

Magog War

(28) Ezekiel 38:1–39:29

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Why is it important to have a working understanding of the Magog War of Ezekiel 38-39?

- It gives us insight about what is important to God as we get close to Jesus returning.
- Seeing the stage being set for this war gives us a sense of urgency to get on with what Christ is calling us to do.

Magog Coalition Attacks Israel – Ezekiel 38:1-17

¹Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²“Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. ⁵Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you. ⁷“Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. ⁸After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. ⁹You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.”

¹⁰‘Thus says the Lord God: “On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: ¹¹You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwallled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’— ¹²to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. ¹³Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, ‘Have you come to take plunder?

Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?’”’ ¹⁴“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it? ¹⁵Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. ¹⁶You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.” ¹⁷Thus says the Lord God: “Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?”

v1-3 – Who is Ezekiel to prophecy against?

- Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. Gog is a new nemesis if Israel, not an ancient enemy as they’ve had to deal with in the past..
- **Magog** – Josephus in his “Antiquities” in AD 93 Or 94 identified Magog as the Scythians who settled in central Asia and migrated to Southern Russia in the 8th Century BC. Most scholars associate this reference in Ezekiel to the “stans” of Central Asia... Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. is an ancient reference to the peoples north of the Black Sea, or Russia. If there is any doubt that this is referring to Russia, Ezekiel 38:6 and 38:15 clears this up saying they come from the “far north.” Moscow is directly north of Jerusalem.
- **Rosh** – Wilhelm Gesenius is the father of modern lexicography; the science and art of compiling Hebrew lexicons wrote in 1842 that Rosh is mentioned by 10th Century Byzantine writers as a people dwelling on the river Volga which has headwaters Northwest of Moscow and empties into the Caspian Sea. Thus, Rosh refers to Russia.
- **Meshech & Tubal** – Herodotus in his “Histories” wrote in 430 B.C. that this referred to the people South-East of the Black Sea (modern day Turkey).

v4-6 – How is Gog’s army described?

Ezekiel described the army using terms that made sense to him. How else could an ancient writer have described modern warfare? It is our concern only to understand what the commonsense interpretation of the passage indicates... This was a large, fast, well-equipped army, ready for conquest.

- Horses & horsemen – how Ezekiel described mechanized troops
- splendidly clothed – wearing uniforms and combat equipment
- a great company with bucklers and shields – how Ezekiel described body armor
- handling swords – weapons, rifles, bayonets
- helmet – head protection

How will God entice Gog to go to war?

- He would be turned around with hooks in his jaws.
- As an animal is made to go in a certain direction, God will use outside influences to direct Gog’s path.

What other nations are part of Gog’s coalition?

- Persia is Iran
- Cush is Ethiopia & Sudan
- Put is Libya
- Gomer is part of Turkey
- Togarmah is another part of Turkey

Do we see these nations aligning against Israel today?

We have seen Russia’s interest in the Mideast with their presence in Syria. They have been working with Iran and Turkey in Syria despite Turkey shooting down a Russian fighter.

- Iran is very public about wanting to see Israel destroyed
- Turkey used to be friendly toward Israel but as they have become more aligned with the Islamic world with the vision of restoring the Caliphate, that is no longer the case
- Russia is still friendly toward Israel but the day will come when the hooks in the jaws turn them around
- Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya are all being led by radical Islamic warlords who hate Israel and wouldn’t take much convincing to get on board with Turkey & Iran attacking Israel

v7-8 – What time-frame is revealed here?

- Latter years – the time-frame of the Messiah setting up His Millennial Kingdom
- brought back from the sword – Israel had been persecuted wherever they went

- long been desolate – the land was a wasteland when Israel wasn’t there
- brought out of the nations – Aliyah, the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to the Land of Israel
- dwell safely – at peace and not expecting attack

v9 – How will Gog’s army attack Israel?

With many people (as clouds), ascending like a storm.

v10-12 – How is Israel described here?

- a land of unwalled villages – secure, open for all to enter... not like ancient times when all villages had walls to protect their people
- peaceful people – not making war with anyone
- dwell safely – not under attack or even expecting attack
- acquired livestock and goods – wealthy (God has blessed modern-day Israel)

Does that describe Israel today?

- Somewhat but not totally... pretty much unwalled villages (walls are meaningless in modern warfare – there are better ways to secure villages today. They are a peaceful people but have to remain vigilant of the Islamic threats in their neighborhood.
- They have been having to deal with Palestinians lobbing missiles & balloon fire-bombs from Gaza; and Iran’s proxy Hezbollah threatens them from the north.
 - So, some say that the Magog War might have to be preceded with a war with the Palestinians to make for more peaceful conditions

What motivation does Gog have for attacking Israel?

- To take plunder and booty – they seek to expand their wealth with what Israel has.
- Ostensibly, Russia invades the Middle East to help their Islamic allies with their “Israeli problem” but their real agenda is to gain control of Middle East oil so that they may dominate the world.
- Israel has discovered vast gas fields... this threatens Russia’s virtual monopoly supplying Europe

v13 – Who questions Gog’s ambitions?

- Sheba – Saudi Arabia, Yemen
- Dedan – Kuwait, other Gulf states
- the merchants of Tarshish – Spain or Europe
- young lions – former Spanish or European colonies

Can we see that opposition alliance in place today?

Pretty much... Europe gets a lot of oil from Saudi Arabia which has been aligned with Western nations. Kuwait is firmly aligned with Saudi Arabia and Western nations. The U.S. is a former colony of European nations.

v14 – When will Gog know to go against Israel?

When the people of Israel are living safely, not expecting attack and thinking they are secure.

v15-16 – What do we learn of Gog’s army here?

- From the far north – come from Russia and Turkey
- Many peoples – a coalition of nations piling on
- All riding on horses – cavalry... mechanized, moving very fast like a blitzkrieg
- a great company and a mighty army – large numbers of soldiers
- cover the land – occupies a large area

v16-17 – Why did God raise up Gog and his army?

- So that the nations may know that God delivered Israel.
- God is all about salvation and goes to great lengths especially in the “latter days” to show His power so that people will embrace His provision for them

How will God delivering Israel from Gog bless the nations?

- People witnessing the prophesied events will recognize that God told us about it in advance.
- So, people will recognize that the Bible has to be from God because only God can declare the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).
- Thus, people will believe the Bible’s testimony and trust in the provision God made for salvation.

Judgment on Gog – Ezekiel 38:18-23

¹⁸ “And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” says the Lord God, “that My fury will show in My face. ¹⁹ For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, ²⁰ so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.’

²¹ I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,” says the Lord God. “Every man’s sword will be against his brother. ²² And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on

his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. ²³ Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.’”

v18-19 – How will God react to Gog attacking Israel?

God will be angry with Gog and will respond on behalf of Israel with fiery wrath.

v19-20 – What will reveal God’s anger?

- With an earthquake so great that all creatures on the face of the earth will be shaken.
- Mountains, rocky cliffs, and walls shall fall – the context indicates this will be a world-wide earthquake, clearly an act of God
- This earthquake probably foreshadows the one that levels all the mountains (7th bowl judgment, Rev 16:20)

v21-22 – How will God destroy Gog’s army?

- He will turn the coalition against itself
- Pestilence – disease
- Flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone (brings the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah to mind)

Does this fire and brimstone have to be supernatural or could it be Israel attacking from the air and even using nuclear weapons?

- God is very subtle and uses natural means to fulfill His prophecies so that only those familiar with His Word knows that it was God who did it. Unbelievers will have reason to continue in their unbelief.
- The fact that God declared from the time of Ezekiel that He would do this makes it supernatural even if He uses the IDF to execute His judgment on Gog.
- However, since this is the event that causes Israel to come back to the God of Scripture, I believe this deliverance by God is probably overtly supernatural (see Ezekiel 39:22).

v23 – How will God magnify and sanctify Himself in the destruction of Gog’s army?

Many people among the nations will recognize that it was God Himself who delivered Israel

Gog's Armies Destroyed – Ezekiel 39:1-10

¹“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; ² and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel.

³ Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. ⁴ You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. ⁵ You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken,” says the Lord God. ⁶ “And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the Lord. ⁷ So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ Surely it is coming, and it shall be done,” says the Lord God. “This is the day of which I have spoken.

⁹ “Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. ¹⁰ They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them,” says the Lord God.

v1-5 – What will become of Gog and his army?

- The army will be disarmed. Gog and his troops will fall on the mountains of Israel... to the north of the Sea of Galilee (it is mountainous around the Golan Heights and into Lebanon and Southern Syria... land God originally gave to Israel).
- The birds of prey and beasts of the field will devour them.

v6 – What is this fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands?

This could be an escalation of the Magog War to a nuclear exchange; but more likely God being thorough.

v7 – How will this war cause the Jews to turn to God?

- They will recognize that what is happening was foretold by God's prophet Ezekiel.
- A secular people will suddenly become devout and God will open their eyes to Jesus as the Messiah.
- This seems to indicate that the Magog War happens after the rapture of the church (God starts working through Israel again).

How will this war cause the nations to turn to God?

- Many Gentiles will also recognize that the Bible explains what is happening and thus it has to be from God. If God accurately foretold of the Magog War in the Bible, it has to also be right about our need to Have Jesus Christ in our lives.
- God will use the Magog War to bring about a great revival.

v8 – How do we know the Magog War will happen?

God told us it would. God and His Word can be trusted.

v9-10 – What will Israel do in the aftermath of the Magog War?

- They will burn the weapons and armor using them for heat.
- I used to burn excess artillery propellant as a battery safety officer in the Army; it certainly could be used as a fuel for other purposes.

The Burial of Gog – Ezekiel 39:11-16

¹¹ “It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore, they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹² For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified,” says the Lord God. ¹⁴ “They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. ¹⁵ The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹⁶ The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus, they shall cleanse the land.”

v11 – Why would the burial of Gog's army obstruct travelers through the area?

There are so many of them. And there may also be some danger to travelers from some contamination...

How does this verse show that the Magog War is not the War of Armageddon and Gog isn't the Antichrist?

Gog is buried in Israel; the Antichrist is cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

- Another distinction is that specific nations are involved in the Magog War while Armageddon involves the whole world (Revelation 16:14).
- Also, the Magog War is directed against Israel whereas Armageddon is about directly fighting the Lamb (Revelation 16:14 & 17:14).

v12-16 – Why does this have to say about the burial process?

- It will take 7 months – a big project
- In order to cleanse the land – certainly a bio hazard and maybe something else? Or just a ceremonial cleansing?
- All the people living in the area will be involved & will be recognized for their extraordinary effort even during the Millennial Kingdom
- There will be people specially employed to search & bury the dead (separate specialists)

Why is there such a detailed description of the burial process?

- This is no ordinary burial process. Something makes this exceptional... maybe the presence of radioactivity or some other hazard?
- Or is this just extraordinary respect for the dead and ceremonial cleansing of the land?

When might the Magog War happen in relation to the Tribulation?

- Some say it might happen during the Tribulation because of God delivering Israel and turning their hearts to Him. They would be living in peace because of the covenant with the Antichrist.
- But the 7-year time-frame for burning weapons indicate that it is probably some time before the Tribulation (maybe as much as 3.5 years).
- This may be the event that causes the Antichrist to confirm a covenant with many nations allowing Israel to build a temple (the official beginning of the 70th Week of Daniel per Daniel 9:27).

How close are we to the Magog War?

- The principal nations involved are aligned with each other which indicates it could happen at any time.
- Others point out that Israel is not exactly living in peace so maybe there is another war that precedes it
- It is curious that the Islamic nations immediately surrounding Israel are not mentioned in Ezek 38-39

Psalm 83 War

Psalm 83 describes an alliance between the enemies of Israel which is referred to as God's people under His protection (Psalm 83:3). The motivation of the enemies of Israel is the very same as we see in Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic State and the Muslim Brotherhood today: "*Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more*" (Psalm 83:4).

The nations and people-groups allied against Israel for this war are given in Psalm 83:6-8:

- **Jordan** called Edom, Ammon, and Lot
- **Arabs** called Ishmaelites.
- **Egypt** called Moab and Hagrites. See also "*the burden against Egypt*" in Isaiah 19.
- **Lebanon** called Gebal and Tyre
- **Anti-Semites** called Amalek
- **Gaza** called Philistia
- **Syria & Iraq** called Assyria

Where are the Palestinians in this array of people who want to Israel remembered no more?

The term "Palestinian" is effectively another reference to Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael. There are no people of Palestine in history. The term Palestine was chosen by the British to describe the land around the Jordan River and west to the Mediterranean Sea. The term "Palestine" is derived from the term "Philistine" which referred to non-Israelites of the Promised Land during the days of Samson, Saul and David.

Syria: Burden Against Damascus

Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins (Isaiah 17:1, NIV).

The capital of Syria is Damascus which boasts that it is the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world. But the Bible says this will come to an end someday. This could be in conjunction with either a Psalm 83 War or the Magog War.

What would cause Damascus to be a heap of ruins?

It is likely that a nuclear weapon will be used to destroy Damascus. Syria is aligned with Iran and harbors Hezbollah, Iran's proxy. Hezbollah has attacked Israel before and they will again. There is also the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Islamic State stirring up the region in their effort to establish an Islamic Caliphate. Syria's chemical weapons have supposedly been destroyed but who knows if all of them really were? What will Israel's response be if missiles with chemical warheads are launched from Syria into Tel Aviv?

When could the Psalm 83 War happen?

- This war could be the on-going struggle that Israel has had since becoming a nation. That struggle could certainly culminate in a Psalm 83 War.
- It also seems more likely that given the motivation and the nations involved, that the Psalm 83 War could happen even before the Magog War.

When might the rapture of the church happen if there is a Psalm 83 War?

- There is no prophetic event that has to happen before the rapture. That is not to say that something like this could happen prior to the rapture.
 - We also know the rapture must occur prior to the Antichrist guaranteeing peace for Israel (beginning of the Tribulation).
- Certainly, if a nuclear weapon is used like in the destruction of Damascus, what better time for the Rapture to occur than during some world crisis?
 - The use of a nuclear weapon will be a major distraction for the world. In light of such a tragedy, who would miss the disappearance of a few million Christians?
 - Such a world-wide crisis could be part of the delusion God uses to give unbelievers a plausible rationale for not recognizing the rapture for what it is.

The Celebration – Ezekiel 39:17-29

Summary: God calls the birds and beasts to come feast on the dead Magog army and there shall be a great celebration in Israel. This event is what convinces Israel that they need to turn back to the God of Scripture...

Ezekiel 39:22 – So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward.

Many Gentiles too will turn to God as a result of this event. And God will bring back Jews back to the land of Israel this time as believers...

Ezekiel 39:25 – Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel

Some say this restoration is supernatural... like a lateral rapture to the land of Israel. This may be the case but it may not be fulfilled until after Jesus returns at end of the Tribulation. Certainly, these events set the stage for the Millennial Kingdom:

Ezekiel 39:29 – And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, ' says the Lord God.

So What? What applications can we make in the here and now from what we have learned about the Magog and Psalm 83 Wars?

- God will protect end-times Israel... we don't want to be a party to any effort to go against Israel, it will make us an enemy of God.
- Watching the developments setting the stage for these wars is part of watching for our Bridegroom and gives us a sense of urgency to get on with what God is calling us to do.