

The Prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39

by Robert Nash

There are several prophecies in the Bible that haven't been fulfilled. Most have to do with the 7 year tribulation, Christ's second coming and of course Israel. One of my favorite prophecies to study is found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. In these chapters we read about an attack on Israel led by countries known as Gog and Magog. In the following post, I will discuss this prophecy. The following information is from the Bible, various commentaries, dictionaries and other sources that will be cited at this articles conclusion.

Beginning with chapter 38, Ezekiel names several nations that will join forces to attack Israel. These include: Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and Beth Togarmah "from the far north". Of the above nine names, only one is not a geographical location – Gog. This is a title like President or King. Gog will lead this invasion against Israel. From the

New International Bible Commentary(F.F. Bruce) we read that "the chief prince" mentioned in verse 3 is "preferable to 'prince of Rosh' which adds another name to our geographical list. Each of these countries was easily identified in Ezekiel's day, but most of the above names seem foreign to us. Once you identify what countries inhabited these ancient lands, though, it is easier to piece together. Rosh was also known as Rashu, Rasapu, Ros and Rus. Today we call her Russia. Magog (ancient Scythians) is present day Central Asia. This is the "Islamic southern republics of the former Soviet Union with a population of 60 million Muslims. This territory could include modern Afghanistan." (M. Hitchcock) Meshech included ancient Muschki and Musku in Cilicia and Capadocia. Tubal was in ancient Cappadocia. Today both are known as Turkey along with southern Russia and Iran.

Libya, the easiest, known as ancient Put and west of Egypt is known today as...Libya.

Persia is probably the second easiest of the list. Persia changed its name to Iran in 1935.

Ethiopia in ancient Cush, south of Egypt is present day Sudan.

Finally, Gomer and Beth-togarmah, are both present day Turkey.

So our list of key players will be Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Libya as well as numerous several Islamic countries in Central Asia. Each will bring all of their military strength to the table for this attack. Led probably by either Russia or Iran, these countries will have one goal in mind: the complete and utter annihilation of Israel.

We know their target is Israel from verse 8 which states, "...In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety." Israel gathered "from many nations" and returned from a *very* long absence and became a nation in 1948.

An interesting side note – God has promised Israel that she will never again be removed from her land (Amos 9:14-15). Prior to the prophecy of Gog and Magog, Ezekiel 37:15-28 tells us that Israel will be one nation, no longer split into two (Israel and Judah). Despite all these nations (and others) who wish to destroy Israel, it will never happen.

Verses 8, 11 and 14 of Ezekiel 38 give hints as to when this attack may occur. All state that Israel will be "living securely". There is a chance that Israel could enter a brief time of peace, possibly reaching some type of agreement with Iran in the near future over the current nuke situation. No doubt this would be a false security, but it is possible. The other possibility is that it might occur early on during the 7 year tribulation.

The tribulation will take place after the rapture of the church. Officially it will not begin *until* the Antichrist *signs* a peace treaty with Israel and all of her neighbors that will last 7 years. However prophecy teaches that the 7 years of peace will only last 3 1/2 years before The Antichrist decides to destroy Israel.

There are some that assume *that* it is when The Antichrist retracts his peace agreement the attacks of Gog and Magog occur leading to the Great Tribulation (the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation). Others believe that this will be World War III and/or Armageddon. Others believe this to be inaccurate for several reasons (one being that Armageddon doesn't take place in Jerusalem, but Megiddo) but we'll focus on the strongest argument.

"Ezekiel 39:9-10 indicates that for seven winters the people of Israel will burn the leftover implements of [the] war" with Gog and Magog. "Since the Jews will be persecuted by the Antichrist for the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, this may suggest that Russia and her Arab allies will be destroyed at least three and a half years prior to the beginning of the Tribulation. It could, of course, be more." (Lahaye) Therefore, this attack is *most* likely to occur anytime between now and shortly before the signing of the seven year treaty. Also, Armageddon occurs at the end of the Tribulation, so Israel wouldn't be living in peace as Scripture states, but in hiding.

It is not difficult to pick a reason on why this attack will take place. Iran has already stated that it wants to destroy Israel. Russia and Iran are close allies. All of the other nations listed above hate Israel. Ezekiel tells us that this attack will occur "so that the nations may know me [God] when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." It is sobering to think about the possible revival this will bring about across the globe, especially if it happens prior to the rapture.

With the exception of the final battles of the tribulation, this attack on Israel will be the largest in its history. Verse 16 states, "You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land." In all likelihood, Israel will stand alone when it occurs. The news is full of reports that the White House doesn't seem as concerned as Israel is about Iran's current nuclear program. Russia is generally off everyone's Nice List and does what it pleases. It wouldn't have any hindrance on attacking Israel. Throw in a war-weary United States and it all helps set the stage nicely.

So how will little Israel withstand such a massive invasion? "This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord. In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beast of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord. Every man's sword will be against his brother. I will execute poor judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning sulfur on him and his troops and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel 38:18-23)

Ezekiel goes on to tell us that all the attacking troops will be destroyed and given over to animals to feast on them. There will be so much carnage that it will take Israel seven months to bury the dead and then "they will begin their search" (39:14). The cleanup will be so extensive that a town (Hamanoh meaning Horde) will be established in the valley at the gravesites to aid the cleanup crews. Fire will fall upon the actual attacking nations. Some believe this means that those nations coming against Israel will be completely destroyed. It is interesting to think that in our lifetime Russia, Iran and almost all (if not all) Islamic countries will cease to exist.

At the end of chapter 39, God once again states his purpose for this attack: "From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God." Ezekiel 39:22

And there you have it, a quick run-down of Ezekiel 38-39. An attack led by Russia and Iran along with Turkey, Sudan, Libya as well as numerous several Islamic countries will come upon Israel (more than likely) before the rapture or shortly thereafter. Though the odds will be greatly against her, God will supernaturally protect Israel -destroying her enemies. Then there will be a revival among Jews and Gentiles as they see that the Lord is God.