

Ezekiel Chapter 38

These next two chapters (38 and 39), tell of a coming northern confederacy of nations who will invade the Promised Land.

Ezekiel 38:1-2 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying," "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,"

This begins a new prophecy. We must look at this from the standpoint of future prophecy, because the things mentioned in the following verses have not happened yet. This prophecy is for the day of the Lord. Some call it the time of the end. This prophecy is primarily spoken against Gog in the land of Magog.

The invading hordes will be led by Gog who seems to be the leader in Magog which is the land North of Palestine around and above the Caspian and Black seas.

“The chief prince” is a reference to Rosh (Rosh meaning chief that is mentioned over 600 times in the Hebrew Old Testament), often in reference to chief priest.

“Gog” was used to render names such as Agag (Num. 24:7 and Deut. 3:1), possibly showing that though it was a proper name, it came to be used as a general title for an enemy of God’s people. “Gog” most likely carries the idea “high” or “supreme one”, based on the comparison (in Num. 24:7).

It refers to a person, described as a “prince” from the land of Magog, who is the final Antichrist. These titles are used there symbolically of the final world uprising against Jerusalem, its people and Messiah King. This attack comes not just from the North but the four corners of the world, as a world of sinners at the end of the 1,000 year kingdom come to fight the saints in the “beloved city” of Jerusalem. On that occasion, there is only one weapon used, divine fire.

Ezekiel 38:3 "And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I [am] against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:"

This statement is easily understood. God is against them, because they have been against God.

“Meshech and Tubal”: Two peoples were recognized in ancient Assyrian monuments: one called Mushki (Mushku), and the other Tubali (Tabal). Both were in Asia Minor, the area of Magog, modern day Turkey. Summing up, a chief prince, who is the enemy of God’s people, will lead a coalition of nations against Jerusalem. The details of the enemy force and its destruction are given by Ezekiel (in the rest of chapters 38 and 39).

Ezekiel 38:4 "And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts [of armor, even] a great company [with] bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:"

Just as God used Assyria and Babylon as human invaders for His judgments, He aims to use this army. In this case, He brings the invader to Palestine so that He may visit judgment on the invader itself. He thus uses the language of hooks in the jaws, as in judging Egypt. From the aggressor's perspective, they think that it is their plan only to seize the spoil which draws them to Palestine.

Ezekiel 38:5 "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:"

Persia and modern Iran are the same. Ethiopia is another hostile country to Christianity. Ethiopia is an African country located south of Egypt. Libya is in North Africa and joins Egypt on the west side. All of these countries are opposed to Christianity. Notice, they are prepared for war. They seem to come from every direction; north, south, east, and west.

Ezekiel 38:6 "Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: [and] many people with thee."

Today the area called Gomer is Armenia, which also was known as Cappadocia, having a people called Gomer in Assyrian inscriptions. Togarmah is eastern Turkey today.

Ezekiel 38:7 "Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."

This is still speaking to Gog. He is to prepare for war. "Guard", in the Scripture above, means leader.

This is the great time of Israel's cleansing, salvation and spiritual life, getting them ready for Messiah's return and kingdom.

Ezekiel 38:8 "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land [that is] brought back from the sword, [and is] gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them."

In the context of Israel's restoration (Ezek. 34-39), the invader will make its final bid for the Land. "Brought back from the sword" refers to Israelites who have been returned to their land, after the sword had killed or scattered many of their people. The Hebrew word used for "brought back" means "to return" or "restore."

Gathered is a word also frequently referring to God's final regathering of Israel. It has begun historically and will continue until the latter days. In the final millennial kingdom, there will occur the full and spiritual regathering, when all Israel is saved to enter their promised kingdom.

Dwell safely means the Israelites' blessed estate after God has brought them back to their land.

Ezekiel 38:9 "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee."

This will be a massive army of all of the above mentioned nations, coming to attack the little land of Israel. There will be so many of them they will stir up dust, and it will look like a cloud covering the land.

Ezekiel 38:10 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, [that] at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:"

This evil thought comes from an evil heart. We must remember, that God is using Gog's evil thoughts to pull him to this battle the same as he did with the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Ezekiel 38:11 "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,"

They are such a small nation, and without walls and gates to hold the conquerors back. They should be an easy prey. This is the evil thought they are thinking.

Ezekiel 38:12 "To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places [that are now] inhabited, and upon the people [that are] gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land."

Israel has become an affluent land, because the blessings of God are upon her. Their land has plenty of food, and has a warm port to the Mediterranean Sea. This would all be a blessing to them. There is famine in some of these countries today.

Ezekiel 38:13 "Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"

Sheba is an Arabian country. Dedan has to do with caravan merchants. Tarshish were merchant traders thought to be from Southern Spain. In fact, the three just mentioned would benefit by trading with Israel. The "young lions", speak of invading soldiers that burned cities, such as the Babylonians who invaded and burned Judah, killed or lead many away captive.

Ezekiel 38:14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know [it]?"

It appears that Gog has been watching and waiting for an opportunity to come against Israel. The people like Iran, Ethiopia, and Libya are all as opposed to Israel, as Russia is. When they feel the opportune time is here, they will attack Israel.

Ezekiel 38:15 "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:"

The strangest thing about this is the fact, they are riding upon horses. One thing we must remember is that in Ezekiel's day there were no motorized vehicles. He is giving this prophecy in his own terminology.

Some see horses and weapons here being used symbolically to represent meaning which would be easy to grasp in Ezekiel's day, but which would be fulfilled in the future time with different war forms suitable to the time.

Ezekiel 38:16 "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes."

Notice that "my people of Israel are God's people in this verse. God will be glorified in this.

"That the heathen may know me" is a phrase, frequent in Ezekiel, is part of the theme to glorify God and show His sovereign power. God is the victor, who will be "hallowed" by fire.

Ezekiel 38:17 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; [Art] thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days [many] years that I would bring thee against them?"

"Art thou he" refers to the general references to this time and the participants. Even Daniel referred to this time at least 3 decades prior to Ezek. 38 (in Dan. 2:41-44). The nature of the question presupposes that the previous generalities are now being particularized in the person of Gog.

Ezekiel 38:18 "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, [that] my fury shall come up in my face."

God has led these countries, and people opposed to God, to this place to destroy them. It will not be Israel that destroys them. It will be God, and everyone will know it is God. God's fury has come up, because they oppose God's people. They even oppose God Himself.

Ezekiel 38:19 "For in my jealousy [and] in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;"

This is speaking of a huge earthquake in Israel and panic will seize the invading soldiers who will turn and use their weapons against one another. It also could be speaking of the fear of God, which comes when all of this happens. God will fight this battle Himself and all of Israel will be safe.

Ezekiel 38:20 "So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that [are] upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground."

This will be a great earthquake, which the entire world will feel. Every living creature upon the earth will fear the Lord at this point.

This sounds like it could be the sixth seal (mentioned in Revelation).

Revelation 6:12-17. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;" "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;" "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:" "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

But notice (in verse 18 above), that this is coming at the time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel. Therefore, this probably is a completely different earthquake being mentioned here that affects only the mountains around Israel.

Ezekiel 38:21 "And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother."

The great confusion caused by all of these calamities, will cause the army of Gog and his companions to turn their swords on each other.

Ezekiel 38:22 "And I will plead against him 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."

This bothered me a lot as I could only think of this happening (in Rev. 19), but not so. This happens in many other places (such as Rev. 8:7, 11:19, and 16:17-21), which is actually the end when Jesus returns.

In the Book of Revelation (Chapters 17 & 18) continues that describe the Harlots; (Chapter 19) the marriage supper of the Lamb; (Chapter 20) Satan is bound; (Chapter 21) the New Heaven and New earth; and (Chapter 22), The River of Life and a description of heaven.

Other scripture where hail is described (is in Psalms), 6 verses; and Exodus (in 14 places).

In the natural, this appears to be an atomic war of great magnitude. This however, comes from God. This fire and brimstone is like that which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. All of this is judgment upon these atheistic people by God, Himself. This is too horrible to even imagine. (The Israelites are not harmed, even though they are near).

Those who are killed by the rain, hailstones and brimstone are those who are enemies of God. What then happens to those who are God's faithful that may be close by?

Do you remember the 6 angels (of Ezekiel in chapter 9), who were charged with the killing of those who didn't mourn the abominations that the people of Judah were doing? They were spared when they were marked by the angel with the inkhorn. God can do that even when fire, brimstone and even great hailstones are falling in the midst of the Israelites and their enemies.

It is easy to confuse the events which happen here (in Ezekiel 38), especially the last several verses (from 18 to 22), which sound so close to those of (Revelation 6:12-21 and 19:11-21). However, there are some differences which must be looked at.

- (1) Even a casual reader plainly sees that Israel is the object of Gog's and Magog's hatred. The happenings of Revelation are that of the Antichrist's and his insane hatred of Jesus Christ which culminates with his bringing together, even from the orient over the dried up river Euphrates, hordes of people against, not Israel, but Jesus Christ the coming King.
- (2) No one world government is functioning during the events (in Ezekiel 38 and 39).
- (3) We will look at and talk more about (Ezek. 39:8-10), when it comes to Israel's burning of the weapons of war left by Gog and Magog (in chapter 39:9), and look at some scripture that will leave no doubt as to the timing of some of these scriptures.

Ezekiel 38:23 "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I [am] the LORD."

The only glory that will come from this is the glory that God will get. Everyone who is left will know He is God. No man has to elevate God, or could even if they wanted to. God is above all of His creation, including man.

Ezekiel Chapter 38 Questions

1. Ezekiel was told to set his face against _____.
2. When is this prophecy for?
3. Magog seems to be what country?
4. Meshack is, possibly, speaking of _____.
5. What was this northern nation known for?
6. Gog was chief prince of _____ and _____.

7. Why was God against them?
8. Russia is spoken of as what animal?
9. What is Persia today?
10. Ethiopia is an _____ country.
11. Where is Ethiopia located?
12. Libya joins _____ on the west side.
13. What do all of these countries have in common?
14. Which directions do they come from?
15. Many believe Gomer to be _____.
16. Who is Togarmah?
17. What are they to prepare for?
18. When will this war happen?
19. Why will they decide to attack Israel?
20. What benefit do they think it will be to them?
21. Who asks the question in verse 13?
22. Who does the author believe the "young lions" are?
23. What is the strangest thing about this army that descends on Israel?
24. When they come against Israel, what happens to God?
25. What is this great shaking, probably?
26. Every man's sword shall be against _____.
27. What destruction does God rain down on them?