

Study 1 - Introduction To The Prophecy of Gog and Magog

The great “Gog and Magog” invasion of Israel and God's devastating judgment of them is found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and involves a coalition of envious nations from the “far north” invading a peaceful Israel and being comprehensively destroyed by YHWH. Most evangelical scholars view it is seen as a key event in the End Times.

In this first study we need to locate Gog and Magog in the prophetic timeline:

1. It is in the distant future, after a regathering of Israel to the land:

Ezekiel 38:7-8 HCSB *"Be prepared and get yourself ready, you and all your company who have been mobilized around you; you will be their guard. (8) After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them now live securely.*

2. The Gog and Magog prophecy of Ezekiel 38 739 comes after chapter 37 – the Valley of Dry Bones, which speaks of the national and spiritual restoration of the nation of Israel:

Ezekiel 37:11-14 HCSB *Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Look how they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished; we are cut off. (12) Therefore, prophesy and say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them, My people, and lead you into the land of Israel. (13) You will know that I am the LORD, My people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. (14) I will put My Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do it." This is the declaration of the LORD.*

3. Gog and Magog seems to come after or be part of the same time period as the Two Sticks prophecy of Ezekiel 37 – of spiritual and political unity in Israel under a Messianic King with a permanent and restored Temple:

Ezekiel 37:22-28 HCSB *I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king will rule over all of them. They will no longer be two nations and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. (23) They will not defile themselves any more with their idols, their detestable things, and all their transgressions. I will save them from all their apostasies by which they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they will be My people, and I will be their God. (24) My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. They will follow My ordinances, and keep My statutes and obey them. (25) "They will live in the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They will live in it forever with their children and grandchildren, and My servant David will be their prince forever. (26) I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. I will establish and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary among them forever. (27) My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people. (28) When My sanctuary is among them forever, the nations will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel."*

4. However it comes BEFORE the restored Temple of Ezekiel chapters 40-48

So we have an end time event that comes to a restored Israel living in peace, and which may be the precursor to the final building of the Temple. It is currently unimaginable that the Muslim nations of the Middle east would allow Israel to rebuild their Temple on its traditional site. Certainly the Temple cannot be rebuilt until the current enemies of the Jewish State are dealt with in some final and absolute way – either a permanent peace treaty that allows the Temple to be built, or a very decisive military victory.

The motivation for Gog and Magog is greed. There is no suggestion that they are invading for religious reasons such as to destroy and already built temple.

Ezekiel 38:10-13 HCSB *"This is what the Lord GOD says: On that day, thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will devise an evil plan. (11) You will say: I will go up against a land of open villages; I will come against a tranquil people who are living securely, all of them living without walls and without bars or gates-- (12) in order to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against ruins now inhabited and against a people gathered from the nations, who have been acquiring cattle and possessions and who live at the center of the world. (13) Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its rulers will ask you: Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hordes to carry off plunder, to make off with silver and gold, to take cattle and possessions, to seize great spoil?"*

The most probable scenario is that Israel is prosperous but has not yet rebuilt the Temple. The war breaks out for economic reasons. The Jews realize that God has fulfilled the prophecy, there is massive national revival and the Temple is rebuilt.

In these verses Israel is living in tranquility, safety and economic prosperity after restoring in a once ruined land. At some point Israel achieves real peace and becomes the economic envy of her neighbors. This may be due to the collapse of the oil economy of the Arab world. Israel is clearly the only super-power in the Middle East and is able to live securely: *a tranquil people who are living securely, all of them living without walls and without bars or gates*. This is certainly not the security situation in Israel today!

At no point in past history have these precise conditions occurred. The return from Babylon did not result in this but was not analogous to it. The Mongol invasion of Europe and the Middle East under Genghis Khan (Genghis = Gog? Mongol = Magog?) did not fit the prophecy precisely but was also closely analogous to it. Only the modern return after the German persecution ("from the graves") to the current "once ruined" land fits the prophecy at all well. So we are looking at a mass return of Jews to the land, great economic prosperity and peace, followed by a "Mongol style" overwhelming invasion.

In Revelation 20:8 "Gog and Magog" is used as an analogy for a universal war against god after the Millennium is concluded. However this is a DIFFERENT Gog and Magog as in Ezekiel the nations involved are specified and the battle does not involve the whole world or result in a new heavens and a new earth. Gog and Magog thus comes to symbolize a great, final and apocalyptic battle.

So where does Gog and Magog fit in the prophetic calendar:

- After a major return to the land of Israel when the ruined nation has been rebuilt
- After a time of security and economic prosperity
- At a time when Israel's neighbors stand to gain economically by such an invasion
- Before the rebuilding of the Temple
- Before or just after a great national spiritual revival
- In the End Times before the return of Christ

Many people are saying that this is the "not too distant future" and may occur in our lifetime. In the next study, God willing, we will look at who is involved – the list of nations and leaders named in the Gog and Magog prophecy.