

Beauties of the Truth

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The House of Togarmah, Is Modern China a Cultural Descendant?

“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against China and against the land of the Mongolians, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O China, the chief prince [Rosh] of Meshech and Tubal: and I will gather your people together and put a bridle in your jaw ... Persians, Ethiopians, and Lybians, with them, all of them with shields and helmets. Gomer and all her army, the house of Togarmah, and the uttermost parts of the north with all their hosts, and many other people who are with you” (Ezekiel 38:1-6, Peshitta, the Aramaic language Bible used by the Syriac church as translated by George M. Lamsa, 1933).

While **not supportive** of Lamsa's interpretative translation of Gog as China, and Magog as Mongolia, Lamsa's alignment of China and Mongolia, nonetheless is significant. It appears reasonable that China, though not “Gog,” is better linked to “the house of Togarmah (which includes Mongolia, which is not “Magog”), and the uttermost parts of the north with all their hosts.” Leaving aside Lamsa's interpretive translation, a direct Bible reference to China (*Sinim*, H5515) appears only once, in Isaiah 49:12.¹

Recognizing that “we see through a glass darkly,” let us explore the possible relations of China to Ezekiel 38. Is China so distant and unlinked to Israel, as to be ignored in Bible prophecy relating to our day? Will China participate in the alliance of Ezekiel 38?

CURRENT RUSSIA, CHINA, AND IRAN

Each day, China is reported in the forefront of international politics and business news. The recent cornerstone of relations between China and Russia is in a statement released by Beijing and Moscow on February 4, 2022 when Mr. Xi and Mr. Putin met before the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics. The statement said the countries' friendship “has no bounds.”

Concerned for this “friendship” and the ongoing Russian “special military action” in Ukraine, a 48-page US national security summary issued October 12, 2022 notes that the overwhelming challenge for the US now is “outcompeting China and restraining Russia.” China is skillfully positioning itself to emerge even more prominently on the world scene, “flexing its muscle” both economic and military, while avoiding direct military action.

Russia's recent historically unprecedented realignment with their traditional enemy Iran (Persia) moves the prophesied alliance in Ezekiel further into place. Vladimir Putin and Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran (a hardline Islamist, accused of crimes against humanity by international human rights organizations and United Nations special rapporteurs²), met January 18, 2022 to talk about their upcoming plans for joint military exercises and other cooperation. “In Russia, many analysts believed that the prospect of increased Russian military cooperation with other American adversaries is one of the Kremlin's best points of leverage against Washington. On Tuesday, warships from Russia's Pacific fleet entered Iran's Chabahar port on the Gulf of Oman ahead of a planned joint Naval exercise with Iran and China, the Russian defense ministry said” (*New York Times*, January 18, 2022).

This is unprecedented. China is busying herself constructing more state-of-the-art aircraft carriers that will soon be launched. Even during the era of Mao Tse-tung, China never attempted to extend their power further than their coastal zone. Now we see China sailing all the way to the Persian Gulf. Recognizing this, the appearance

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Figure 1. China's Shandong Jian Aircraft Carrier launched 2017.
Source: New York Times

of the “House of Togarmah” at the close of the list of allies suggests a supporting roll, but not necessarily direct military involvement.

Further Iranian-Russian cooperation and Russian alienation from Israel may be linked to action during October 2022. Iran’s Shahed-136 attack drones have been deployed to Russia for use against Ukraine. The Ukrainian defense ministry reports that Israel provided intelligence to Ukraine in shooting down these drones (New York Times, October 17, 2022).

HISTORICAL RECORDS AND EZEKIEL 38

Historical records outside the Bible offer hints about people and their culture. These records are limited, confused, and frequently fanciful. To illustrate this point, consider the shrewd Roman Emperor Hadrian who visited the ruins of Jerusalem on the eve of the Bar Kokba rebellion (130 AD). Hadrian was poorly studied on issues of Judaism, and when he spoke with Rabbi Akiba, the head of the Sanhedrin, Hadrian reported being puzzled. How could the Jews cling so tenaciously to their variant Egyptian worship of Serapis! Obviously, Hadrian had a total misunderstanding. Worshipping Serapis, a god of the underworld and nature, could never in any sense be considered a form of worshipping Jehovah!³

Understanding Ezekiel 38 requires us to go back to the seventy nations of Genesis 10. Confusion on locating many of the seventy nations’ descendants increases when the classical writers pass along accounts of distant peoples with whom there were no direct trade links. While the peoples of Europe are clearly descended from Japheth, Chinese Muslim scholarship argued for China’s descent from Japheth, but Europe from Ham!⁴

Some of the nomadic peoples of the seventy nations traversed the Asian steppes for thousands of miles, creating additional complications. Chinese annals record an unsuccessful assault on the Great Wall by a people identified as the nomadic Hsiung-nu. These people are recognized as the Huns.⁵ Four years later led by Attila the Hun (who came to power in 433 AD), the deadly Hunic

cavalry’s archers appeared 4,000 miles to the west where they reworked the world of the enfeebled Western Roman Empire and nearly succeeded in conquering it. They settled in what has since been called Hungary. The long distance travel over the Asian Steppes by the nomadic people of Togarmah has been of interest to specialists in DNA studies. These efforts provide insight into the back and forth movements, flowing East to West, over the millennia.⁶

ANCESTRY, LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

In Ezekiel 38, we should recognize that ancestry, language, and common culture characterize a people. In the four millennia since the seventy nations of Genesis 10 were dispersed, a European focused study published by the US National Academy of Science concluded: “These results [examining European genetics, language, and geographic dispersal] clearly demonstrate that speakers of different language families in Europe differ genetically, and that this difference remains even after allowing for geographic differentiation.”⁷ This conclusion may be taken as broadly applicable to all the “different families” of the world.

Most of the enemies in Ezekiel descend through Japheth, while two, Ethiopia and Libya, descend through Ham. There are no enemies from Shem. No ancestor of the seventy nations in Genesis 10 is named Gog. The four direct descendants of Japheth named in Ezekiel 38 are Gomer, Magog, Tubal, and Meshech. From the following generation, Togarmah descends through Gomer (Genesis 10:2,3, 1 Chronicles 1:5,6).

Rotherham observes that “Prince of Rosh, Mesech, and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:1) has the sense of Leader (*nasi*, H5387). Rosh is Russia, “without much doubt” in the judgment of the eminent Hebrew scholar Gesenius.⁸ In the 19th century, “Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” were still preserved in the title of the Russian emperor as Tsar of “Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk.”⁹ Rosh is Russia, while Meshech has been identified as Armenia,¹⁰ a supplier of Bronze Age copper (see RVIC Ezekiel 28:12, footnote 238).

“Tobolsk” refers to Tbilisi, the capital of the former Soviet republic called Georgia (Sakartvelo to natives of Georgia). Though Georgia is a small Orthodox Christian nation with a current population of only 3.7 million, this people has had a large impact. The name “Sakartvelo” suggests a link to the dreaded Scythians of the ancient world who were divided into three tribes. Georgians have had a major impact on 20th Century history. One native Georgian, born Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili, went by the adopted name of Joseph Stalin. Following the death of Lenin, Stalin’s ruthless dictatorship of the Soviet Union (1922-1952) left deep and still unhealed wounds. The seemingly inbred military prowess of this Georgian

people includes US General John Shalikashvili, the 13th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1993), who was the Joint Chiefs first foreign-born chairman.

HISTORICAL TOGARMAH AT THE WESTERN EXTREME OF THEIR “HOUSE”

Some scholars hold that Togarmah are the Armenians, but as already noted, Armenia appears to be Mesech. Armenia was a well-established kingdom also known as “the ancient kingdom of Urartu in Armenia.”¹¹ This regional name Urutu survives today affixed to a single mountain in Armenia called Mt. Ararat, which is held to be the grounding site for Noah’s ark.

Jewish scholars identify Togarmah as the Turks. Claims that this identification is a late historical development seem strained. References to Togarmah appear in ancient records.¹² “They of the house of Togarmah traded for thy wares with horses and war-horses and mules” (Ezekiel 27:14, RVIC). Hence, the people of Togarmah must have had access directly to Israel via long distance land routes with Togarmah itself, as an intermediate station accessing markets from the wide Asian steppes where horses breed prolifically. This by itself does not permit us to settle on whether Togarmah were Armenian or Turkic peoples.

Togarmah is identified by the Hittites, a Bronze Age people dwelling in what is most of present day Turkey. Twice their written records address rebellion by the subject people from the district of Targama, in the far north of present day Turkey. This is the Biblical Togarmah.¹³⁻¹⁸ The link amongst the Turkic tribes would find Togarmah well positioned for horse-trading with their far-extended kinsmen. As will be shown, Biblical Togarmah is the farthest western enclave of this wide-ranging nomadic people.

The Turks and Armenians have had a bitter history of conflict that comes down to our day. Tragically, this includes Turkish genocidal atrocities against Armenians following World War I. Possibly rephrasing the question on Togarmah may assist in the answer: which of these two peoples — today — not only could have a significant military posture in the near future, but enough aligned people to be called the House of Togarmah? An assessment of the current world situation makes it clear that Biblical Togarmah refers to the widespread peoples who speak Turkic and related Trans-Eurasian, or Altaic, languages.¹⁹

TOGARMAH — THE ALTAIC LANGUAGE FAMILY

In the west, nearly all the settled people of Europe, excepting the Huns and Finns, speak languages derived

from Italic, Germano-Celtic, or Balto-Slavic. These are branches growing from one common Indo-Aryan root linked to Japheth. Millennia earlier than Ezekiel’s prophecy, Sanskrit, another branch of the Indo-Aryan language family, was established as the language of India’s Brahman caste in the east. However, across most of northern Asia, a language family called Altaic dominates (Hungarian and Finnish are Altaic languages).

In November 2021, an extensive collaboration of Robbeets, a linguist, and 40 scholars, considered (1) archeology, (2) the study of DNA profiles recovered from burial sites, and (3) linguistics, to open additional insight into the culture of Japheth’s descendant Togarmah, which should be understood as the Altaic language family.^{20} Robbeets writes in summary, “The linguistic relatedness of the Trans Eurasian languages — also known as ‘Altaic’ — is among the most disputed issues in linguistic prehistory. Trans-Eurasian denotes a large group of geographically adjacent languages stretching across Europe and northern Asia, and includes five uncontroversial linguistic families: Japonic, Koreanic, Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic.” The family of 98 languages included in the study extends from European Turkey in the west, all the way to the farthest eastern portions of Siberia, as shown (Figure 2).

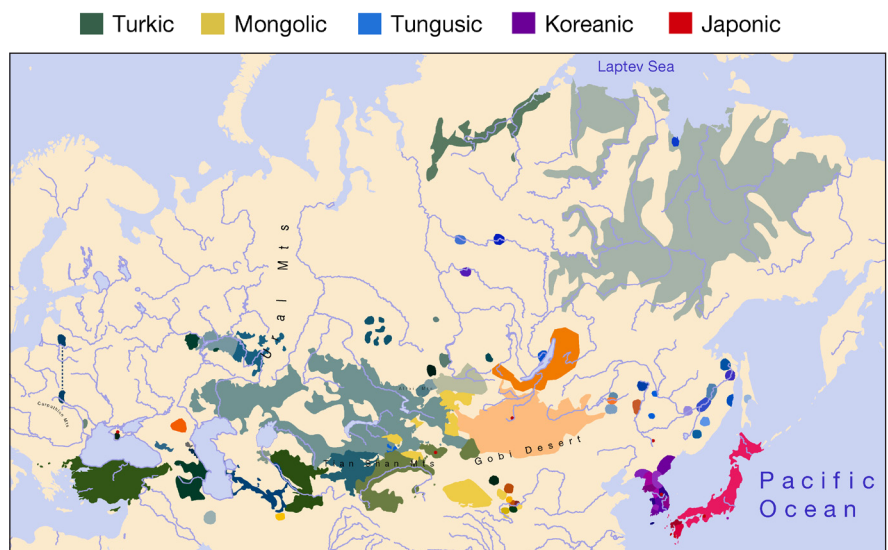


Figure 2. Distribution of Trans-Eurasian languages in the past and in the present. Geographical distribution of the 98 Trans Eurasian language varieties included in this study. Contemporary languages are represented by coloured surfaces, historical varieties by red dots. Source: Robbeets, M., et al., “Triangulation supports agricultural spread of the Trans-Eurasian languages,” *Nature*, 599 (25 November 2021).

The archeological study of Robbeets, *et al.*, surveying where Togarmah (the Altaic people) originally settled, provides additional insights. These settlements were at the northern border of present day China, inland, but close to the Pacific Ocean. This people is designated as proto-Trans-Eurasian (Figure 3, Territory 3) and occupied the Heibe district around present day Beijing. To be clear, the Han Chinese who now occupy this territory are not direct descendants of Togarmah, but they are linked to the

“House of Togarmah, and the uttermost parts of the north with all their hosts.”

The descendants of Togarmah expanded to Territory 4,5 (in red) close to this original settlement. By the Bronze Age (green) they had expanded to the West as proto-Turkic (Territory 1) and all the way to Japan as proto-Japonic (Territory 8).

As the map shows (see Figure 3), the Turkic and Mongolian tribes overlapped, and this conflict led to shifts in who controlled the territory. Over the centuries, the territory shifted between nomadic Turkic people, nomadic Mongols and their ally tribes, and nomadic Chinese.²¹

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Proto-Turkic | 3 Proto-Transeurasian | 5 Proto-Japano-Koreanic | 7 Proto-Koreanic |
| 2 Proto-Mongolic | 4 Proto-Mongolo-Tungusic | 6 Proto-Tungusic | 8 Proto-Japonic |

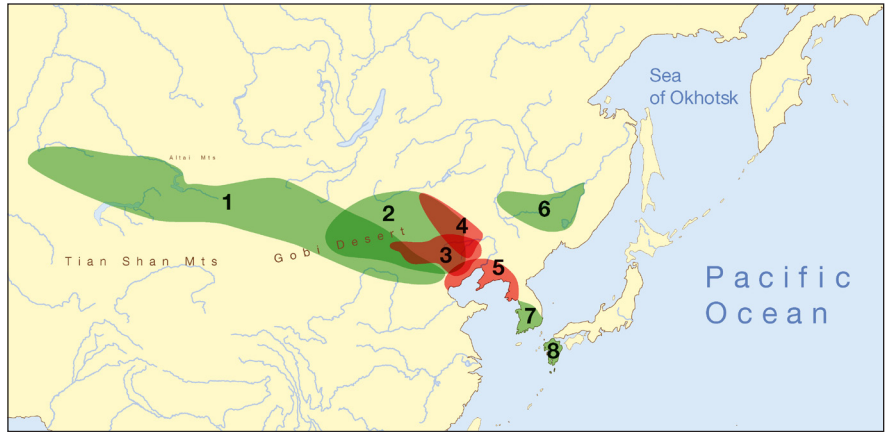


Figure 3. Reconstructed locations of Trans-Eurasian ancestral languages spoken during the Neolithic (red) and the Bronze Age and later (green). Source: Robbeets, M., et al., “Triangulation supports agricultural spread of the Transeurasian languages,” *Nature*, 599 (25 November 2021).

“HOUSE” IN BIBLICAL USE

Of all the peoples in Ezekiel 38, Togarmah is unique in that it speaks more broadly of the “House,” in addition to an aligned geographical location. This means not only kinsmen, but also those who were part of the extended control of this people. An example of this is that all of the House of Abraham were circumcised: “And all the men of his house [Abraham], those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him” (Genesis 17:27, RVIC). The importance of this for Ezekiel 38 is that even if the Chinese descend through Shem, they may still be included in the House of Togarmah alliance (see inset).

ARE EAST ASIANS (HAN CHINESE) CHILDREN OF SHEM, OR JAPHETH?

Jewish, Christian, and Moslem commentators have sought the origins of the nations in Genesis and their linkage to Ezekiel 38, including the Chinese. “Christian scholars speculated widely as to the ancestry of the Chinese ... The Muslim view remained more firm: Japheth and his descendants were to be the rulers of China.”²²

Today, studies of DNA genetic “drift” in populations makes it possible to establish ancestor connections with

Another Insight on Gog of the Land of Magog

Magog is first mentioned in the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10:2 (RVIC), “The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai.” Gomer was divided into three tribes in Genesis 10:3; it was recorded also by Herodotus, that the Scythians divided them about BC 640.

Herodotus also mentions the “Kimmerian Bosphorus,” which would be the Kerch Strait between the Sea of Azov and the rest of the Black Sea. So the subtribes of Gomer began north and south of the Black Sea, while Magog were around the Caspian Sea. (Today, Gomer and its subtribes, and Magog and its subtribes, are each about a billion population. Only Elam, predominantly Chinese, are more numerous.)

In Eastern terminology, the Magog tribe is called “Massagetae,” from Ma-Saka-Ta, meaning “from the Saka hordes,” or the “greater Saka hordes.” The word “Saka” is like the Hebrew word “sagab,” which means “to lift up.” The Western form of the word is “Gog,” like the Hebrew word *gag*, meaning “that which is lifted up,” or “roof.” In ancient times, the Massagetae capital was in the Caucasus mountains; from there they spread north and east. They were famous (notorious?) for breeding and raising horses for war. (The Saka-ta is slurred by us as Scythia.) Thus, Josephus is justified in identifying Magog with the Scythians. (Lamsa translated Magog as “Mongolia” in Genesis 10:2.)

The largest subtribe of Magog today is the Great Russians (not Byelorussians, who are Slavs). Also included are Mongols (including Moghuls who went south into India), Koreans, Yakuts (who call themselves “Sakha”), Kazakhs (meaning “freemen”), Uzbekhis, and Eskimos.

It remains to explain the relationship to “Gog and Magog” in Revelation 20:8. Likely it is similar to the prophecy, “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of Jehovah come” (Malachi 4:5-6 RVIC); for the church it means John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14, 17:10-13), but for the world it will mean the faithful church. Hence, we need only look to the future Gog and Magog as having characteristics like Ezekiel’s Gog. Perhaps fear, deceit, and accusation? — *Br. James Parkinson*

a high level of confidence. Three studies that include both Middle Eastern Semitic and Japheth populations and the Far East Asian (Han Chinese) populations provide stronger evidence for the genetic connection of the Han Chinese as the descendants of Japheth, rather than descendants of Shem.^{23,24,25} Graphics from one of these studies is reproduced in Figure 4. Their expansion appears to have been by a route that took them South of the Himalayan Mountains and into Tibet, before settling in China.²⁶

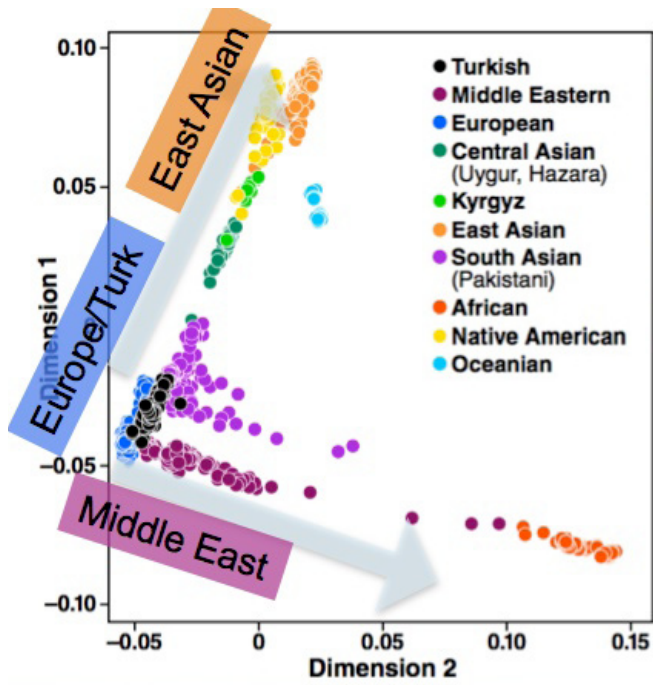


Figure 4. DNA genetic drift showing the relationship of European and East Asian populations (Source: Hodoglugil, Ugur, and Robert W. Mahley, *Ann. Hum. Genet.*, 76:2, March 2012).²⁵

EXPANSION OF THE MONGOLS FROM THE HOUSE OF TOGARMAH

To this day, the most expansive move by the House of Togarmah remains the Mongolian conquests (Figure 5).

Wherever they went, the Golden Horde of Genghis Khan (1206-1227 AD) was invincible. Their consistent policy was to diplomatically contact the states they intended to conquer with one message, “Surrender, or face annihilation.” Carnage, murder, rape, and devastation



Figure 5. Chinese scroll, 13th century, showing Mongol-Chinese fighting (public domain).

marked the trail of their advance. Certain that the Day of Judgment had come upon Christendom and that the very gates of Hell were opened to release this horde, the Christian nations called them Tartars, the inhabitants of Tartaroo. The Mongol empire forged in the 13th Century remains the largest, and arguably one of the richest, empires prior to modern history. Nearly every family of the House of Togarmah — the Turks, the Mongols, the Koreans, and the Japanese — have either embarked on expansive conquests or had aspirations to do so.

Moving to the west, in the turbulent period following the death of Genghis Khan, the Mongol hordes made a successful assault on both Hungary and Kraków, Poland, in the year 1241-2 AD, devastating Krakow — but not the Wawel castle. Two Mongol armies pushed further west descending on the Roman Catholic Church’s base in Wroclaw, Poland, but after the attack withdrew without occupying. This was the high water mark for Mongol westward expansion into Europe.

The fortified Great Wall of China failed to stop the Mongol’s eastward expansion (1230-1279 AD). They conquered the whole of China and established the Yuan Dynasty. Mongol control was unchallenged over of all of Asia from the Pacific coast of China and Korea to present day Belarus and Ukraine.

By 1260 AD, the Mongolian ruler of China was Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan. Kublai Khan was an able administrator, but to the disgust of Mongol leadership he openly became a Buddhist. Kublai Khan built his new capital near the Mongolian border and called it Dadu, Mongolian for “Grand capital.” Here he lived and died in 1294. While Dadu was originally conceived on the plan of a Mongol camp, with the intent “to model his city after a Mongolian camp of tents, with the Khan’s dwelling in the center,” the magnificent rebuilding of Dadu in 1418 followed a very traditional Chinese plan. The city was renamed Beijing, meaning “North capital.”²⁷

Mongol control of formerly hostile Islamic territory in present day Iraq and Iran initiated a cultural awakening in Europe. For a century, there was “Mongol peace” and relative safety for travel. During this peaceful period, Marco Polo and his uncle traveled overland from Venice, Italy to Hanzhou, China far to the south of Beijing. In the

picturesque city of Hanzhou, with its fine public gardens, Marco Polo worked in the service of Kublai Khan. When he returned to Venice, Marco Polo brought back wondrous reports. Firsthand knowledge of the world and the trade that followed transformed Europe. Exotic goods from the Mongol empire became fashion statements in prosperous Italian cities.²⁸

China under Mongol rule became even more transformed. Morrison, one of the early lexicographers of Chinese (1815) said that Mandarin Chinese, the official language of China today, is a “Tartar Chinese dialect.”²⁹ Today Mandarin is the official language of China following a policy first enunciated by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai (1956). “The foundation for the unification of Chinese already exists; it is Putonghua [Mandarin], which takes Beijing pronunciation as its phonetic standard, takes northern vernacular as its dialect foundation, and takes model writings in modern vernacular prose as its standard for grammar.”³⁰

The current rapidly evolving hegemony of Russia appears consistent with expectations for Ezekiel 38. With Russia and its far northern capital of Moscow as the leader of the coalition, who then is the separate “House of Togarmah, and the uttermost parts of the north?” If we move westward from Moscow, we identify neither Finland, Norway, Great Britain, nor Canada as the “uttermost parts of the north” likely at all to lead a coalition against Israel. But it seems reasonable that Beijing, China, is this people.

SUMMARY

What does this mean for Ezekiel 38?

- The people who founded the Altaic language family may be identified as those descended from Japheth through Togarmah. They first settled in the district of present day Beijing, China. This language family now extends from Finland, Hungary, and Turkey, all the way across Asia to the Bering straits and beyond.

- DNA evidence suggests the Han Chinese people also are descended from Japheth, but they are not themselves descendants of Togarmah. Possibly the Han Chinese descend through Shem. In either case, they may be considered part of the House of Togarmah for cultural reasons.

- The Mongols of the House of Togarmah conquered all of China (1230-1279 AD), establishing the Yuan Dynasty. This brought an era of peaceful trade transforming both society and language as far away as Europe.

- Today, Mandarin Chinese, a “Tartar Chinese dialect,” is China’s official language, and Beijing, the Mongol capital, is China’s present day capital.

- The Mongol Acquisition culture seems to dominate China’s Policies more and more.

- Both the acquired language and culture makes the identification of China with the House of Togarmah (Beth-Togarmah) reasonable.

- Present day Turkey itself also is an important member of the House of Togarmah. Present day Hungary, as an extension of the House of Togarmah, bears close watching. Though both Turkey and Hungary are NATO allies, they have created the greatest strain for NATO.

— Br. Richard Doctor

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(2) Iran wire, Golnaz Mahdavi, July 21, 2021. <https://iranwire.com/en/features/69850/>

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(4) Leslie (1984), *op. cit.*, page 409.

(5) Sinor, Denis, “The Inner Asian Warriors,” *J. Amer. Oriental Soc.*, 101:2 (1981), page 1364.

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(12) Zeitlin, Solomon, “The Propaganda of the Hebrew Scrolls and the Falsification of History,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 46:1 (July 1955), pages 1-39. See also McClintock and Strong’s Cyclopeda, 1887, *Togarmah*, as reprinted by Baker Books.

(13) Luckenbill, D.D., “Hittite Treaties and Letters,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 37:3 (April 1921), pages 161-211. “Tegarama (or Tagarama) ... appear in the later Assyrian texts as ... Tilgarimmu.”^{14,15} “The Late Assyrian Til-Garimmi and the Hittite Tegarama were one and the same place.”¹⁶ As to location, “the site of Togarmah has now been settled by Hittite texts. We learn from them that it stood between Carchemish and Harran, though considerably to the north of either. In the cuneiform tablets of Boghaz Keui the name is written Tegarama and Tagarama, and Delitzsch long ago identified it with the Til-Garimmi of the Assyrian inscriptions where the native name has been Assyrian.”¹⁶ “Togarma is the state called Tilgarimmu in Assyrian sources, and near the sources of the Tigris.” This would be on the border of Hittite controlled territory.^{17,18} Mellaart writes, “Three prominent tribes [of Turks], the Tecerli (or Tacirlu), roamed in the Antitaurus, wintered in Cilicia, and gave their name to the Tecer Daglanr, between the Yeni-il, the old land of Tegarama (biblical Togarmah).”¹⁹

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A Crown of Thorns

"When they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:29).

Jesus suffered many pains and indignities when he bore the penalty for Adam and his race. With the crown of thorns, both pain and indignity were involved. However, there is symbolic meaning in this experience. The word "thorns" was used respecting the penalty imposed on Adam. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; (19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:18, 19). Jesus died to relieve us from all of the curse. Receiving a crown of thorns symbolized Jesus bearing our penalty.

This was represented also in the experience of Abraham offering Isaac, in Genesis 22. God asked Abraham to offer the only child of Abraham's proper wife Sarah. Isaac, of course, represented our Lord Jesus, offered by God as a ransom for mankind.

Abraham had waited 25 years after entering Canaan, for the birth of his promised child, and decades more until his son was grown. Then God asked Abraham to make an offering of the most precious thing Abraham had, his child of promise. It was a token of God offering the most precious thing He had, his "only begotten son," Jesus (John 3:16).

Jesus would die on a prominence near Jerusalem, thus one of the hills of the area of Moriah, as for example the temple at Jerusalem was constructed on mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1). In picture of this, God told Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and



Abraham, Isaac, an intervening angel, and a ram in a thicket

get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2). Thus the location was specific, and meaningful.

Notice also the kind of offering mentioned, a burnt offering. Years, later, under the Mosaic Law, a burnt offering, unlike all other kinds of offerings, was specifically directed to be put upon the wood directly. "The burnt offering ... the priests ... shall lay ... in order upon the wood" (Leviticus 1:6-8). This reminds us that Jesus died on a wooden cross, or, as Peter expresses it, Jesus "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). The wood of a tree is meaningful, for the sin of Adam which Jesus bore was occasioned by eating of forbidden tree.

When Jesus walked up Calvary's hill, "he bearing his cross went forth" (John 19:17). Likewise Isaac, in picture of this, carried the wood for the burnt offering up the hill of Moriah where he was to be offered. "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son" (Genesis 22:6).

As Abraham prepared to offer Isaac per God's direction, when it was apparent that Abraham was ready to obey,

God intervened by sending an angel to stay the hand of Abraham (Genesis 22:10-12). But when the time came for actual atonement in Christ, God "spared not his own Son" (Romans 8:32).

As Abraham climbed the hill with his son, Isaac asked "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?," to which Abraham replied, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:7, 8). That lamb was Isaac, and God accepted the offering as though it had been accomplished. In the antitype, Jesus is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

After Isaac was removed from the altar, another animal was found caught in a thicket, which was offered. It was not a lamb, for Isaac was the lamb. It was a ram, a grown male with horns. Those horns had become caught in a nearby thicket. "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:13).

The "thicket" reminds us of the curse respecting "thorns and thistles." That the ram's horns were caught, tells us that this thicket engaged the head of the ram in particular. This reminds us of the crown of thorns placed on the head of Jesus, reflecting that part of the curse of Adam. The ram was then offered for a burnt offering on the wood, just as Jesus died on the cross.

Thus Jesus redeems mankind both from the curse of death, and from the continuing "sweat of thy face" by which mankind has for millennia toiled for their sustenance. In the Kingdom of Christ, mankind will not only be offered everlasting life, but freedom from degrading toil. Instead, their lot will be everlasting joy. "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

— *From fellowship with a sister in Alabama*

How David Beat Goliath

In the 20th century endocrinology has shown that tall and strong people often have limited eyesight.¹ "Endocrinology has been marshalled to prove convincingly that limited eyesight, common in tall, strong people, could have hampered Goliath's capability to react correctly to David's aiming his sling."

Consider highlights of this encounter: "And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare [Goliath's] shield went before him. (42) And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. 43 ... And the Philistine cursed David by his gods [big mistake!]. ... (45) Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a



David and Goliath

spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied ... (48) And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. (49) And David put his hand in the bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth" (1 Samuel 17:41-49).

Slingshot warriors have been common in the past (even now by some Arabs in Gaza). Perhaps more often than not, the slinging was done from their sides (vertically), rather than overhead (horizontally). But "slingers sometimes commanded little respect by other ancient troops, as the simple sling was often viewed as a poor man's weapon. Well-armored and well-armed infantrymen, who fought hand-to-hand, commanded more respect. Goliath's disdain for David (1 Samuel 17:42-44) may reflect this common disrespect of slingers."

The 21st century suggests the practical physics of the encounter. "A modern ethnographic study notes that Arabian slingers hunt game at 30-50 yards, which likely provides an upper limit for the range at which David could have attacked Goliath. ... Modern tests show that javelins have an effective range of just over 20 yards. ... When it comes to speed and lethal force, the sling's centrifugal force enables a moderately skilled slinger to launch a projectile at speeds of up to 113 mph and inflict great damage."² That speed is 55 yards per second! Goliath would have had only a split second to react. So with Goliath's likely limited eyesight, it gives full credibility to David's slingshot victory.

— *Br. James Parkinson*

(1) Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, (1978, 1997), page 93.

(2) Boyd SeEVERS and Victoria Parrott, "Taking a Sling, How David Defeated Goliath," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR) 48, 3 (Fall 2022), pages 50-54.