

## Gog and Magog

- I. This study is meant to set forth an alternative to the popular assumption among some Christians that Gog and Magog (as depicted in **EZE 38-39**) could not have had an ancient historic fulfillment but rather refer to a culminating battle at the end of time as noted in **REV 20:8-9**.
  - A. It should be remembered that certain names in the Book of Revelation which appear in O.T. writings are not the same entities.
  - B. The Babylon of Revelation is not the ancient Babylon of the O.T. but rather a spiritual whore which dallies with kings of the earth. **REV 17:1-5**.
  - C. The Jerusalem of Revelation is not the earthly Jerusalem which featured so prominently in history but rather is the heavenly city. **REV 3:12**.
  - D. The use of historic names of earthly and carnal people, things or places in Revelation is helpful in discerning the nature and application of things in Revelation since there are characteristics of the former which may be applied to the latter.
- II. An investigation into Gog and Magog is difficult, owing to the limited amount of information about those names in Scripture.
  - A. The names are conspicuously noted in **EZE 38-39** and **REV 20:8-9**, both passages setting forth certain enemies of God which assault the people of God.
  - B. There are eleven occurrences of Gog in Scripture, ten are in the O.T.
    1. A descendant of Reuben was Gog (**1CH 5:4**), hundreds of years before **EZE 38-39**.
    2. Gog is of uncertain derivation and means *mountain*, per Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew dictionary. This may be significant since *mountain* sometimes figuratively describes a ruthless expansionist government like Babylon. **JER 51:25**.
    3. Historically, Gog has been speculatively associated with an ancient Lydian king, Gyges or Gu-gu, such names appearing in monuments.
    4. In **EZE 38:2-3**, Gog is a *chief prince* but in **REV 20:8-9** is noted as a nation.
  - C. There are five occurrences of Magog in Scripture, four are in the O.T.
    1. Noah had a grandson, Magog (**GEN 10:2**), thousands of years before **EZE 38-39**.
    2. Magog also means *land of Gog*.
- III. Current events have stirred a number of Christians to conclude that the end of all things is at hand, Gog and Magog are Russia (and others) which have designs to attack Israel.
  - A. There is a “Gog and Magog” final assault on the *camp of the saints and the beloved city* in **REV 20:8-9**.
    1. Mind that this attack is at the end of the famous “thousand year” kingdom-age fancied by premillennial interpretation.
    2. Thus, if current events are **REV 20:8-9** in motion, the millennial kingdom-age must be on the verge of expiry (according to the premillennial scheme), yet some seem to be flirting with the notion that these things are the immediate harbingers of the beginning of the “millennium.”
  - B. Gog and Magog are mentioned as enemies of God and His people in **EZE 38-39**.
    1. Gog there troubles Israel greatly but is decisively destroyed by God.
    2. The events would take place in the *latter years / latter days* (**EZE 38:8, 16**) upon a regathered Israel.
    3. Some (particularly futurists, premillennialists) therefore affirm that the battle of **EZE 38-39** must be the same as the final assault of **REV 20:8-9**, and that both passages are treating of modern times after Israel reclaimed Palestine (ca. 1948).
      - a. Scofield’s footnotes on **EZE 38:2** describe “...the last mad attempt to

- exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem,” associating it with **REV 20:7-9**.
- b. Mind that this implies that the “camp of the saints” (**REV 20:9**) is equated with Israel.
    - (1) If so, there is going to have to be a super-conversion of presently antichrist Jews to bring them up to N.T. standards of “saints.”
    - (2) Simply being “of Israel” does not mean one is “of God’s Israel” as a saint in His eyes through Christ.  
**ROM 9:6-8; GAL 6:16; ACT 9:13; 26:10.**
    - (3) Dispensational premillennialism accommodates this inasmuch as it supposes a massive conversion of Jews somehow after the church and the spirit are raptured out of the earth at the beginning of the supposed millennial kingdom-age.
  - c. Scofield’s footnotes preceded 1948 by decades. He anticipated a regathering of Israel to Palestine based upon his faulty interpretation of certain “regathering” passages of O.T. prophecy, and somehow things curiously panned out along the lines he anticipated.
- C. Gog and Magog are assumed to be modern Russia (and possible allies).
1. Meshech and Tubal (**EZE 38:2-3**) are assumed to be modern Moscow and Tobolsk.
  2. Since Gog & Co. come upon Israel from the north (**EZE 38:6, 15; 39:2**), Russia’s location of being north of Israel only adds to the assumptions.
  3. Russia’s current militarism is assumed also to be a prelude to a move against Israel, and some Christians (based upon their eschatology) might not only deem these events as foreshadowing the final conflict of **REV 20:8-9**, but also that Russia must be opposed at all costs since it represents an imminent threat to “God’s chosen people” (equated with the modern State of Israel).
    - a. NOTE: The militarism of Russia may indeed be a concern from the standpoint of geopolitics but to associate its current moves with prophecy concerning Israel is a different story.
    - b. This stirring up of Christians against Russia based upon a futurist interpretation of **EZE 38-39** has happened previously (e.g. 1968).
    - c. But what’s the worry? If **REV 20:8-9** is about to occur, and Russia is involved in the Gog and Magog assault, the attackers are destroyed by God and so is the devil (**REV 20:10**)! Maybe Christians should be praying for and pushing politically for Russia’s haste to Israel?
- D. The futurist/premillennial interpretation of **EZE 38-39** and **REV 20:8-9** has a number of problems, including:
1. Scofield’s footnotes affirm that the chapters of **EZE 38-39** (and following) are a prophetic outline of sequential events that pertain to the final days, **EZE 40** denoting “ISRAEL IN THE LAND DURING THE KINGDOM-AGE” (i.e., during their “millennium”). The pattern: Gog’s assault and defeat, then “kingdom age.”
  2. “Premillennialists insist that the establishing of the millennium is to follow God’s judgments upon evil. One of the signal proofs of this to which they appeal is the fact that the overthrow of Gog and Magog described in Ezek. xxxviii.-xxxix. immediately precedes the description of the establishment of a kingdom which apparently is to have no end. Yet in Rev. xx. the millennium is followed by a world-wide revolt of which Gog is definitely declared to be a leader... The question as to where Gog, whose armies were utterly destroyed BEFORE the kingdom age, is to raise up a multitude ‘the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,’ with which

to attack ‘the camp of the saints and the beloved city,’ has been a stumblingblock to Premillennialists...”

(Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy And The Church*, pp. 239-240, Caps mine).

3. “Is Gog to be destroyed for ever, and then brought to life again to fight a last great battle against Messiah and the saints? Or, are there two Gogs? Or, are we to reverse the sequence of events in Ezekiel? or in Revelation?” (Ibid., p. 28)

IV. Futurists/Premillennialists have had a habit of unnecessarily assuming that certain prophecies must have future fulfillments rather than historical fulfillments since such fit better with their scheme of prophetic interpretation.

- A. They assume that certain prophecies of Israel’s regathering and rebuilding in their land have a distant fulfillment but Scripture shows a satisfaction of such prophecies in history.

**EZR 1:1-3.**

1. NOTE: After the Jews returned to their land from Babylon, there is thereafter NO positive mention of a return/rebuilding in the post-captivity O.T. books.
2. The one post-captivity reference to a future return/rebuilding is that of a futile attempt by Esau/Edom (**MAL 1:1-4**), and Esau spiritually represents the non-elect portion of the descendants of Abraham. **ROM 9:6-13.**

- B. They assume that Israel of old never received all the land promised in the Abrahamic covenant so this awaits fulfillment in a future millennium.

1. “It is important to see that the nation has never as yet taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, nor has it ever possessed the whole land...” (Scofield’s footnote on **DEU 30:3**)

2. But Israel DID possess all of the land in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. **JOS 11:15, 23; 21:43-45; 22:4; 23:14-16; 1KI 8:56; NEH 9:7-8 c/w JOS 17:12-13.**

- C. They assume that the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy did not immediately follow the 69th week but was put off until the distant future (one of Scofield’s gaps), yet the 70th week was required in history for the cutting off of Messiah. **DAN 9:24-26.**

- D. They assume that the O.T. prophecies of a coming kingdom of God (e.g. **DAN 2:44**) were meant for a future dispensation, yet Scripture shows the kingdom of God to have been a present reality into which men were pressing by faith in Christ’s days. **LUK 16:16; MAT 21:31-32 c/w LUK 7:29-30.**

- E. With such a sketchy track record of overlooking historical fulfillment of prophecies, it would be advisable to think twice about concluding that the “Gog and Magog” battle of **EZE 38-39** must be referring to something that awaits fulfillment.

V. Here are some of the arguments that are used to support the idea that the “Gog and Magog” battle of **EZE 38-39** must be referring to something that awaits fulfillment.

- A. The prophecy uses terms like “latter years” and “latter days.” **EZE 38:8, 16.**

1. It is therefore assumed that a near/historical fulfillment cannot answer the prophecy; it must be referring to something at the end of time.
2. latter: Belonging to a subsequent or comparatively advanced period; later... 5. That has been mentioned second of two, last of a group of more than two, or at or near the end of a preceding clause or sentence: opposed to former. [Note **EXO 4:8**]
3. Moses’ prophecy of evil upon Israel in the *latter days* has a fulfillment as near as the days after Joshua’s death. **DEU 31:29 c/w JDG 2:19-20.**
4. Nebuchadnezzar’s dreamed image symbolized what would happen in the *latter days*, to wit, “...what should come to pass hereafter...” (**DAN 2:28-29**).

- a. The image represented four successive world empires, beginning with Babylon.
- b. The rest of Daniel plus other O.T. scriptures identify the next two as the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, the latter being replaced by Rome.
- c. “Latter” obviously meant *latter* from their viewpoint, not the end of time. The “latter days” of necessity had a historical fulfillment.
5. **JER 30:24** must refer to the *latter days* after the Babylonian captivity when the Jews would have been restored to their land. **JER 30:17-22**.
  - a. Similarly, nations like Moab and Elam were promised recovery from captivity in the *latter days*. **JER 48:47; 49:39**.
  - b. Their liberation would be in latter days AFTER the Babylonians’ power, even as was the case with Israel, all historical fulfillments.
6. The post-captivity rebuilt temple was the *latter house* as opposed to the pre-captivity *former*, not an imagined rebuilt temple in a future millennium. **HAG 2:9**.
7. The pre-captivity prophets were the *former prophets* (**ZEC 1:4; 7:7, 12**), implying that the post-captivity Zechariah was of the *latter prophets*.
8. The pre-captivity days were the *former days* (**ZEC 8:10-11**) which logically implies that the post-captivity days were the *latter days*, per the definition of *latter*. The return from Babylon was a signal watershed moment in time for Israel.
9. Therefore, “latter days” or “latter years” in **EZE 38:8, 16** does not forbid a historical fulfillment and does not demand a future fulfillment.
- B. **EZE 38:8** describes Israel as being “...brought forth out of the nations...”
  1. Futurists assume a modern-day fulfillment from this on the supposition that the return at hand was only from Babylon, not from *nations*.
  2. The notion is that Israel was scattered to the nations in 70 A.D. and was not regathered to that land as a nation until 1948 A.D.
  3. But at the Babylonian captivity, Israel was dispersed *into the nations* as well as into Babylon itself. **EZE 6:6-9; 12:10-15**.
  4. Their seventy-year Babylonian captivity would end and they would then be gathered *from all the nations* to which they were dispersed. **JER 29:10-14**.
  5. **EZE 39:27-28** speaks of Israel returning from captivity “...out of their enemies’ lands...”
  6. Therefore, it is an error to conclude that Israel being “...brought forth out of the nations...” (**EZE 38:8**) must have a distant future (modern-day) fulfillment.
- C. **EZE 38:2; 39:1** prophesy against “...Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal...”
  1. In these chapters, Gog’s confederate army consists of Magog, Gomer, Tubal, Meshech, Togarmah, Tarshish, Javan, Sheba and Dedan. These tribes/nations are most likely the descendants of Noah’s grandsons and great grandsons, bearing their founders’ names. **GEN 10:1-7**.
  2. Such nations were relatively close to Israel and were then known to Israel for their commerce at Tyre, “...a mart of nations...” (**ISA 23:3**) c/w **EZE 27**.
  3. Futurists like to locate these tribes/nations in distant lands, conspicuously Russia.
    - a. This is largely based upon the observation that the word translated “chief” in **EZE 38:3** is *ro’sh* (SRN H7218), and hence, Russia!
    - b. In the Revised Version, the word was left in Hebrew form and the verse rendered, “...O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.” This turned an adjective (chief) into a proper noun and added fuel to the Russia speculation.
    - c. The Hebrew, *ro’sh*, appears about 600 times in the Hebrew O.T. and is

alternately translated as closely synonymous terms: chief, head, top, principal, etc.

- d. Its use in **1CH 27:5**, “chief (*ro'sh*) priest” is not referring to the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church!
- 4. However, once Russia was assumed to be involved in the prophecy, Meshech is supposed to mean *Moscow*, and Tubal is supposed to mean *Tobolsk* (cities in Russia). The slight similarities in letters are assumed to be significant.
  - a. However could it not be alternately argued that Moscow is actually from the name of one of Daniel’s Hebrew brethren, Meshach? **DAN 1:7**.
  - b. Some think Gomer (**EZE 38:6**) means *Germany*. There are similar letters in those names and both start with “G.” But so does Guadeloupe, Guatemala and Guesswork.
  - c. If Meshech be *Moscow*, Tubal be *Tobolsk*, and Gomer be *Germany*, we should hope for more concrete proof than similarity of letters.
  - d. We further doubt that Javan is *Japan*, or Dedan is *Denmark* or *Dedham* (*Mass.*) or that Togarmah is *Togo*, *Tonga* or *Tobago*.
- D. It has also been speculated that since Gog would go up against unwallled villages (**EZE 38:11**), this must refer to modern times when walls are obsolete.
  - 1. Though ancient cities commonly had walls (like Jerusalem), smaller population centers commonly did not. **LEV 25:29, 31; DEU 3:5; EST 9:19**.
  - 2. Therefore, it is an error to conclude that **EZE 38:11** must be referring to modern times of unwallled towns or villages.

VI. The description of the attack by Gog is that of an ancient battle, not a modern one.

- A. The invaders come on horses. **EZE 38:15**.
  - 1. Are we to believe that modern-day Russia is going to revert to horse cavalry to go up against a nuclear Israel?
  - 2. Togarmah was one of the confederates (**EZE 38:6**) and it is identified as being a contemporary power who traded with horses in Tyre in Ezekiel’s day. **EZE 27:14**.
- B. The weapons and armor used by the invading army are primitive. **EZE 38:4-5**.
  - 1. The weapons are largely of wood and used as firewood. **EZE 39:9-10**.
  - 2. This is likely not figurative of an AK-47 with wood stock and forepiece.
  - 3. Futurist gospel tracts speculate that a manufactured wood product (lignostone) is very strong and it can burn like coal. Of course, this implies that modern-day Israel will have reverted from fossil-fuels, solar power, etc. to firewood.
  - 4. The description in **EZE 38-39** is clearly more akin to a time when people relied upon wood for bows, arrows, spears, shields and firewood, not to post-1948 Israel.