

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 do 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. That Gog said, “...I will go up to the land of unwallled villages...” (**EZE 38:11**) implies that other lands had walled villages, an ancient description more than a modern one.
 - 3. 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.

VII. Disclaimer: The thoughts that follow only present possible historical satisfaction of the Gog and Magog prophecy of **EZE 38-39**, a reasonable alternative to the Futurist interpretation according to the light I have now.

VIII. Generally, the Futurist affirms that the Gog and Magog battle of **EZE 38-39** is the same as the Gog and Magog battle of **REV 20:8-9** which precipitates the swift, arresting judgment of God upon the enemy of the saints and the destruction of the devil who deceived the aggressors.

- A. Recall that the Scofield Reference Bible footnotes suppose that the battle of **EZE 38-39** is

- what basically begins the “kingdom age” (messianic millennium) but the battle of **REV 20** is “...when the thousand years are expired...” (**REV 20:7**).
- B. Recall that the allies of Gog and Magog in **EZE 38-39** have been shown to be contemporary powers whose trade at Tyre was well known in those days. **EZE 27**.
- C. In **EZE**, Gog is a prince but in **REV**, Gog is a nation.
- D. In **EZE**, Gog’s band comes from various countries around Israel and come upon Israel *from the north* (**EZE 38:15; 39:2**) but in **REV**, Gog and Magog are nations *from the four quarters of the earth and innumerable*.
- E. In **EZE**, Gog’s host come against Israel who have returned from captivity and are dwelling without walls but in **REV**, Gog and Magog go up on the breadth of the earth and compass the *camp* of the saints and the *beloved city*.
1. camp: The temporary quarters, formed by tents, vehicles, or other portable or improvised means of shelter, occupied by a body of nomads or men on the march...
 2. Mind how this accords more with the church of *strangers, pilgrims and sojourners* (**HEB 11:8-9, 13**) who here *have no continuing city* (**HEB 13:14**), than with a fixed city like earthly Jerusalem.
 3. A church member is a *citizen* (inhabitant of a city with certain rights and privileges) and the church is God’s beloved. **EPH 2:19; 5:25**.
 4. Earthly Jerusalem certainly has had God’s interest (**PSA 132:13-14; 48:2 c/w MAT 5:35**) but do not overlook the church’s relationship to the heavenly Jerusalem as being in God’s vision. **GAL 4:25-26; HEB 12:22; REV 3:12**.
- F. In **EZE**, the enemy is Gog of the land of Magog but in **REV**, Gog and Magog.
- G. In **EZE**, Gog is defeated and Israel burns the weapons of war for seven years (**EZE 39:9**), but in **REV**, fire of God from heaven destroys the enemy, which implies the consumption of wood (and more). c/w **1KI 18:38**.
1. **EZE 39:10** describes Israel also spoiling the vanquished enemy.
 2. **REV 20:8-9** does not exactly accord with this picture.
 3. **REV 20:10** connects the devil’s destruction with the fiery destruction of v. 9.
 4. **REV 20:8-10** leaves little room for spoiling the enemy and burning his wooden weapons for seven years, or for seven months of burying decomposing bodies, per **EZE 39:11-16**, or for the heathen to consider and be instructed. **EZE 39:21-23**.
 5. One-sixth of the armies escape destruction in **EZE 39:2** but not so in **REV 20:9**.
 6. The battle of **EZE 38-39** does speak of God pleading against Gog “...with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone” (**EZE 38:22**).
 - a. Mind that no mention is made of rain or hail or pestilence in the climactic final destruction in **REV 20:8-9**.
 - b. God had used such elements *in history* to help fight against the oppressors of His people, and it was not a complete destruction like **REV 20:9**. See **EXO 9:15, 24 c/w PSA 105:32; JOS 10:11**.
 - c. The brimstone may be related to a geologic event (**EZE 38:19**) such as God has used *in history* to judge the wicked. **ISA 29:6; DEU 29:22-23**.
 - d. Therefore it is quite possible that **EZE 38:22** is connected to a then upcoming battle in Israel’s future which did take place long ago.
- H. There are substantial differences between the Gog and Magog battle of **EZE 38-39** and the Gog and Magog battle of **REV 20:8-9**. These differences are such that one should be cautious of making **EZE 38-39** be fulfilled in **REV 20:8-9**.

- IX. **EZE 39:23-29** sets forth a return from captivity attended by a pouring out of God's spirit upon Israel (v. 29).
- A. The Futurist position tends to ascribe this pouring out of the spirit to the conversion of the Jews at the end of time, commonly associating it with **JOEL 2:28-29** or **ZEC 12:10**.
1. Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost where the Spirit filled the N.T. church: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel..." (**ACT 2:16-21**).
 - a. Peter did not say, "This is some of that..." or "This is kind of like that..." but "THIS IS THAT..."
 - b. Joel was prophesying of the endowment of the church with the Spirit of Christ to indwell and guide it by apostolic revelation.
 - c. The same thing occurred at the house of Cornelius for the purpose of proving the acceptance by God of uncircumcised men of faith for fellowship and salvation through Christ. **ACT 11:15-18**.
 2. **ZEC 12:10** has fulfillment in the days of Christ's appearance and crucifixion. c/w **JOH 19:37**.
 - a. There were those in those days who were bitterly affected inwardly about the sufferings and death of Messiah, and the guilty brought to humbled repentance owing to the influence of the spirit of grace. **ACT 2:36-41**.
 - b. **ZEC 12:10** is in a context of times of great turmoil in Jerusalem (vs. 11-14) which could describe the rending of families by the gospel (**MAT 10:34-37**) or the political upheaval of the times (internally and by outward oppression).
 - c. Note **ZEC 13:1**. "In that day..." This speaks of the continual and universal access to God's mercy sinners have through Christ. c/w **HEB 4:15-16**.
 3. There may well be a great conversion of the Jews near the end of time (**ROM 11:22-32**) and we should rejoice if that happens. But this is the precipitation of the end of all things, not the beginning of a millennium on earth. Christ is coming not to set up the kingdom of God but to deliver up the kingdom of God to the Father. **1CO 15:23-24**.
- B. Consider that **EZE 39:29** may be referring to a near historical operation of the spirit of God for Israel's benefit.
1. (**PRO 1:23**) Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, and I will make known my words unto you.
 2. Ezekiel prophesied at the time of the Babylonian captivity, during which time God hid his face from them as He had promised He would do for their idolatries. **EZE 39:23-24** c/w **DEU 31:16-21**.
 - a. Their punishment by captivity was God hiding His face from them.
 - b. The captivity being completed, that condition would end: "Neither will I hide my face any more from them..." (v. 29).
 3. Their captivity in Babylon would end and they would regather into their own land because the *spirit of prophecy* stirred up the *spirit of Cyrus*. **ISA 44:28; 45:1, 13** c/w **EZR 1:1-4**.
 4. Isaiah elsewhere sowed hope by describing a *pouring out* of God's spirit. **ISA 32:13-15; 44:1-4**.
 5. The rebuilding program after the captivity was "...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts..." (**ZEC 4:6-9**). The work was animated by spirit-led prophets. **EZR 6:14**.
- C. Thus, a near historical interest is a real possibility in Ezekiel's prophecy. It does not have to refer to a distant future, as yet unfulfilled event.

- X. Here are some pertinent elements relative to a near historical fulfillment of **EZE 38-39** during the intertestamental period between the prophecy of Malachi and the gospel of Matthew.
- A. The voice of prophecy was silent during this season of hundreds of years. Therefore there is no authoritative inspired record of the events of those years.
1. This does not mean that God could not confirm His word by other means, as was the case in **EZR 6:1-3**.
 2. There are extra-biblical historical records which do provide reasonably reliable information about the Jewish situation in the intertestamental period, such as some of the Apocryphal books like 1&2 Maccabees or the writings of the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews, Wars of the Jews*).
 3. “These are not inspired writings, but they are authentic and trustworthy histories, which have, in the providence of God, come down to us from ancient times, that by their records, the faith of God’s people might be encouraged, and those that reject his word might be without excuse.”
(Philip Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks And The Great Tribulation*)
 4. Prophecy of future events was to be confirmed at their historical fulfillment for the benefit of those who would witness the fulfillment (**JOH 13:19; 14:29; MAT 24:24-25**). Therefore, a dark prophecy of something that was significant to God’s people in a particular season could have served its purpose for the comfort of the people of that season without having the same significance for the distant future. *They would at the time* be assured that God had things under control.
- B. There are indeed inspired prophecies of events that would take place in the intertestamental period. It cannot be affirmed that the prophets completely overlooked that coming era.
1. The Book of Daniel expressly sets forth major events of the intertestamental era, including the rise of the Grecian empire and its influence, demise, etc., and the rise of the Roman Empire. **DAN 2:39-40; 8:21; 10:20; 11:2**.
 - a. **DAN 11** is unique in that it prophesies many specific events not covered elsewhere in the Bible.
 - b. Try and find another chapter in the Bible that gives anywhere close to the same number of prophetic details as **DAN 11**.
 - c. Its detail and accuracy have led Bible skeptics and critics to hold to a late date for its writing, namely, after its events took place. Yet even the Jewish historian notes concerning Alexander the Great: “And when the book of Daniel was shewed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favours they pleased of him...”
(Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities Of The Jews*, Book XI, Chap. II)
 - d. Daniel also prophesied of other significant players that arose during the intertestamental period: a vile conniver who would entice a corrupt element of Jewish society and defile true religion, and a stalwart opposition to him. **DAN 11:21, 30-33**.
 2. Zechariah also prophesied of sons of Zion who would be raised up against Greece. **ZEC 9:12-13**.
 3. The foregoing major players are well known in history: Alexander, an heir to his kingdom named Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), and the Jewish priest-warriors (the Maccabees).

- a. “The following words explain this: I have raised up and animated thy sons, O Zion! against thy sons, O Greece! This was fulfilled when against Antiochus, one of the kings of the Grecian monarchy, the people that knew their God were strong and did exploits, Dan 11:32. And they in the hand of an almighty God were made as the sword of a mighty man, which none can stand before.” (Matthew Henry Commentary on Zechariah 9:13)
 - b. “**bent Judah** — made Judah as it were My bow, and ‘filled’ it ‘with Ephraim,’ as My arrow, wherewith to overcome the successor of the Grecian Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes (compare Notes, see on Dan 8:9; see on Dan 11:32; 1 Maccabees 1:62; 2:41-43), the oppressor of Judah. Having spoken (Zec 9:1-8) of Alexander’s victories, after the parenthesis (Zec 9:9, Zec 9:10) as to Messiah the infinitely greater King coming, he passes to the victories which God would enable Judah to gain over Alexander’s successor, after his temporary oppression of them.” (Jamieson, Faussett, Brown Commentary on Zechariah 9:13)
- C. Some may object that since there is no follow-up mention in Scripture of the fulfillment of **EZE 38-39** in ancient history, that it therefore cannot be speaking of ancient times. But there are other prophecies which lack further elucidation which we need not doubt took place.
1. “All this shall be done in a little time: “*Within one year according to the years of a hireling* (within one year precisely reckoned) this judgment shall come upon Kedar.” If this fixing of the time be of no great use to us now (because we find not either when the prophecy was delivered or when it was accomplished), yet it might be of great use to the Arabians then, to awaken them to repentance, that, like the men of Nineveh, they might prevent the judgment when they were thus told it was just at the door.” (Matthew Henry Commentary on Isaiah 21:16).
 2. “**Within three years** - We have no means of ascertaining the exact fulfillment of this prediction, nor do we certainly know by whom it was accomplished.” (Albert Barnes Commentary on Isaiah 16:14)

XI. Here is a summary of world events relative to Israel during the intertestamental period.

- A. The Medo-Persian empire was overcome by the Greek, Alexander the Great (ca. 336 B.C.), who built a massive empire at a young age and who died young. When dying, he was supposedly asked, “To whom do you leave your kingdom?” and he answered wryly, “To the strongest.”
- B. Alexander’s kingdom was eventually divided among four of his generals (Lysimachus, Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander) with a northern, southern, eastern, and western division of the empire (Asia, Egypt, Syria, Greece). The hellenic influence of Greek civilization ran through all.
- C. There were ongoing struggles for dominance between the Ptolemaic monarchy of Egypt (kings of the south) and the Seleucid monarchy of Syria (kings of the north) and these struggles are outlined in Daniel.
- D. The Seleucid king, Antiochus IV, came to the throne in 175 B.C.
 1. “Dan. 11:21 calls him a contemptible person.’ I Macc. 1:10 refers to him as ‘a sinful root,’ and II 9:28 calls him a ‘murderer and a blasphemer.’ He gave himself the special name of Epiphanes, which means ‘God made manifest.’” (Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary, p. 590)
 2. In his warring exploits he also oppressed Judah and Jerusalem, doing so with great notoriety. He is of central interest to the prophecy of **EZE 38-39**.

- E. The Jews, typical of their history, eventually fell into worldliness and apostasy after the return from Babylon.
1. Religion, even for the priesthood, had been deteriorating from the days of Malachi.
 2. The modernized Greek culture was very appealing to a large element of the Jewish people who were willing to cast off their history and order to mainstream Jewish life in a Greek world and “be like the cool kids.”
 - a. “...Menelaus and the sons of Tobias were distressed, and retired to Antiochus, and informed him, that they were desirous to leave the laws of their country, and the Jewish way of living according to them, and to follow the king’s laws, and the Grecian way of living: wherefore they desired his permission to build them a gymnasium at Jerusalem. And when he had given them leave, they also hid the circumcision of their genitals, that even when they were naked they might appear to be Greeks. Accordingly, they left off all the customs that belonged to their own country, and imitated the practices of other nations.”
(Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities Of The Jews*, Book XII, Chap. V)
 - b. There is nothing new under the sun (**ECC 1:9**) and history has a way of repeating itself for those who are ignorant of, or who willfully disregard, its lessons.
 3. **DAN 8:9-12** describe the rise and reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.
 - a. “And there came out of them a wicked root Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks” (1Mac. 1:10).
 - b. He posted a garrison of soldiers to hinder God’s worship and promote his worship in which he offered swine in God’s temple.
 - c. “He did all he could do to extirpate and abolish true religion and godliness; he cut in pieces the copies of the book of the law, and burnt them, called the law of truth in Mal. 2:6, and put to death the professors of truth; and showed all the contempt of true doctrine and worship he was capable of.” (John Gill)
 - d. God allowed this, it is written, “by reason of transgression” (**DAN 8:12**). In other words, it was allowed as a judgment against the Jews because of their sin.
 - e. God gave *Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers* because of their sin. **ISA 42:24**.
 - f. “The great transgression of the Jews after the captivity was a contempt and profanation of the holy things, snuffing at the service of God, *bringing the torn and lame for sacrifice*, as if *the table of the Lord were a contemptible thing*, and therefore God sent Antiochus to take away the daily sacrifice and cast down the place of his sanctuary. Note, it is just with God to deprive those of the privileges of his house who despise and profane them, and to make those know the worth of ordinances by the want of them who would not know it by the enjoyment of them.” (Matthew Henry Commentary)
 - g. The transgression of the Jews is clearly stated by the prophet Malachi in **MAL 1:6-14; 2:1-17; 3:5-15**.

- XII. Dr. Scofield affirmed that the invading forces of **EZE 38-39** had to be speaking about Russia and northern European powers in the far-distant future.
- A. “That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, all

- agree.” (SRB on Ezekiel 38:2)
- B. This slant on **EZE 38-39** fit better with Dr. Scofield’s premillennial dispensational theory of an end-time regathering of Israel and the final establishing of the Messianic Davidic throne therein.
- C. But Scofield was wrong: all do NOT agree that modern Russia, etc. are in the prophecy. In fact, the consensus was otherwise.
1. “The Scythian Tauri in the Crimea were so called. The Araxes also was called “Rhos.” The modern Russians may have hence *assumed* their name, as Moscow and Tobolsk from Meshech and Tubal, though their *proper* ancient name was *Slavi*, or *Wends*.” (Jamieson, Faussett, Brown Commentary on Ezekiel 38:2).
 2. “The Revelation [sic] David Martin, pastor of the Waloon church at Utrecht, concludes, after examining all previous opinions, that Antiochus Epiphanes, the great enemy on the Israelites, is alone intended here; and that Gog, which signifies covered, is an allusion to the well-known character of Antiochus, whom historians describe as an artful, cunning, and dissembling man. See Dan 8:23, Dan 8:25; Dan 11:23, Dan 11:27, Dan 11:32. Magog he supposes to mean the country of Syria. Of this opinion the following quotation from Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. v., c. 23, seems a proof; who, speaking of Coele-Syria, says *Coele habet Apamiam Marsyia amne divisam a Nazarinorum Tetrarchia. Bambycem quam alio nomine Hierapolis vocatur, Syris vero Magog*. “Coele-Syria has Apamia separated from the tetrarchy of the Nazarenes by the river Marsyia; and Bambyce, otherwise called Hierapolis; but by the Syrians, Magog.” (Adam Clarke Commentary on Ezekiel 38:2)