

# EZEKIEL

## Chapter 38-39

### *Gog and Magog Battle*

*(Chapters 38-39 will be considered as a whole)*

Of all the chapters in the book of Ezekiel none offer more confusion than these two. The confusion is over **the identity of Gog of Magog** and **when this future battle takes place**. Of the two, the question of when this event takes place is the most important and most puzzling. Pick a commentary from the shelf and you will find authors placing this event in one of the three time periods:

1. At the mid-point of the Tribulation
2. At the end of the Tribulation, as the final battle before the Millennium
3. At the end of the Millennium

I bring this up to show you the confusion over this issue, and so that you will understand that while I believe one of these views have a stronger argument than the others; the others are not without some validity.

#### What the Scriptures Say Regarding Gog of Magog:

- Gog is a “chief prince”:  
**Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: (Ezekiel 38:2-3)**  
**Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: (Ezekiel 39:1)**
- Magog is a people group that occupy a land:  
**Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2)**  
**Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (Ezekiel 38:6)**
- Gog is one that the prophets have spoken of:

**Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? (Ezekiel 38:17)**

This verse is often overlooked, for whomever this person is he is spoken of by the prophets of Israel.

- Gog comes from the north:

**Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (Ezekiel 38:6)**

**And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: (Ezekiel 39:2)**

*\*Bibles have changed this to read "from the far north" (NIV) or "remote parts of the north" (NASB). This is done to support a Russian interpretation. I am not saying it is not in the location of Russia, however I do not believe in changing the Bible to fit ideals.*

- Gog's army:

The people involved in this army are listed in Ezekiel 38:1-6. Most of these people can be found in Genesis 10:1-2, they would consist of Gentile nations.

- Gog's battle:

*Ezekiel 38:15-16, 18-23*

**And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. (Revelation 20:7-8)**

**And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Revelation 20:9)**

This is not to say that this battle in Revelation is the same as Ezekiel; we are just looking at all verses mentioning Gog of Magog.

So then this is what the Bible has to say regarding the identity of Gog of Magog, and therefore one can easily see why there is so much confusion on the issue; not a lot is revealed. However if we try to understand *when* this battle takes place it might allow us to begin to speculate further on the identity of this individual.

**When Does the Battle of Gog of Magog Take Place?:**

The scriptures plainly state that this event takes place following the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ:

**And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9)**

Now if this is all the information we had on the issue there would be no confusion; or if all other information in Ezekiel lined up with this time period we would have no problems and all would be in agreement. However as we look at the details in Ezekiel 38 & 39 problems arise in placing both battles as one event transpiring at the end of the Millennium.

#### **The Gog and Magog Event in Ezekiel 38 & 39 (Cf. Gen. 10:1, 2):**

- Gog's great army is brought against the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:1-9)
- Gog's evil thought (Ezekiel 10-17): The evil thought brought into the mind of Gog is to invade the land of Israel to take a spoil of the people and the land.
- Gog's Destruction (Ezekiel 38:19-23; 39:1-22): The wrath of the LORD God is poured out upon Gog and his armies which are depicted by climactic events on the earth:
  - Great Shaking in the land of Israel (38:19, 20) This is very depictive of the time our LORD comes back at the end of the Tribulation period (Isaiah 2:19, 21, 13:13; Joel 3:11-16).
  - Rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone (38:22)

This is associated with the Second Advent (Rev. 11:19, 16:21).
  - The birds and beasts of the field shall devour the dead bodies of the armies of Gog (39:4, 17-20).

This is indicative of the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17, 18; Joel 3:9-16)
  - Their weapons of war will be used as fuel for Israel for 7 years (39:9)
  - A graveyard east of the Dead Sea will be the burying place for the armies of Gog, named Hamongog (Hordes of Gog - 39:11)

- Fulltime employment will be sought to bury the armies of Gog, it will take 7 months (39:14)
- Any passer-by that sees a bone of the bodies of Gog's armies is not to touch it but mark it so the men can come bury it (vs. 39:15)

### The State of Israel at the Time of the Battle:

- It is a time after they are brought back into the land from the Gentile nations:

**After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. (Ezekiel 38:8)**

**To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. (Ezekiel 38:12)**

We have looked at this before in previous chapters in Ezekiel and have noted that this gathering of the nation back into the land takes place sometime in the latter half of the Tribulation period, when Zion travails (Ezekiel 36:24; Isaiah 66:7, 8)

- It is a time when Israel dwells safely in the land and they are at rest:  
**And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, (Ezekiel 38:11)**

This is an interesting verse for when Gog and his armies come up against the land of Israel she will be in a state of rest, dwelling safely. This would seem to point to the Millennial rest. However it could be following the signing of the peace treaty with the confederacy of the nations, during the first 3 ½ years; or it could be that once the nations are gathered back into the land at the end of the Tribulation they are at "rest" prior to the Battle of Armageddon.

- It is a time when Israel has much prosperity:

**To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations,**

which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? (Ezekiel 38:12-13)

This would seem to be indicative of the time once the Millennium period is established, once the riches of the Gentiles have been converted unto them (Isaiah 60).

### Israel following the Battle:

- Israel will be gathered back into their land to dwell no more among the nations: **Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. (Ezekiel 39:25-28)**

This gathering of the nation back into the land takes place sometime in the latter half of the Tribulation period, when Zion travails (Ezekiel 36:24; Isaiah 66:7, 8)

- Israel has the spirit of God poured out on them already: **Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 39:29)**

Israel will be born in a day and part of this born issue is having His spirit pour out upon the nation which will happen at the latter half of the Tribulation period (Joel 2:28-31)

### Summary

As we started out this section I mentioned that when it comes to understanding who Gog of Magog is and when this battle takes place there are scriptural arguments on several sides; there is therefore justifiable confusion on the issue. When interpreting Scripture we need to understand the difference between what the Scriptures clearly state from what is

deduced or speculated. Where the Scriptures are concerned we need to be dogmatic, but what we deduce from scripture would fall into the area of plausible reasoning, and therefore there will most likely be alternative views that are not without merit. So then the following are for you to ponder when you search out for yourselves the answers to Gog of Magog. And while there is much more evidence presented on each of the views listed below (either persuasive or not), I have tried to simplify them for clarity.

### **Identifying Gog of Magog:**

#### **The Russian Invasion:**

Most all prophecy teachers would hold to this viewpoint. It is true that Gog and his hoards come from the north (38:6, 15; 39:2). They are Gentile nations as is seen from Genesis 10:1-5, they are from Japheth. However, it should be kept in mind that to bolster this viewpoint they change Scripture; changing "chief prince" to "prince of Rosh" (NASB) and changing "north parts" or "north quarters" to "remote parts of the north" (NASB) or "far north" (NIV). Another problem is that Scripture tells us that this man is spoken about by all the prophets of Israel (Ezekiel 38:17). If this man is a Russian ruler that will rise, it would seem the Scriptures are silent on him.

#### **The Vile Person of the North:**

Another understanding of the identity of Gog would be that there is a "vile person of the north" that is to come against Israel; he is the one told about in Daniel chapter 11 (11:21-45). He would be that Assyrian from the north (Joel 2:20 cf. Micah 5:5, 6 & Isaiah 10:5, 6 cf. Jer. 6:26, 27 & Zeph. 2:13). He would be the "Prince of the people" Daniel 9:25-27 and would be the "prince of the covenant" of Daniel 11:21-22. This would explain Ezekiel 38:17: *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?* There are many titles that the Antichrist holds in Scripture. Should we add the title "Gog"? However there are problems with this view as well, one of which is the fact Gog is destroyed at a time which seems to be before the Millennial reign of Christ, leaving a question in regard to Gog's return following the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9).

#### **The Time of the Gog Magog War:**

##### **Prior to the Millennium:**

The most plausible view is that the battle of Gog & Magog in Ezekiel 38 & 39 is a different event than the one described in Revelation 20:7-9. While not much information is given on the event in Revelation, it is perfectly clear the Gog and Magog event in Revelation happens following the 1,000 year reign of Christ. This is in contrast to the event described in chapters 38 & 39 of Ezekiel which seems to argue for post-Tribulation, pre-Millennium event.

The climactic events in the earth are very depictive of the time of the Second Advent (Ezekiel 38:29-20 cf. Isaiah 2:19, 21, 13:13; Joel 3:11-16 and the bulk of passages in Revelation).

The terms used concerning the judgment against Gog is similar to that of the Second Advent (Ezekiel 38:19 cf. Zeph. 1:18; 3:8).

The description of the destruction of Gog and his armies is reminiscent of Armageddon which transpires at the end of the Tribulation (Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20 cf. Rev. 19:17, 18; Joel 3:9-16).

Gog and his armies are buried in graveyards east of the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 39:11) which would not seem to fit the end of the Millennium in which Gog is burnt up by fire from God and then a New Heaven and Earth is established (Rev. 20:9; chapter 21).