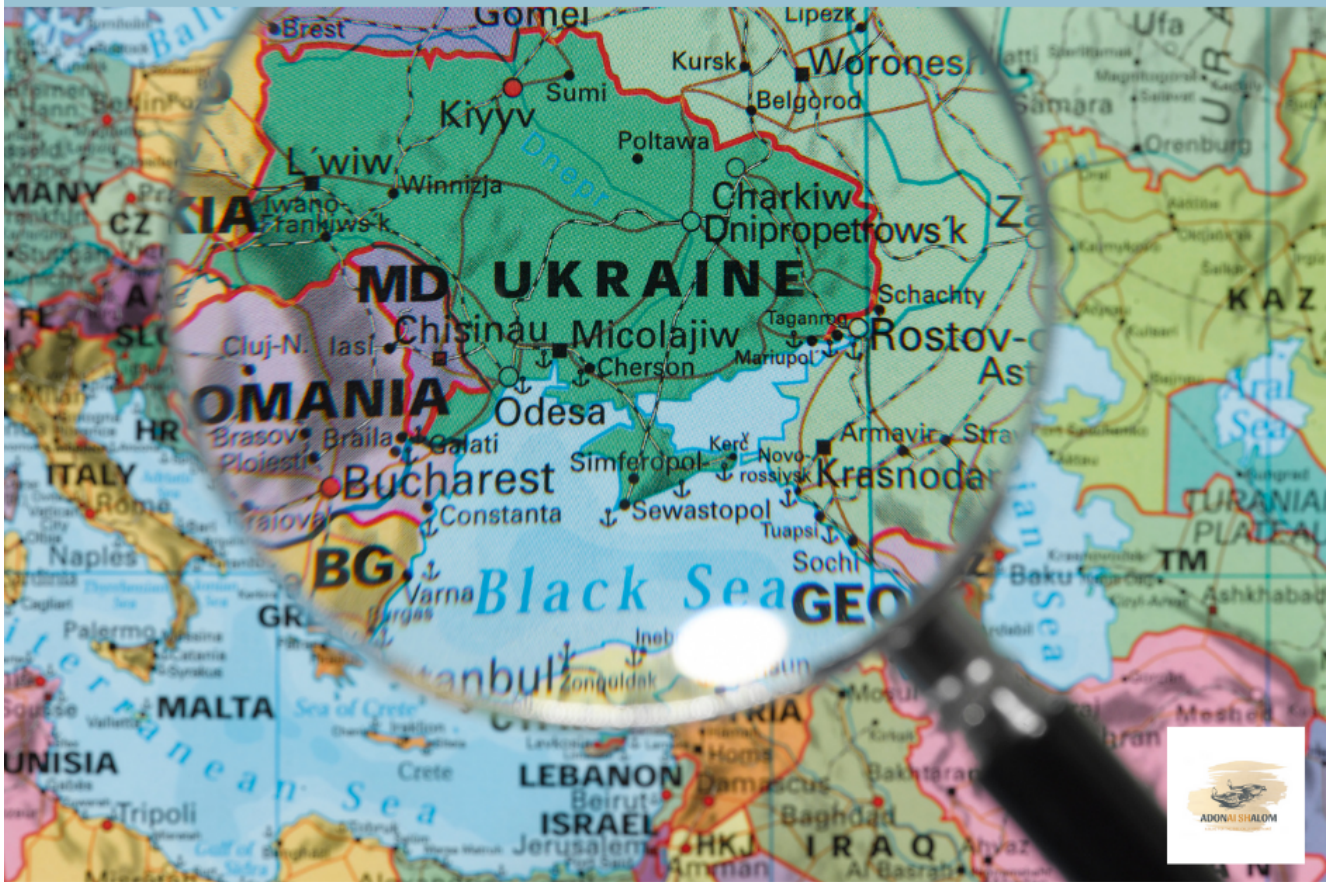
[Ezekiel 38:5-6 "With them will be Persia, Cush, and Put, all of them with shield and helmet, Gomer and all his troops, the house of Togarmah from the extreme north and all his troops – many peoples with you."](#)

Gog's alliances with Persia (modern day Iran), Cush and Put (Northern Africa), and Togarmah (Armenia) are already formed. The Scythians (Magogites) and Gomer inhabited lands north of the Black Sea. In order for Gog to increase his alliances with Magog, the entire region north of the Black Sea will ultimately serve Gog.

Notice, **present day Ukraine is directly north of the Black Sea.**

If Ukraine is part of this future alliance, it would seem to suggest that sooner or later, Ukraine will indeed fall to Russia and will eventually adopt the spirit of Gog's hostile attitude toward Israel.

UKRAINE *in Bible Prophecy*



The invasion of Crimea was a precursor to all of this, as that region is now also under Russian rule.

Prophecies of Ezekiel 38 & 39

Notice that Crimea and Ukraine are located north of the Black Sea. Being familiar with the positions of these nations is important for understanding the prophecies in Ezekiel 38 & 39.



The spirit of gog at work

Indeed, the spirit of Gog continues to be at work in our modern world.

Remember, Gog is prophesied by Ezekiel to “come up against” the LORD’s “people Israel” like a “cloud covering the land.”

The Russian President has chosen to invade Ukraine. Are you aware that Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is Jewish? According to the [Jerusalem Channel](#), President Zelenskyy is the grandson of a Holocaust survivor. Ukraine has a long history of being home to many Jewish families.

Russia – Gog – is coming against the LORD’s people Israel. Gog has come in with tanks and missiles like a cloud covering the

land. In the future, Gog will attack the nation of Israel.



RUSSIA in Bible Prophecy



End-time battle against the nation of Israel

“When the thousand years has ended, satan shall be released from his prison, and he shall come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for the battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the *kedoshim* (the saints) and the beloved city – but fire fell from heaven and consumed them.”
Revelation 20:7-9

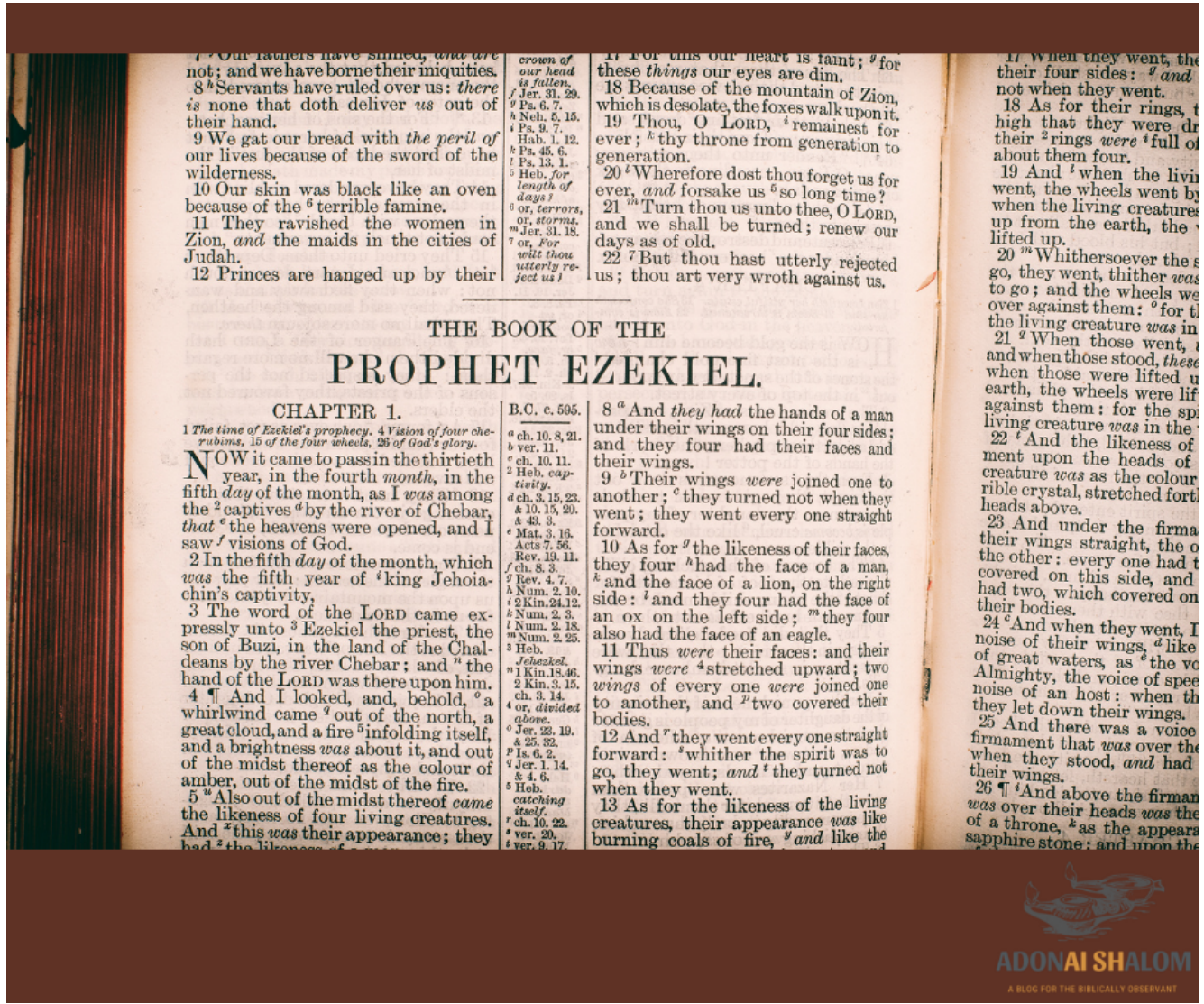
As you can see, Gog will remain an integral part of satan’s

team even until armageddon. The Good News is, when Jerusalem is besieged for the last time, Gog will be no more.

Ezekiel has prophesied these events and we are seeing them come to pass.

Look straight at the enemy and do not fear

Did you notice in [Ezekiel 38:2](#) the LORD tells Ezekiel to set his face toward Gog?



Ezekiel is to stand firm and look at the reality of Gog's ambitions. Gog devises evil in his heart to invade the unwalled villages and the quiet people living securely. The prophet is told to prophesy against him that God the Most High

will “put hooks into [their] jaws.”

Yikes. It is a lot of violence. But the LORD’s people are to confront evil and remain strong in their faith. We are not to look away. We are to look forward and look toward the enemy, recognizing that victory will come.

The LORD says the purpose of all of this is [“I will make Myself known in the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I am ADONAI.”](#) (Ezekiel 38:23).

Meanwhile, while the war in Ukraine is so hard to watch, we must pray for all of the innocent families and especially the children. We must remain confident in the LORD.

The LORD’s people are to confront evil and be strong in their faith.

[“Though an army camp besieges me, my heart will not fear. Though war breaks out against me, even then will I be confident.”](#) Psalm 27:3

Though an army camp besieges me,
my heart will not fear.

Though war breaks out against me,
even then will I be

confident.

PSALM 27:3

коли проти мене розложиться табір, то серце моє не злякається, коли проти мене повстане війна, я надіятись буду на те, на поміч Його! Псалми 27:3

Если ополчится против меня полк, не убоится сердце мое; если восстанет на меня война, и тогда буду надеяться. Псалтирь 27:3

Psalm 27:3

We pray for a [Purim victory](#). That Haman's plan would fail and God's people would prevail!

[Please pray for the people of Ukraine](#). I hope that through Biblical prophecy, you can find hope that even when it doesn't seem like it, the LORD is in control and there is hope. Please leave a comment so we know you are praying with us and we can pray for you, too!

How to pray for Ukraine and Russia

Updated 2/24/22

The Invasion of Ukraine by Russia

As we hear rumors of war and so many nations set themselves on a course to rage against one another once again, we must remember Yeshua's (Jesus') words: ["Do not let your heart be troubled or afraid." John 14:27.](#) *Update 2/24/22 – Today, the Russian military has invaded Ukraine. We must urgently pray for the vulnerable! Pray for BOTH sides – both Ukrainians and Russians desperately need the LORD right now.*

The LORD gives us His divine *shalom*, His peace, and we must find our peace in Him alone. Placing our confidence in anything else will result only in distress and anxiety.

The aggressions overseas are certainly unnerving to us. How much more so to the people directly affected! Ordinary civilians wanting to live an ordinary life are now facing threats and unrest, and a very uncertain future.



PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF

Ukraine & Russia



Keep praying for the people of Ukraine and Russia

Praying for Ukrainians and Russians

Alas, it is easy to talk about *shalom* when we aren't the ones facing missile attacks in our own neighborhoods. Yet all who would believe can find security in the depths of His love and peace. I pray today for the children of Eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Russia, that they would be able to grow up in a free society. Pray for their safety. And pray for those who need medicines. I pray that there would be an awakening to salvation.

We must pray for **all** of the people of Ukraine and Russia.

ПСАЛМИ/ПСАЛТИРЬ PSALM 56:4

Того дня, коли страх обгортає мене, я надю на Тебе кладу. (Ukrainian)

Когда я в страхе, на Тебя я уповаю. (Russian)

In a day when I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.



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Psalm 56:4 "What time I am afraid, I will trust in You."

We are in the last days

The Bible is clear that these nations, particularly Russia, will be involved in the final events of the last days, so we should not be shocked or alarmed by what is unfolding.

The Good News of our Messiah can still reach people who live there, and we must pray for them.

Yeshua said:

**"DO NOT LET YOUR HEART BE
TROUBLED OR AFRAID." JOHN 14:27**



Pray for people to be reached with the warmth of Messiah's love

Eastern Europeans and Russians are frequently stereotyped as being as cold of heart as the Siberian tundra. I do not believe this is true. I do believe many people from these regions have endured much hardship and their demeanor often reflects it. **Most importantly, it is not too late to reach them with the warmth of the love of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus the Christ).** We must pray that they would come to know His love and His peace.



An excellent resource on how to pray during the Ukraine crisis & war

SEND International ministries has compiled an excellent resource on how to pray for Ukrainians and Russians that I found helpful. You may like to refer to this during your personal devotions or with your congregational group: [15 Ways to Pray During the Crisis in Ukraine](#).

The LORD works miracles even in the midst of great crises, so let us fervently pray that *Ruach haKodesh* (the Holy Spirit) touches hearts and lives in miraculous, saving ways. There are established evangelical churches and Messianic congregations in Ukraine.

May they be strengthened and righteously emboldened to continue to witness to their friends and neighbors even while sheltering. Let us pray that they will be protected from persecution and poverty. May they be filled with genuine peace.

The Light of Messiah shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it.

If you will join us in praying for Ukraine and Russia, please leave a comment below. We would love to know that so many of you are uniting in prayer with us!



PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF

Ukraine & Russia



Haman's wife Zeresh was right about this 1 thing

From Haman to Hamas, Israel is all too often surrounded and attacked by enemies, but fear not, the enemy will never prevail! Baruch HaShem Adonai, the Guardian of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps.