

The Destruction of Gog with His Coalition of Armies

In the last days, a ruler who Ezekiel calls *Gog*, of the land of *Magog*, prince of *Rosh*, *Meshech*, and *Tubal*, will invade the restored nation of Israel from the far north. He will attack with a powerful army made up of a coalition of nations (Ezekiel 38:1-9), with the purpose of plundering Israel, who will then be dwelling in safety. The Lord's purpose in this invasion is that He might magnify Himself before the entire world (vv. 10-16, 23). But when Gog comes upon Israel, his armies will be destroyed by a furious judgment from the Lord, that the nations may know that the Lord, God of Israel is truly God. (vv. 17-23). Gog with all his allies will succumb to the Lord's judgment on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:1-8). The people of Israel will then spend seven years burning the weapons of their defeated enemies as fuel. They will spend seven months burying the dead bodies of these armies to purify the land. The valley in which they will be buried will be named *Hamon Gog (The Hordes of Gog)* as a result of this event, (vv. 9-16). In the meantime the birds and wild beasts will gorge themselves on the flesh and blood of the fallen (vv. 17-20). Because of this judgment all the nations – and Israel especially – will know that it was on account of her sins that the Lord previously gave Israel up into captivity and defeat. But from this point on He will no longer forsake His redeemed people and He will pour out His Spirit upon them (vv. 21-29).

38:1-6 Many of the people mentioned in this chapter can be found in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. We see descendants of Japheth and Ham, the sons of Noah.

38:2-3 *Gog* “is not a geographical location or a personal name but a title, like Pharaoh, Caesar, or President. *Gog* means a high mountain, high, supreme, or a height. Gog will be the leader of this invasion, and he is also called a Prince.” – Mark Hitchcock, in the *Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*

Magog From about the time of Ezekiel onward, historians have concluded that *Magog*, grandson of Noah, became the Scythians, a people who lived north of the Black Sea. The ancient authorities that get thrown around in these discussions are Hesiod, Herodotus, Flavius Josephus, Philo and Pliny. Today we would find their descendants in Russia, Ukraine or among the people of Central Asia.

the prince of Rosh There is disagreement among translators regarding this phrase.

The question is this: Should the Hebrew word *rosh* be *translated*, which means you take the meaning of the Hebrew word and find the best English word to fit it? Or should it be *transliterated*, which means you take the Hebrew sounds and spell them out with English letters?

The Hebrew word *Rosh* means “head” or “chief”. So the Old KJV translated *prince of Rosh* as “chief prince”. The NIV has followed that example. However, there is very good reason not to do that. Ever since before the time of Christ, Hebrew scholars have looked at the grammar of this verse and concluded that *Rosh* is not really the normal word meaning “head or chief”, but a proper name, “Rosh”. The LXX (oldest Greek version of the OT) transliterates this as Ρως or Ρῶς – so that was the opinion of a group of ancient Hebrew scholars living around 250 B.C. The NKJV and NASB agree with them.

So why care? Mostly because of this: If it’s a name, *Rosh*, then it points directly to Russia, which didn’t exist in Ezekiel’s day or in the time of the LXX, before the time of Christ. Russia didn’t come into existence as a nation until at least 1000 years later. Some scholars just hate that, so they throw around a lot of technical terms regarding Hebrew grammar to try to explain why. With all due respect to the scholars, what they’re implying is that they know more about the rules of ancient Hebrew grammar than the ancient Hebrews who translated the LXX over 22 centuries back – and just a few hundred years after Ezekiel wrote it. When prophets clearly write about things before they exist; it shows us that the Bible is truly a supernatural book.

Meshech and Tubal Scholars debate whether these people are found in Turkey or Southern Russia – or if they moved from modern Turkey up into what is now Russia.

38:5 *Persia* is modern Iran, which now has a hard line Islamic ruler.

Ethiopia is the Hebrew *Cush*, which lines up better with modern Sudan rather than Ethiopia. Sudan presently has a radical Islamic government.

Libya is Hebrew *Put*, and Libya is a good translation. This nation was west of Egypt. Libya has a well documented history of anti-Israeli policies.

38:6 *Gomer* points to the ancient Cimmerians who lived in modern Turkey. They are a stable, democratic country, but their current leader is actually from an Islamist party. They could swing radical more quickly than we’d hope. Regarding Turkey and Islamism here’s a recent article from *Middle East Forum*:

<http://www.meforum.org/article/pipes/2670>

The house of Togarmah The Armenians, according to their own traditions, are the descendants of Togarmah, so we should probably take their word for it. There is a very sizeable Armenian population living in Iran and Turkey, which we’ve already mentioned. The actual state of Armenia may or may not be involved.

From the far north In case we had any doubt where the armies gathered for this invasion have their origin, it is stated plainly here. Russia especially is “the far north” if you’re looking from the land of Israel.

- 38:7-9 The time of this invasion is in *the latter years* – after Israel has been re-gathered from among the nations – and are back in their land, which had long been desolate, as they are right now. But importantly, the people need to be dwelling there *safely*.
- 38:11 Notice the emphasis on peace and safety. Israel is back in the land now, but they don't yet dwell there safely. War and terrorism are constant threats.

The Bible really only tells of two times when Israel will be at peace. The main one is the 1000-year Kingdom Age when Christ reigns on the earth. Before that, however, there will be a short period of peace when Antichrist makes a seven-year covenant or peace treaty with Israel to begin the ticking clock of the Tribulation. This is most likely looking into that period of time.

unwalled villages, without walls, having neither bars nor gates It's interesting that Ezekiel emphasizes the lack of walls, bars and gates. In ancient times, of course, people normally built walls to protect themselves, but now that isn't true – except in Israel.

A few years back, the Israeli government began erecting what they call *the security fence* to protect themselves from Palestinian terrorists. It seems to be working. Suicide bombings have decreased since they started construction. Not surprisingly, the Palestinians see it differently. They call it "The Apartheid Wall" and complain about how it has terribly disrupted daily life in the West Bank. They point out (fairly) that it's much taller and longer than the old Berlin Wall. They compare it (not as fairly) to the Great Wall of China. The rest of the world is staring at it dumbfounded. World leaders seem baffled as to what to do, which is normal regarding the Palestinian - Israeli conflict.

If you'd like to learn more about this wall without having to go there, I'd recommend the following websites:

In defense of the fence: From the Israeli Ministry of Defense:

<http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/default.htm>

A photo gallery trying to remain neutral from the BBC:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/photo_gallery/3108635.stm

And some really negative reporting from the Palestinian point of view:

<http://snapshots.palestinechronicle.com/snapshots.php?gid=40>

Just this week *Israel Today* Wed. July 6, 2005 reported the following:

United Church of Christ passes anti-Israel resolutions

The United Church of Christ (UCC) has called on Israel to dismantle the security barrier in Judea and Samaria and to stop doing business with Israeli companies that support the "occupation." The resolution was passed by the UCC General Synod at its annual meeting in Atlanta. "The wall has devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians," said senior church official Peter Makari. "It prevents the opportunity for interaction for people who desperately want there to be peace." Makari makes it sound like Israel wants to keep peace loving Palestinians out instead of suicide bombers. Jewish leaders reacted angrily. "That wall has saved the lives of Jews, Christians and Muslims," said David Elcott of the American Jewish Committee. Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal [Institute] described the UCC as "functionally anti-Semitic."

And the very next day, Thurs. July 7, 2005 in *Israel Today*:

Barrier construction to be accelerated

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has ordered construction of Israel's controversial security barrier in Judea and Samaria to be speeded up, especially around Jerusalem. Israel has been building the barrier for two years, but only a third of the 425-mile (700-km.) long structure has been completed. Work has been slowed by Israel's Supreme Court, which has ruled that the fence illegally confiscates disputed land and imposes hardship on Palestinians. That has infuriated many Israelis, who accuse the court of siding with the Palestinians at the expense of Israeli security. "And the more they take decisions in this direction, the more Israelis will question the wisdom of the Supreme Court," said Israeli security analyst Dan Schueftan. So by ordering rapid construction of the barrier, Sharon is responding to public opinion. He hopes to overcome the legal obstacles by rerouting the barrier in problematic areas.

I guess my point is that for us, this wall topic is very current news. It just might be that this wall will be torn down as part of Antichrist's eventual peace plan for the Jews. Then the Israelis will be living in peace and without walls – and then Russia and her allies will decide to invade the land – fulfilling this prophecy.

38:12 *to take plunder* Here is their motivation: They want Israel's wealth.

the midst of the land the navel of the earth

38:13 *Sheba, Dedan* This points to modern Saudi Arabia, which is presently more allied with the West than with Russia.

Merchants of Tarshish and all their young lions Most scholars put Tarshish in Southern Spain. Their merchants were known to travel around the Western Mediterranean and out to Great Britain and the coast of West Africa. All Their *young lions* might well refer to places colonized by these people. If the USA appears in prophecy at all it is probably among the *young lions* in this verse. These people seem to object to Gog's invasion, but are totally incapable of stopping it.

38:14-17 *riding on horses* The use of horses in major battles lasted right into the 20th Century. During the Tribulation they may be used widely again. But the Hebrew root really signifies "to skip" and doesn't absolutely have to mean "horse". In fact, it is sometimes translated as a bird like the crane or swallow (Isa. 38:14, Jer. 8:7). So the "horses" and weaponry mentioned here may look exactly as our Bible text indicates – or it could be more modern weaponry without doing violence to the text. The soldiers may be riding on "cranes", "swallows" or another type of "bird".

These armies will cover the land of Israel *like a cloud*. This will look like the most lopsided battle in history. Poor little Israel will be helpless

38:18-23 The Lord will cause four things to happen when Gog and his armies invade Israel:

1. A *great earthquake* will rock the land (vv.19-20).
2. Internal strife will lead to fighting among the allied armies (v.21).
3. A *pestilence* or deadly epidemic will ravage the armies.
4. Flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone will fall from the sky (v.22).

39:1-8 Take another good look at v.8. Do we have any doubts as to whether this is really going to happen?

39:9-10 The Israelis will gather the weapons of their defeated enemies and burn them as fuel for *seven years*.

39:11-16 It will take them *seven months* to bury the bodies in order to cleanse the land. All the people will help out and they'll still have to employ people full time to do the work. At the end of the *seven months* they will still be finding bones here and there that they will have to mark for the burial crews to pick up and dispose of properly in the Valley of *Hamon Gog*, which means "The Hordes or the Multitude of Gog". The city will simply be called "Horde" or *Hamonah*.

39:17-20 God compares this great slaughter to a *sacrificial meal* and He calls all the *birds* and *beasts of the field* to come and eat as much as they want.

39:22 Israel will know that the Lord is their God from that day forward. During the Tribulation, Israel is scheduled to experience a mass conversion – a nationwide turning to their God. This may be the event that triggers their national repentance – when they see the Lord supernaturally give them victory over this overwhelming international coalition.

39:23-24 At this point many of the Gentiles will begin to understand the Scriptures regarding the nation of Israel and turn to the God of Israel.

39:25-29 Shortly after this God will completely regather his people to the land of Israel. The word *captive* in v.28 is literally “there”. God will no longer leave His people in dispersion among the nations. In other words this battle is to happen near the time of the return of the Lord. The regathering is one of the trademarks of Christ’s return and the Millennial Kingdom.

Conclusion:

<p>2 Peter 1:19-21 (NKJV) ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation [or “origin”], ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke <i>as they were</i> moved by the Holy Spirit.</p>
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