

Study 2 - Who Is Involved?

Ezekiel 38:1-6 MKJV *And the Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, (2) Son of man, set your face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (3) And say, So says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the chief ruler of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. (4) And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed most perfectly, a great assembly with buckler and shield, all of them swordsmen; (5) Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, all of them with shield and helmet; (6) Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah from the recesses of the north, and all his bands; and many peoples with you.*

These verses are fairly controversial and identify the main coalition forces that comprise the army of Gog and Magog. The changed national boundaries and place names since the time of Ezekiel mean that we have to do quite some research to find out which nations are meant. We will start with the easiest and most certain and work through to the most difficult and most uncertain:

Persia = Iran

“Ethiopia” = the ancient land of Cush and = Ethiopia and Sudan / NE Africa

Libya = Put and is modern Libya plus a chunk of north Africa

Gomer = southern Russia, Caucasus area, descendants of Japheth

“Rosh” = could mean “king” or chief ruler, or it may indicate Russia or a Scythian nation (from the area north of the Black and Caspian seas, around the Caucasus)

Meshech = descendants of Japheth, Armenian area (most likely), Moscow (also possible)

Tubal = Black sea area, descended from the Hittites, copper-producing, descendants of Japheth

Togarmah = Armenian area, descendants of Japheth, supplied horses to Tyre

Magog = a descendant of Japheth, ancient Lydia a part of modern Turkey, the Turks

Gog = 1. The leader of Magog or 2. Turkey / Constantinople or 3. Turkmenistan

In addition to this is the thrice-repeated phrase “from the remotest parts of the north” (Ezekiel 38:6,15, 39:2). If we go directly north from Israel the “remotest parts of the north” would be Russia, Ukraine and possibly Belarus and Kazakhstan. Lebanon, Syria and Turkey are also directly north of Israel (but are not “remote”).

The most probable make up of the Gog and Magog army is Russia, Ukraine, Syria, Turkey, Iran, the Muslim nations of North Africa particularly Sudan and Libya, as well as the Central Asian Republics – the “stans” - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan etc.

It is no coincidence that it is precisely these nations that are the most bitter enemies of Israel today!

How does Russia get included? The news tells us that a) Russia has many Muslims, particularly in the south, 2) Russia has long historical ties with these nations 3) Russia is actively pursuing trade relationships with these nations 4) and Russia has long persecuted the Jews.

Remember this war is economic in nature “to seize much plunder” (Ezekiel 38:12) so while religion may be part of the picture the main reason is greed, and this allows non-Islamic nations to also be involved.

Three other nations are mentioned as “commentators”

Ezekiel 38:13 HCSB *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?*

Sheba and Dedan were “sons of Cush” and were nomadic trading tribes in North Africa and Arabia. Tarshish was a sea trading power, sometimes identified with Spain or with Carthage. These represent the financial opportunists, the business world. So we see the wild barbarian hordes of the Caucasus and above doing the invading and the cunning trading nations trying to figure out how to make a profit in the process!

Lastly we need to ask 'who is missing from this picture'? These Muslim nations would not attempt this today because they know that America would rapidly intervene on Israel's behalf. So there must be a very different balance of power in the Middle East than there is today. In Ezekiel 38 and 39 Israel is powerful, prosperous and peaceful and it also seems that America, Western Europe and the UN are either unable or unwilling to prevent this crisis. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan also seem conspicuously absent from the picture. Egypt and Jordan have peace treaties with Israel and Saudi Arabia and Iraq may be under strong US influence or have made similar treaties by this time. (Saudi Arabia may be “Dedan” and be trying to profit from the war, which would not be totally out of character!). The other possibility is that Iran (Persia) is in control of Iraq and Saudi Arabia by this time and so the reference to Persia ends up including these nations as well.

It also seems that the Gog and Magog coalition will have weapons and armor in abundance!

*And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, **all of them clothed most perfectly, a great assembly with buckler and shield, all of them swordsmen;** (5) *Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, **all of them with shield and helmet;****

This indicates a weapons build up and perhaps a large armored force of “horsemen” that is cavalry – possibly tanks in modern terms (a cavalry regiment = a tank regiment). The conclusion being that the Gog and Magog invasion is a massive, well-armed Muslim and Russian army.