

Ezekiel 38 Commentary

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Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
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Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

To help understand the **context** of Ezekiel's message of hope in Chapter 37, study the following diagram of the book. Another suggestion before you begin to study Ezekiel 37 is to take some time and study **Dr Tony Garland's** well referenced discussion of the [Interpreting Symbols](#) (From the preface of Garland's commentary on The Revelation, one of the best and most balanced commentaries from a literalistic perspective I have ever read = [A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#) - highly recommended).

Irving Jensen points out that "There is a turning point in the book, made up of two parts. At Ezekiel 24:2, Ezekiel is informed by God that the king of Babylon has begun the siege against Jerusalem. At Ezekiel 33:21, the actual turning point, Ezekiel learns from a messenger that the city has fallen. Up to Ezekiel 24:2, Ezekiel's message is mainly "The city shall be destroyed." After Ezekiel 33:21, Ezekiel looks to the next prophetic peak, and prophesies, "The city shall be restored." It is at Ezekiel 24 that the prophet learns that when Jerusalem falls, his tongue will be loosed to speak a new message of hope; and people, sobered by the reality of Jerusalem's destruction, will begin to give him a hearing. (Read Ezekiel 24:25-27.) (Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament)

A C Gaebelein outlines this last section of Ezekiel...

EZEKIEL 37-48

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel Re-united. Chapter 37.
 2. Gog and Magog and Their Destruction. Chapters 38-39.
 3. The Millennial Temple and its Worship. The Division of the Land. Chapters 40-47.
- (From The Annotated Bible, Volume 4)

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|---|--|--|---|--|
| FATE OF JUDAH Before the Siege | | FOES OF JUDAH During the Siege | FUTURE OF JUDAH After the Siege | |
| 593-588 BC | | 587-586 | 586-571 | |
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Ezekiel 38:1 And the word of the LORD came to me saying, [\(NASB: Lockman\)](#):

Study Ezekiel 38-39 as a single unit.

Introductory Comments - The reader should understand that in my humble opinion **Ezekiel 38-39** constitute some of the most difficult (if not the most difficult) prophecies in the entire Bible to interpret with confidence. One difficulty relates to the identity of the major characters in these two chapters, especially **Gog** and the other named countries. The other major question relates to the timing of these events. Without going into detail, Ezekiel 38-39 are recorded after **Israel is reborn** (Ezekiel 37), which has been partially fulfilled in our lifetime (May, 1948) and events in Ezekiel 40-48 which are best characterized as a description of the time of the **Millennium**. That said, the timing of the events in **Ezekiel 38-39**, suggests that they will occur between these other two major events (although some feel these events might occur at the end of the Millennium). In short (Sept, 2013), we certainly could be living in the time period in which the events of Ezekiel 38-39 might transpire. However we cannot be dogmatic and websites and commentaries that are dogmatic are not honestly interpreting these passages (in my opinion). As we discuss these two chapters, our goal will be to observe the **objective truths** that are obvious. Comments that are more in the realm of "educated speculation" or "contextual supposition" will be interspersed, but must be taken with a healthy Berean-like mindset (Acts 17:11). Care will be taken to avoid dogmatic statements on passages that do not allow for such an interpretation. The reader should be aware that I will use a number of quotes from **Joel Rosenberg** ([Joel C. Rosenberg's Blog - Tracking events and trends in Israel, Russia and the epicenter](#)), a Jewish believer who has written and spoken frequently about prophetic events in the Middle East. In my opinion, Rosenberg's views are excellent because he always strives to maintain objectivity and avoid sensationalism.

Rosenberg writes...

Ezekiel 36 and 37 set the stage for the “**War of Gog and Magog**” by describing that Israel will be reborn as a country in the last days, the Jewish people will come back to the Holy Land from exile all over the world, the Jewish people will rebuild the ancient ruins and make the deserts bloom again. These things have all happened, and this suggests we are getting closer to the fulfillment of the next set of prophecies. ([War of Gog and Magog-Part 1](#))

WHY WE SHOULD STUDY

BIBLE PROPHECY

Beloved, while Bible prophecy is exciting to study, especially in light of current world events (2012), it is vital that we not be carried away by sensationalistic speculations and miss or neglect the **transforming effect** that prophecy **should have** on our daily lives (cp 2Cor 3:18-note). Some 25% of the Bible is prophetic, and so to fail to study the prophetic writings is to miss the transforming effect it can have on our heart and mind. The **Apostle Peter** in the context of a prophetic description of the future destruction of the present heavens and earth instructs us on how the study of **prophetic events** should radically impact our **present existence**...

But (Don't "fly over" the instructive **conjunctions of contrast** - check the **context** to guide one or more appropriate 5W/H'S) the **Day of the Lord** will come like a thief (A term of comparison - "**as**" or "**like**" identifies a **simile**, a "divine picture" which should always cause you to pause and ponder asking appropriate 5W/H'S), in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **11** Since (term of conclusion) all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy** (hagios = set apart from the profane or common conduct of the lost world!) **conduct** (anastrophe = deals with the whole manner of one's life, focusing especially on our daily conduct or deportment) **and godliness**, (eusebeia = it speaks of "God likeness", living life with a sense of reverence and awe, ever seeking to be pleasing to God our Father - the related verb anastrepho is used in a related context - Meditate on 1Peter 1:17-note) **12** looking for (**prosdokao** = looking forward to, waiting for, anticipating. Here in the **present tense** = describing the disciple's continual upward focus eagerly anticipating Christ's Second Coming, continually maintaining a "Maranatha [Our Lord, come] attitude" in our heart - **Why is this attitude so desperately needed in the modern church?** Because what we are looking for will determine what we are living for! I fear too much of the church is looking too much at the world, which is passing away [1Jn 2:17-note], rather than eagerly longing for Jesus and the everlasting world to come! If you are longingly looking for Jesus, you will be motivated to be lovingly living for Jesus! And you will pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord - Hebrews 12:14) and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (**What defines the "Day of God"?** Observe the context.) **13** But according to His promise (Whose promise?) we are looking for (**prosdokao** in the **present tense**) new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells (**katoikeo** = is permanently at home, describing a fixed, durable dwelling!). **14** Therefore (term of conclusion), beloved, since you look for (**prosdokao** in the **present tense** - what is a "**key word**" in this section of 2Peter? Why?) these things (**What things?**), **be diligent** (spoudazo = in the **aorist imperative** = Do this now, even with a sense of urgency) to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (**What should be the effect of studying prophecy on our daily lives, our interactions with our spouse, our children, etc?**), **15** and **regard** the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, **16** as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. **17** You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, **18** but **grow** (present imperative = Command to keep on growing in Christlikeness! Remember that God's commands ALWAYS include His enablements - His indwelling Spirit of grace empowers us as we learn to surrender our will to His will - see Php 2:12b-note, Php 2:13-note, Ezekiel 36:27-note) in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2Peter 3:10-18)

Other reasons study of prophecy is worthwhile:

Proof of Scripture's inspiration - Isaiah 48:3,5

Prophecy has a calming effect - when we know that God control's our future!

Prophecy fulfilled underscores the faithfulness and trustworthiness of God.

Prophecy should cause us to understand that Israel is the key to God's prophetic clock.

Prophecy should engender in us a love for Israel - Beloved even **Dr John Piper** one of the foremost evangelical scholars in the world seems to raise some doubts about God's promise of **the land** to the nation of Israel. **Piper** writes "The promises made to Abraham, including the promise of the Land, will be inherited as an everlasting gift only by true, spiritual Israel, not disobedient, unbelieving Israel." (**Ref**) **Piper** goes on to say "Israel still has human rights among nations even when she **forfeits** her present divine right to **the Land**." Is that what God promised in Deuteronomy? In truth, Israel did not receive the Land in the first place because she was **obedient** or **righteous**. She did not deserve **the Land**. God gave **the Land** to Israel because of His faithfulness to covenant, the unconditional covenant He cut with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He will not break

that covenant. To reiterate, God never gave Israel **the Land** based on the obedience of the nation. Yes, it is true, Israel was disciplined and removed from the land temporarily because of her disobedience, but that does not abrogate the covenant promise of **the Land to the nation of Israel!** Dr Piper says that "spiritual Israel" will inherit the land, but I am not sure what he means by "spiritual Israel." Many interpret "spiritual Israel" as the church (all Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus). If by "spiritual Israel" Piper is referencing that portion of the literal nation of Israel which believes in the Messiah in the end times, those Paul describes in Romans 11:25-26-**note** ("all Israel will be saved."), then I would agree with him. The nation of Israel will continue to exist as a nation into the Millennium. The "caveat" is that the nation of Israel that enters the Millennium will be composed entirely of believing Jews and it is those Jews and the nation of Israel which will inherit **the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, a promise that has never been literally fulfilled (Israel never occupied or received all of the Land promised, so if God does not fulfill this promise, He would be unfaithful to His original covenant to Abraham - See the original boundaries in Genesis 15:18). Here are God's words regarding **the Land** which was always a gift of grace...

"(God speaking through Moses to Israel) Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this **land**,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. 5 'It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their **land**, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, **in order to confirm the oath (the covenant) which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.** 6 'Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that **the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess**, for you are a stubborn people." (Deut 9:4-6)

In fairness to **Dr Piper** he makes this statement "So the promise to Abraham that his descendants will inherit the Land does not mean that all Jews inherit that promise (Ed: I agree wholeheartedly with this statement, because "all Jews" will not be saved). It will come finally to the true Israel, the Israel that keeps covenant and obeys her God (Ed: I agree with this statement if "true Israel" refers to the nation of Israel. Of course the only way they will be able to "keep covenant" and obey is because of the indwelling Spirit, promised to Israel in the Old Testament, long before the Gentiles partook of that promise. See Ezek 36:26-27-**note**, cp Jer 31:31-34 - notice with whom God promises to make a New Covenant -- not the church but Judah and Israel -- no place in the NT is the church ever called "Judah and Israel!" The promise was to the Jews first, which is exactly why the Spirit inspired Paul to give the warning in Ro 11:17-21-**note!**)" In sum, prophecy should give us a better understanding of God's plan for Israel and create in us a love for Israel. This love does not mean that Israel is perfect or deserving to be in the Land granted her by the United Nations in May, 1947. But it does mean that there is a perfect God, a God Who will keep His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and will remain true to the covenant He has made with all believers through the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

To help understand the **context** of Ezekiel's message in Chapter 38, take a moment and study the following diagram of the book of Ezekiel ([See below](#)). Another suggestion before you begin to study these eschatological passages in Ezekiel is to take some time and study **Dr Tony Garland's** well referenced discussion of the [Interpreting Symbols](#) (From the preface of Garland's commentary on The Revelation, one of the best and most balanced commentaries from a literalistic perspective I have ever read = [A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#) - highly recommended).

As you study the chart ([below](#)), keep in mind that the fact that the fall of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 33:21 marks a major transition in the book from a message of judgment and hopelessness to a message of future restoration and hope. Ezekiel 36-37 describe the spiritual and physical restoration of Israel. Specifically Ezekiel 37 describes the restoration of Israel to the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant.

J Dwight Pentecost explains that this restoration is "pictured as a gradual process, for the prophet sees the process of bone being joined to bone, tied together with sinews, clothed with skin. It is a **regathering in unbelief**, for the prophet observes that there was **no life in the assembled carcass** (Ezek. 37:8)."

In Ezekiel 40-48 the prophet describes the coming age of Messiah, commonly referred to as the **Millennium**. Ezekiel 38-39 deal with Gog and Magog which is situated between the time of Israel's restoration to the land and the millennial age. Read Ezekiel 38:1-2 and compare with Ezekiel 39:1. What is repeated in this passages? This repeated reference to **Gog** indicates that Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39 while divided into two separate chapters are to be read and studied as a unit.

Israel was a land that was desolate, but came to life in May, 1948. Dr. Theodor Herzl, the playwright from Austria who began the Zionist movement into the land of Palestine said

"There is a land without a people. There is a people without a land. Give the land without a people to the people without a land."

And that is exactly what the sovereign God brought about in 1948 just as He had prophesied in Ezekiel 37!

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, as he was speaking before the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry...

The Jewish nation is a ghost nation. Only the God of Israel has kept the Jewish people alive.

Weizman's remark is difficult to dispute, for as we study the history of Israel, we cannot come away without seeing the "rebirth" of the nation as a miracle of God. God had sustained Israel as an definite ethnic people group and then He brought them back into the land! And that is where Ezekiel 38-39 give us the rest of the story of Israel.

David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister and minister of defense in Israel, once said that

Ezekiel 37 has been fulfilled, and the nation Israel is hearing the footsteps of the Messiah.

Ben-Gurion however was only partially correct because clearly Ezekiel 37:21-28 has not been fulfilled.

And say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them (**Not fulfilled**); and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. 23 "And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. (**Not fulfilled**) 24 "And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them. (**Not fulfilled**) 25 "And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever. (**Not fulfilled**) 26 "And I will make a covenant of peace (Refers to the New Covenant which was described by Jesus at the last Passover made effective on the Cross. While increasing numbers of Jews have come to believe in the New Covenant in His blood, the complete fulfillment of this prophecy awaits the return of the Deliverer as described in Romans 11:26-note) followed by with them; it will be an everlasting covenant (Another description of the New Covenant in His blood - cp Hebrews 13:20-note) with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. (**Not fulfilled** - Temple Mount, the site of the Holy Temple is currently under Muslim Control. The rebuilding of the sanctuary is a major subject in Ezekiel 40-48) 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people (**Not fulfilled**- Another description of the New Covenant - see Jer 31:31, 32, 33). 28 "And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies (sets apart, makes holy - as summarized in the 6 things which will occur at the end of the "Seventy weeks" of Daniel 9:24-note) Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.'" (**Not fulfilled**)

Yes, there is a man coming (Rev 6:2-note) who is riding in on a white horse, but he is not the Messiah, but is almost assuredly the Antichrist. And for 3½ years he will usher in a time of false peace (Da 9:27a-note) before he pours out his fury upon this world and especially on the Jews. After Ezekiel 37 and the rebirth of the nation we come to Ezekiel 38, which describes a war against Israel just prior to the start of the 7 year period, the Seventieth Week of Daniel.

So the context of Ezekiel 38 is that Israel is back in the land. Let's look at the nations who will sweep down upon Israel to destroy her, and what God will do to this army.

A C Gaebelein outlines this last section of Ezekiel...

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1. The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel Re-united. Chapter 37.
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Mark Hitchcock writes that...

An Arab-Islamic invasion of Israel is not too difficult to imagine today, is it? In fact, it's already happened several times in the past fifty years. Arab nations surrounding Israel have mounted furious attacks to eradicate the Jews, most recently in 1967 and 1973, only to be repelled and humiliated by the smaller Israeli army. Every Arab nation except Egypt and Jordan is in a declared state of war with Israel right now, and those two could turn on Israel at any moment. With every passing day, Arab-Islamic frustration with Israel grows. Israel controls land formerly under Muslim control. Jerusalem, the place from which Muhammad supposedly leaped to heaven (Ed: Specifically [The Temple Mount](#), [\[or here for an excellent aerial view\]](#) the most contested and "valuable" parcel of real estate in the entire world!), is Islam's third most holy site, after Mecca and Medina. Then there's the persistent Palestinian problem. Add to that the extremist Islamic states whose stated mission is to drive the Jews into the sea, and it's not too difficult to imagine another Arab-Islamic invasion of Israel in the near future. ([What on Earth is Going On?](#))

And now in the year (March) 2013 there continues to be a very real threat of Iran developing a nuclear capability and Israel considering attacking Iran to "defuse" that possible scenario for a "nuclear Iran" would be an absolute nightmare for Israel. And yet an Israeli attack on Iran would run the risk of major retaliation by the Arab-Islamic countries in the Middle East.

So...

In light of current events, it is not surprising that many Bible students are raising the possibility that that at least portions of Ezekiel 38-39 could soon be fulfilled. Writers such as **Hitchcock** see in Ezekiel 38-39 an "account of a future invasion of Israel led by Russia and joined by a vast horde of Islamic nations on all sides." To be sure such an interpretation would have been far fetched prior to May, 1948, when there was not even a nation of Israel to invade. But Israel is a nation. And Iran appears to be seeking nuclear weapons. And Russia seems to be re-arming their military (the re-elected president of Russia, Alexander Putin, called for a \$770 billion upgrade of Russia's military in Feb/March, 2012).

And so it behooves all students of the Bible to seek diligently to rightly divide the **Word of Truth** (2Ti 2:15-note) in the prophecies of Ezekiel 38-39. The following comments will attempt **as objectively as possible** to shed light on these fascinating eschatological chapters keeping in mind that they are notoriously **difficult to interpret dogmatically!** Care will be taken to attempt to alert the reader if a comment is written which is "speculative".

The reader will also note that I will quote frequently from [Joel C. Rosenberg's](#) writings, for I have found this Jewish Messianic believer to always take a very balanced, literalistic, albeit non-sensationalistic approach to the interpretation of Bible prophecies and how they relate to current world events. The danger of Bible prophecy is to read the newspapers and try to make those events fit the Biblical prophecies. The converse should be our goal - to become so familiar with the Bible's "print" that we are enabled by the Spirit to read the newspapers with godly wisdom and insight, taking care to avoid the temptation to fall into "eschatological dogmatism!"

FOUR VIEWS ON EZEKIEL 38-39

Summary of the four views of when Ezekiel 38-39 will occur...

Most Bible students who are committed to the principle of literal interpretation will choose one of these four options.

VIEW 1: Near the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week. Israel will be enjoying security because of the protection afforded by the world ruler before he shows himself to be the Antichrist. But then he demands that he be worshiped, killing all who refuse. (See Dan. 9:24-27; Rev 13:1-18-[note](#).) In this view, the Israelites are attacked unexpectedly (as required by Ezek 38:8), but the period that follows—the great tribulation described in Revelation—will be so horrendous that it is difficult to envision people clearing the battlefield of war equipment and dead bodies as depicted in Ezek 39:9-20.

Ed comment: John Philips champions this view and here is his summary from his commentary on Mt 24:15 - "The order of prophesied events is as follows: Shortly after the rapture of the church, a dynamic leader will arise in Europe. He will unite ten key European nations under ten "kings" and revive the Roman empire. As part of his overall strategy for world domination, he will sign a seven-year treaty with the nation of Israel. Under cover of this treaty the religious Jews will rebuild their temple in Jerusalem (**See notes on the Tribulation Temple**); their enemies will be held back by the overwhelming military might of this ruler (called the beast in the Apocalypse and the **Antichrist** elsewhere). The Islamic nations will appeal to Russia. Seeing its global position being eroded by the dynamism and determination of the revitalized West (led by the beast), Russia will make the fatal decision to invade Israel. A military disaster of unprecedented magnitude will overtake the combined anti-Semitic forces (Ezekiel 38-39). This will create an enormous geo-political vacuum, which will make it possible for the beast to assume global rule. The beast will now have no more use for Israel. He will seize the rebuilt temple, put an image of himself in the inner sanctuary (cp Mt 24:15-note, 2Th 2:3-note, 2Th 2:4-note, Rev 13:14-15-[note](#)), and command that universal worship be given to him and his image. Then he will launch an all-out [pogrom](#) against the Jews; he will set out to exterminate them along with all those who refuse to receive his mark and worship his image. It is this image that is referred to by both Daniel and Jesus as the **abomination of desolation**." (Mt 24:15-note; Da 9:27-note) (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew)

VIEW 2: Near the close of Daniel's 70th week as part of the war of Armageddon described in Daniel 11:36-45-note; Zechariah 12,14; Revelation 14:14-20-[note](#); Rev 16:17-21-[note](#); Rev 19:11-21-[note](#). Various excellent scholars take this position and manage in different ways to integrate the Scriptures listed above. But reading Ezekiel 38 and 39 gives the impression of an invading force that is destroyed before it meets enemy armies.

VIEW 3: During the transition period between the destruction of the armies gathered at Megiddo at Christ's return, and His subjugation of the northern confederacy. In this scenario, the Beast and False Prophet are still free for a brief time after the great battle of Armageddon as depicted in Revelation 16:16-21 and Rev 19:11-16-[note](#). In this view, Revelation 19:17-21 does not refer to Armageddon, but to the battle depicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The regathered and converted Israelites are living safely because Messiah has returned. This position is strengthened by the fact that the "great supper" is common to both Ezekiel 39:17-20 and Revelation 19:17-19. Additionally, the time spent cleaning up the battlefield coincides nicely with the idea of a transitional period of preparation as the kingdom age begins.

VIEW 4: At the close of the millennial kingdom, when Satan is released for a little while, gathers a following, and then makes one final and futile assault against God. In favor of this view are the facts that the Israelites will be living safely and that the words "Gog and Magog" appear in Revelation 20:7-10-[note](#) as in Ezekiel 38:1-2 and 39:1-2. **But one wonders why the Lord would have people spend so much time cleaning up the land when He is on the verge of purifying the whole planet by fire and bringing down the new heavens and earth as depicted in 2 Peter 3:10-13 and Revelation 20:11-21:27. ([Knowing God Through Ezekiel](#))**

Ezekiel 38:2 "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him:

Son of man - Reference is to the prophet Ezekiel.

Son of man - 93x in Ezekiel -

Ezek 2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3-4, 10, 17, 25; 4:1, 16; 5:1; 6:2; 7:2; 8:5-6, 8, 12, 15, 17; 11:2, 4, 15; 12:2-3, 9, 18, 22, 27; 13:2, 17; 14:3, 13; 15:2; 16:2; 17:2; 20:3-4, 27, 46; 21:2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 19, 28; 22:2, 18, 24; 23:2, 36; 24:2, 16, 25; 25:2; 26:2; 27:2; 28:2, 12, 21; 29:2, 18; 30:2, 21; 31:2; 32:2, 18; 33:2, 7, 10, 12, 24, 30; 34:2; 35:2; 36:1, 17; 37:3, 9, 11, 16; 38:2, 14; 39:1, 17; 40:4; 43:7, 10, 18; 44:5; 47:6

Set your face (turn toward) (In **Lxx** uses **sterizo**) - Qal Imperative - A command from God to Ezekiel. 11x/11v - Ezek 4:3, 7; 6:2; 13:17; 20:46; 21:2; 25:2; 28:21; 29:2; 35:2; 38:2. This phrase almost always introduces a prophecy **against** the recipient of the prophecy (cp **against** in Ezek 38:3).

Gog - 10x in 8v - 1Chr 5:4; Ezekiel 38:2, 3, 14, 16, 18; Ezekiel 39:1, 11. Below are all the uses of **Gog** in the English Standard Version. Take a moment and write out your (descriptive) "definition" of Gog, by **objectively observing uses in Ezekiel 38-39** (remember to check the context) and then read what the scholars say about Gog.

1 Chronicles 5:4 The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, **Gog** his son, Shimei his son,

Ezekiel 38:2 "Son of man, set your face toward **Gog**, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him

Ezekiel 38:3 and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, **O Gog**, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

Ezekiel 38:14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to **Gog**, Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, will you not know it?

Ezekiel 38:16 You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, **O Gog**, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Ezekiel 38:18 But on that day, the day that **Gog** shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused in my anger.

Ezekiel 39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against **Gog** and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, **O Gog**, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

Ezekiel 39:11 "On that day I will give to **Gog** a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea. It will block the travelers, for there **Gog** and all his multitude will be buried. It will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog.

What is the meaning of Gog? This is difficult to answer **objectively (and dogmatically)**! **Gog** is felt by some commentators to be a personal name, whereas others see it more as a title like "Czar" or "dictator" (See more discussion below). In the context (Ezekiel 38:10) **Gog** clearly appears to describe a political and/or military leader and thus suggests an individual is in view.

In the original Hebrew text, there is no gender or number (singular or plural) designation for any of the uses of **Gog** in Ezekiel, but the Greek Septuagint translates all the Hebrew uses with the Greek noun in the masculine, singular.

As I researched this topic, it seems that much of our modern evangelical interpretation derives from **C I Scofield's** interpretative comments (circa 1917, prior to Israel becoming a nation) on Ezekiel 38:2...

That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, all agree...."**Gog**" is the prince, "**Magog**," his land. The reference to **Meshech** and **Tubal** (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification. Russia and the northern powers have been the latest persecutors of dispersed Israel, and it is congruous both with divine justice and with the covenants (e.g. (See Scofield "Genesis 15:18") See Scofield "Deuteronomy 30:3" that destruction should fall at the climax of the last mad attempt to exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem. The whole prophecy belongs to the yet future "day of Jehovah" ; Isaiah 2:10-22; Revelation 19:11-21 and to the battle of Armageddon, Revelation 16:14 (**Speculation** - **Ed Comment**: As discussed the **Timing of the events** in Ezekiel 38-39 is not clearly defined!).... ([The 1917 Scofield Study Bible](#))

For example, **TWOT's** "definition" for **Gog** is somewhat *interpretative*...

Gog is the ruler of the land of Magog and prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal (Ezek 38 and 39). Gog is also the name of a Reubenite in 1Chr 5:4....Ezekiel envisions this prince as the leader of a vast horde of armed troops that includes people from Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and Beth-togarmah. They will march against Israel at a time when the people of God have returned to their land and live in peace completely undefended. But

this will all be allowed by the Lord that he might display his holiness among them. The people of God will not have to fight, for God himself will destroy the armies of Gog (Ezek 38:19-23). (E B Smick in [Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

Even the etymology of **Gog** is difficult! The **TWOT** explains that...

All attempts to trace the origin of the name **Gog** must be held to be tentative. Some see the name in **Gyges** of Lydia who drove away the Cimmerians (Gomer). Others see it in a name mentioned in Assyrian records, **Gagu**, the chief of a mountain tribe north of Assyria (cf. BDB). It is not important theologically that we be able to trace the name linguistically or identify it historically. Most Christians interpret these passages eschatologically. Precise interpretations differ. Some see the passage as *highly symbolic* of the final struggle between the Church and the forces of evil (**Ed**: See discussion on [Interpreting Symbols](#) for dangers of spiritualizing the Scripture!). Others taking it quite literally (**Ed**: See discussion of the **Literal approach**) say the nation Israel will be attacked after the **Millennium** when Satan is released only to be finally destroyed by being cast into the lake of fire. (**Ed**: As discussed below, **this is a speculative statement** because the timing of Ezekiel 38-39 is very difficult to identify with absolute confidence!) Others consider the references in Rev 20:7-9 to be allusions, not decisive as to fulfilment and they identify the time of fulfilment as the battle of Armageddon before the millennium.

Louw-Nida defines **Gog** (G-K #1573) as follows...

גֹּג (gôg): noun proper; ≡ Strong's #1463; [TWOT](#) 324—Louw-Nida 93-personal/person. (male) **Gog**: 1. of Reuben (1Ch 5:4) 2. chief prince of Meshech and Tubal of the land of Magog (Eze 38:2-18 passim; Ezekiel 39:1,11); also part of a compound name, *Hamon Gog*. ([A Dictionary of Biblical Languages w- Semantic Domains Hebrew - OT](#))

Charles Ryrie says that...

The derivation of the word is uncertain. It *probably* refers to the ruler of the people who live in Magog. Magog was identified by Josephus as the land of the Scythians, the region N and NE of the Black Sea and E of the Caspian Sea (now occupied by three members of the Commonwealth of Independent States: Russia, the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan). Rosh. The area of modern Iran. Meshech and Tubal. The area of modern Turkey. (Bold italics mine)

Henry Morris (who is conservative and generally interprets Scripture literally) says that...

"**Gog**" seems to be the name of the commander-in-chief of this confederation of nations which will invade Israel "in the latter days" (Ezekiel 38:16), sometime after Israel has been reestablished in its land--while still rejecting God and His Christ--as outlined in Ezekiel 37. The name "Gog" may be an accommodation to some such ethnic name as "Georgi." Magog is evidently Gog's country, associated also with the countries of Meshech and Tubal. All three countries were named after their founding fathers, each of whom was a son of Japheth (Genesis 10:2), and all three originally settled in what is now Asia Minor, north of Israel.

The HCSB Study Bible has an interesting discussion of **Gog**, noting that...

Gog may most immediately refer to Gyges, king of Lysia, from the seventh century b.c. Even so, the reference transcends this Gog's historical circumstances to refer to a leader who will oppose Israel in the far future. A modern parallel would be for us to speak of a prominent but vile leader as a "new Hitler." The only other occurrence of "**Gog**" is in Rev 20:8 ([note](#)). **Gog** seems to transcend historical categories, serving as a symbol of the forces of antichrist. If so, **Gog** has become a transnational symbol of evil, much like Edom and Egypt (Ex 15; Isa 34; Isa 63:1-6; Mal 1:2-5). ([HCSB Study Bible - Note - this well done resource is free online](#). **Hint**: Enter Ezekiel 38 in the search query. To see if there is a note on specific verse, click the verse number. For the preceding comment, click verse "2" and a separate window pops up with the comment).

Prince of Rosh - While some interpreters have stated "**Rosh**" is Russia, this interpretation is problematic. (**Speculation**) While the **NAS** uses the word "**Rosh**", the **ESV** and **RSV** both translate **Rosh** as "*Chief*." **Rosh** is found almost 600 times in the OT and is most commonly translated "*chief*" or "*head*" (as in the expression for the Jewish New Year, **Rosh** ha-Shanah, or head of the year).

The **NET Bible Note** comments on "**the prince, the chief of Meshech and Tubal**"...

Some translate "**the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**," but it is more likely that the Hebrew noun in question is a common noun in apposition to "**prince**," rather than a proper name. See Darrell I. Block, Ezekiel (NICOT), 2:434-35. As Block demonstrates, attempts by some popular writers to identify these proper names

with later geographical sites in Russia are anachronistic. See as well E. Yamauchi, *Foes From the Northern Frontier*, 19-27. ([NET Bible Online](#))

The HCSB Study Bible adds that...

Because the Hebrew word for **chief** (Hebrew = **ro'sh**) sounds similar to the name "*Russia*," many modern Bible students have attempted to identify Russia with the "chief" in this verse. This popular identification is based on a faulty etymology, the similarities in sound between Russia and Rosh being purely accidental. "**Rosh**" never appears as a nation in any biblical text. Furthermore, those who identify **Meshech** with Moscow and **Tubal** with Tobolsk likewise operate on faulty assumptions about the etymological evidence.

Comment: I tend to agree with the HCSB Study Bible comment. The "danger" in interpreting difficult passages like Ezekiel 38-39 is to be so excited about them that one attempts to force them into current events, rather than letting the passage govern the assessment of current events. There is a subtle but very real difference and this approach can lead to a very speculative, sensationalistic interpretation. **While I believe these passages indeed could refer to Russia, one has to remain as objective as possible lest he or she wrongly divide the word of truth.**

Henry Morris...

"chief prince. The words "chief prince" may also be rendered "prince of Rosh," and some translations so render it. This *may well be* (**Speculation**) a reference to the people known as "Rus," who eventually became Russia. The names "Meshech" and "Tubal" may be preserved today as "Muscovy" or "Moscow," and "Tobolsk" and "Tbilisi."

Magog is identified by Josephus with the Scythians, and there is considerable evidence that all three tribes eventually migrated farther north. Whether they can be precisely identified as equivalent to modern Russia (or other states of the former Soviet Union) is debatable, but it does appear most probable that the prophecy does refer to a "northern confederacy," coming out of the "north parts" (Ezekiel 38:15).

Beloved, now are you really confused?!

Is so then read **Thomas Constable's** note below which in my opinion is one of the best, most balanced comments I have seen on these introductory passages...

The identity of this ruler (**Gog**) has been the subject of much study and speculation. The possibilities include a Reubenite prince (1Chr 5:4), a former king of Lydia named *Gugu* (or Gyges), an unknown "dark" figure (from the Sumerian word *gug*, "darkness"), a man named *Gagu* who ruled over Sakhi (an area north of Assyria), an unspecified official ruler (taking "**Gog**" as a title) of a particular land (**Magog**), a general personal name for an otherwise unidentified enemy of Israel, or a code name for Babylon.

It is probably safe to say that "**Gog**" refers to the name or title of a ruler who will emerge in history while Israel is dwelling safely in her land (cf. Ezekiel 38:8). Perhaps Ezekiel referred to this unnamed future enemy of Israel as a dark figure (unknown and evil) calling him "Dark" much as we might refer to such a person as a *new Hitler*....

The **land of Magog** probably refers to the former domain of the Scythians, who lived in the mountains around the Black and Caspian seas (modern southern Russia).

Gog will also have authority over **Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal**. **Rosh** (lit. "head" or "chief") has not been identified either by biblical or extra biblical references. The idea that it refers to Russia rests on etymological similarities, but the name Russia only came into existence in the late eleventh century A.D. **Thus a linguistic connection with Russia is very tenuous.** **Rosh** may be an adjective describing the ruler of **Meshech and Tubal**.

Meshech and Tubal occur together in Scripture (Ezekiel 27:13; 32:26; Ge 10:2; 1Chron. 1:5) and apparently refer to regions of Anatolia (modern western Turkey), the areas that became known as Phrygia and Cappadocia. The whole region would be what is now parts of southwestern **Russia, Turkey, and Iran**. (Bolding added for emphasis)

Joel Rosenberg has the following comments on **Gog**...

Over the years, people have asked me if Putin might be the Russian dictator referred to as '**Gog**' in the Biblical prophecies of "**Gog and Magog**" in Ezekiel 38-39. I suspect as Putin continues to re-emerge, those

questions will begin to be asked again. Here's my quick answer: It's too soon to draw such a conclusion. There's much more that would have to happen to indicate that Putin was the "Gog" of Bible prophecy. But there's no question in my mind that Putin is *Gog-esque*. He is dangerous, and both Israel and the West should keep a close and wary eye on him, especially given all that Putin has done to build a strategic alliance between Russia and Iran and the other countries mentioned in the "Gog and Magog" prophecies. ([Putin Rising but is he "Gog"](#))

NET Note - Heb "the prince, the chief of Meshech and Tubal." Some translate "the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," but it is more likely that the Hebrew noun in question is a common noun in apposition to "prince," rather than a proper name. See D. I. Block, Ezekiel (NICOT), 2:434-35. As Block demonstrates, attempts by some popular writers to identify these proper names with later geographical sites in Russia are anachronistic. See as well E. Yamauchi, Foes From the Northern Frontier, 19-27.

Land of Magog - Mentioned again in Ezekiel 39:6 "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD.

Tony Garland explains why **Gog and Magog** described in **Ezekiel 38** are distinct from **Revelation 20**...

Although the terms **Gog and Magog** appear in proximity in both the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 38:2-3; 39:1-11) and the book of Revelation (Rev. 20:8), a comparison of these passages indicates two different historical events are in view.

because Gog and Magog are mentioned as combatants in a war at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9), many have identified the two battles in Ezekiel and Revelation as one and the same. However, the events following the battles are quite different, as are the events preceding each battle. In Ezekiel's prophecy, the battle of Gog and Magog is used by God to draw Israel to Himself; in Revelation the battle of Gog and Magog comes after God has drawn His people to Himself for one thousand years of blessing during the Millennium. Therefore, it seems best to place Ezekiel's battle in the Great Tribulation. (King James Version Study Bible - Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1988).)

Gog of the land of Magog invaded Israel in Ezekiel 38, prior to the rebellion mentioned in Revelation 20 at the end of the millennium. Differences between the two passages include:

- 1 The Ezekiel invasion is from the north, the rebellion in Revelation 20 is from the entire earth.
- 2 The Ezekiel invasion requires seven years to dispose of weapons, whereas the Great White Throne judgment immediately follows the rebellion in Revelation 20.
- 3 The Ezekiel invasion occurs before the establishment of the kingdom, whereas the event in Revelation 20 occurs afterwards.
- 4 The Ezekiel invasion is destroyed on the mountains of Israel, whereas the Revelation 20 force is destroyed around Jerusalem.
- 5 "In Ezekiel Gog was the leader and Magog his land, while in Revelation both represent nations." (Alva J. McClain, The Greatness Of The Kingdom - Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974, c1959)

This prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog cannot be identified with the prophecy in Re 20:7-10 for three reasons. The former takes place before the Kingdom is established on earth; the latter after this Kingdom. Also, in Ezekiel the invasion comes only from the north, but in Revelation it comes from the 'four quarters of the earth.' Furthermore, the rebellion of Gog and Magog and their destruction in Re 20:7-10 marks the ushering in of the eternal state (Re 20:11-15); but in Ezekiel it is preliminary to the Millennial Kingdom on earth. (Freedman, D. N., The Anchor Bible Dictionary: New York: Doubleday, 1996, c1992).

The fact that Gog and Magog are mentioned both in Ezekiel 38:1,6 and in Revelation 20:7 indicates to some a connection. However, Gog is a human leader and Magog are a people in Ezekiel 38, but their meaning is not defined in Revelation 20 . In other respects the scene is different. In Ezekiel life goes on after the war, requiring months to bury the dead. The war in Revelation 20 is followed immediately by the destruction of the earth and the creation of the new heaven and new earth. The war in Revelation 20 concerns Jerusalem. The war of Ezekiel does not touch Jerusalem. The scenes are different. (Walvoord, J. F., The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook - Wheaton, IL: Victor Books,

Related Resources:

- [Israel Through the Eyes of Scripture - Gog of the Land of Magog-Tony Garland](#)
- [Islamic Invasion of Israel-Andy Woods](#)

Ezekiel 38:3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal:

THE ARMY MUSTERS

Ezekiel 38:3-9

Thus says the Lord God (Adonai Yahweh) - This phrase is used 122 times in Ezekiel and seven times in Ezekiel 38-39 (considered a unit because they cover the same prophetic subject) - Ezekiel 38:3, 10, 14, 17, Ezekiel 39:1, 17, 25 and effectively divides the chapter into seven sections. It is also worth noting that the related phrase "declares the Lord God" occurs 8 times - Ezekiel 38:18, 21, 39:5, 8, 10, 13, 20, 29.

At the outset of Ezekiel 38-39 we see that the Sovereign **Lord God** is clearly in control and it is He Who is giving the orders to Israel's enemies!

Behold (02005) (Hebrew = **hen**; **Lxx** uses **idou** = 2nd person singular aorist imperative, middle voice of **eidon** = perceive, look at) is an interjection demanding attention, "look!" "see!" It is used to emphasize the information which follows it

Spurgeon on "**behold**" (in English) - "**Behold**" is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation.

I am against you (cp phrase "set your face" Ezek 38:2) - When God is opposed to anyone, this fact alone should get their attention. In view of the fact that Gog is coming against Israel, it is clear that God is promising His hand of protection at the very outset of this prophecy. Why would Gog (et al) seek to come against Israel? They are greedy for gain. Ezekiel 38:12-13 explains it will be "to capture spoil and to seize plunder," to "capture spoil" and "to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil""

Warren Wiersbe - The prophet encourages his listeners (and readers) by telling them the end of the story even before he begins: God will defeat this vast coalition army and rescue His people Israel in their land (Ezek 38:3-4a).

O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal - Much has been written about who these names represent. I think that as the events of these two chapters begin to unfold, those who are living (and have the spiritual eyes to see) at that particular time will readily discern to whom these names refer. In the meantime, we must be cautious in offering interpretations which are too dogmatic.

Joel Rosenberg - In my first novel (written in 2001 before 9/11, but published in November 2002), The Last Jihad, I wrote that in order for Israelis to feel secure enough to set into motion Ezekiel's "War of Gog and Magog," Saddam Hussein could no longer be the ruler of Iraq. After all, Iraq is not mentioned as one of the countries that is part of the Russian-Iranian alliance against Israel. Moreover, how could Israelis feel secure with the "Butcher of Baghdad" in power, a man who fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel and threatened to use chemical weapons to "scorch half of Israel" back in 1990? They couldn't, which is why I wrote about a kamikaze attack by radical Islamic terrorists against an American city that would lead to a war between the U.S. and Saddam Hussein over fears of a link between Iraqi-sponsored terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Remarkably, these events have actually come to pass in real life. In my second novel, The Last Days, I wrote about the death of Arafat and a civil war that would ensue afterwards between the secular nationalist forces of the Palestinians (Fatah) and the Islamic Jihadists in the West Bank and Gaza (Hamas), vying for control in Arafat's absence. That was fiction, but in real life Arafat ended up dying 13 months after the novel was published, and the battle between Fatah and Hamas erupted almost immediately.

Ezekiel 38:4 "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords:

I will turn you about - God's sovereign control is clear in these events (cp Pr 21:1). This is not simply Gog's evil plan, but is God's good plan to bring an enemy against His chosen people. Why? I would propose His ultimate purpose is His glory and acclaim

because at the end of this chapter He says...

So the nations may **know** Me when I am **sanctified** through you before their eyes, O Gog...And I shall **magnify** Myself, **sanctify** Myself, and **make** Myself **known** in the sight of many nations; and they will **know** that I am the LORD." (Ezek 38:23, cp Ezek 36:23)

Turn...put...bring - God orchestrates this assembling of forces. The implication is that Gog will not be able to resist God's hooks! However in Ezek 38:10 God acts freely to accomplish his evil goals. Compare Ezekiel 38:16 "I will bring you against My land."

Ezekiel 38:5 Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet:

Persia, Ethiopia, and Put - Here we see a confederation of forces that join with God to oppose Israel (the other members of the confederation are seen in Ezek 38:6).

Persia is surely modern day Iran. Ethiopia is a modern nation in 2013. Put is thought by many to be Libya.

"Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya" are all ancient nations; they are still important nations collaborating "after many days" (Ezekiel 38:8), with the northern confederation to go against Israel.

Shield and helmet - This pictures these nations as prepared for war. and are heavily armed.

Ezekiel 38:6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops--many peoples with you.:

Gomer - Also pictured as prepared for war with "all its troops."

Beth-togarmah - Is prepared for war.

With you - The Lord God is addressing Gog who clearly is the leader of the multinational forces.

Ezekiel 38:7 "Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them.:

God continues to address Gog calling him into the fray. God instructs Gog to be prepared. Prepared for what though? From the previous context (as well as the following), God is commanding Gog to be ready for war.

Application: If the enemies of God are supposed to be prepared, how much more should the Church of Jesus Christ be ready at all times!

Ezekiel 38:8 "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.:

After many days (literally "in the end of years") (**Expressions of time should always prompt questions like "When?," "Why?," etc**) - After how many days? After which days? The context does not allow one to be dogmatic.

After many days "alludes to the nearly identical phrase "end of days," which designates the time of the messianic kingdom (Gen 49:1-days to come; Isa 2:2-last days; Jer 23:20-last days; Jer 30:24-note- latter days; Hos 3:5-last days; Mic 4:1-last days)." (HCSB)

You will be summoned - **You** refers to Gog. He will be visited (KJV) or mustered (as soldiers are mustered) as an army who would **come the land**. Who summons Gog? This text does not say, but the context suggest this is God's summons. Scripture refers to God's sovereignty over earthly kings, as when Jehovah called "**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon My servant**" who would defeat Judah and take her captive (as well as other nations) into a seventy year exile in Babylon. (Jer 25:9, 11), but who would also be held

responsible for his willful actions (cp Ezek 38:10-11 where we see Gog has an **evil plan**)! This mysterious juxtaposition of **divine sovereignty** and **human responsibility** permeates the pages of Holy Writ!

The land (Erets) - The Promised Land. Israel. God's land ("My land" - Ezek 38:16) It is notable that Israel is **NEVER** called "Palestine" in the Bible. Other names of "the land" include "Canaan" and "the land of Israel."

The Land - This specific phrase 12x in 12v - Ezek 38:2, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19; 39:12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and all but Ezek 38:2 refer to the Land of Israel.

In the latter (acharith) **years** (shanah) = This would seem to be synonymous with the similar phrase **"Last days"** Ezekiel 38:16 - and you [Gog] will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It will come about in the last days that I shall bring you against My land, in order that the nations may know Me when I shall be sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog." -

The Greek (**Lxx**) literally reads "upon last years." This is the only occurrence of this specific phrase in Scripture. While we can answer the question of **"who"** are the "players" in Ezekiel 38-39 (albeit their literal interpretation is more problematic), **"when" the latter years** occur is less clear. It is not surprising that there have been a number of future fulfillments proposed by conservative, premillennial scholars regarding the **"when"** of Ezekiel 38-39...

- 1) Before the Tribulation (**Daniel's Seventieth Week - The Seven Year Period**)
- 2) Near the beginning of the Tribulation (7 Years)
- 3) Sometime just before the middle of the Tribulation (before the beginning of the last 3.5 years which Jesus designated specifically as the **Great Tribulation**)
- 4) At the end of the Tribulation (7 Years)
- 5) Period between end of Tribulation and establishment of Messiah's millennial kingdom
- 6) At the end of the **Millennium**.

MacArthur feels these events will occur at "the end of the future tribulation period of 7 years. Israel will have been under a false peace in treaty with the Antichrist (Da 9:27; 11:22, 24), before he turns on them in the "abomination of desolation" (Mt 24:15; cf. Da 9:27). The false peace will end in hostility lasting to the completion of the 7 years (Zec 14:1-3). When this final war occurs (cf. Rev 16:12-16), Christ will ultimately conquer the beast, the false prophet, and all the ungodly forces (Rev 19:11-21) in order to establish His millennial kingdom (Rev 20:1-10).

Ezekiel 38:9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the Land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.":

Like a storm (cp parallel description in Ezek 38:16) - Suddenly, ferociously the anti-Semitic confederacy will come against the Promised Land. The invasion is most likely a "surprise attack" for it occurs at a time when Israel is dwelling **securely** (Ezek 38:11, cp Ezek 34:27, 28, 38:8, 14, 39:26).

Like a cloud covering the land - descriptive of the extent of this invasion. "The cloud and the storm are common images in biblical literature announcing prophetic threats (Jer 4:13)." (HCSB)

All your troops (bands = KJV) - Henry Morris says It is noteworthy that all these "bands," involving "many people," are comprised either of Moslem nations or nations which were until recently Communist nations and which are still controlled by leaders who are atheists and Marxists. All of these hate Israel and would love to "cut them off from being a nation" (Psalm 83:4). In recent years, Israel has soundly defeated several smaller confederacies which attempted to destroy her, but this confederacy seems so large and strong that nothing less than divine intervention can save her. But note that it is God Himself who has said to Gog: "I will bring thee forth, and all thine army" Ezekiel 38:4). All this is part of God's plan to bring Israel to "know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 39:22).

Ezekiel 38:10 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan,':

Someone has rightly said that **"God uses, but never excuses, the sins of men."**

On that day (Ezek 38:10, 14, 18, 19, 39:11) - The day when the invasion of Israel is imminent. It most probably refers to the "Day of

the Lord."

Thoughts will come into your mind - Gog will think it is his plan to attack Israel. The mystery is that God is sovereignly ordaining these events and yet we know that God is not the cause nor author of evil ("devise and evil plan").

Peter Naylor - In this section the God of Israel informs Gog that although it is predetermined that he shall attack Israel, the tyrant nevertheless does so willingly. Divine sovereignty ordains, predicts—and will harness—human villainy, yet the villain in question remains solely accountable for his evil machinations. Because he, and he alone, aspires to annihilate the people of God, Gog will be no automaton, a nerveless puppet on a string: 'in that day ... matters will arise in your heart and you will devise an evil scheme' (Ezek 38:10).

Wiersbe - The decisions made in the war room of Magog will conform to the will of the Lord who planned this invasion for His own purposes. God in no way violated their own freedom to think and decide, but He overruled Gog's decisions for His own purposes, just as He did with Babylon (Ezek 21:18-24). "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Pr 16:33, nkjv).

Ezekiel 38:11 and you will say, 'I will go up against the Land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates,':

I will go up against the land of unwalled villages - Gog plots her attack on unsuspecting Israel. Israel is unaware (except those who have read and understood this prophecy) that Yahweh will allow an assault on their secure land.

Live securely (cp Ezek 34:27, 28, 38:8, 14, 39:26) - This indicates that this invasion will occur in a time of ostensible "peace" in the Land of Israel. We do know from Da 9:27 (note) that the Antichrist will make a seven year covenant with Israel, so that in the first 3.5 years Israel will be living in relative "peace" ("unwalled villages...living securely...without walls...bars...gates"). **John MacArthur** feels that after the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel at the midpoint (3.5 years) of the seven year covenant, "there is an escalation of hostility until the end of the 7 years when this great force (described in Ezekiel 38-39) comes to plunder Jerusalem and the Promised Land (Ezek 38:12)." This is a reasonable consideration but one cannot be dogmatic.

Ezekiel 38:12 to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.':

Spoil...plunder - Greed and lust for wealth is one reason for Gog's invasion (although there may be others - see Wiersbe's comment below).

Wiersbe speculates - "Perhaps these nations also want to prevent the rebuilding of the Jewish temple. The nations named are identified with Islam, and they would want to protect the "Dome of the Rock," a revered Muslim monument which has stood on the temple site for centuries."

Center (midst) of the world ("navel of the earth") - Some say this speaks of central in terms of God's purposes for Israel but others see Israel as the geographical center of the world. The Hebrew word for center (**tabbur**) can also be translated "navel." In the Septuagint, **tabbur** is translated with the Greek noun **omphalos** (Latin = umbilicus) which means anything central (like a navel as it is translated in Song 7:3!)

HCSB - It could be argued that theologically Jerusalem will be both the center of the land of Israel and indeed of all the earth.

Speaking of Jerusalem...

Thus says the Lord God, 'This is Jerusalem; **I have set her at the center of the nations** with lands around her. (Ezekiel 5:5)

Modern computer studies have shown that Jerusalem is, indeed, very near the **geographical center of all the earth's land areas** and, therefore, the "center of the nations". Here in Ezekiel (Ezek 38:14) refers to those who live at Jerusalem as those "who live at the center (navel) of the world." Why does God make this geographical point? God had called Israel to be a light to the nations and placed her strategically in their midst to facilitate the fulfillment of her calling. Yet she rebelled and rejected her "yoke" of responsibility. In Deuteronomy God had instructed Israel to "Faithfully obey these laws. This will show the people of the world your wisdom and insight. When they hear about all these laws, they will say, "What wise and insightful people there are in this great

nation!" (New Living Translation) (Dt 4:6) Believers are given a similar charge by Jesus who reminds us that our purpose is to be "the salt of the earth but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Mt 5:13-16) Are you redeeming the time, letting your light shine? Or have you lost your savor like Israel and in danger of being thrown out and trampled under foot by men? As MacDonald says "We as Christians have even higher privileges than the Jews. May the Lord give us grace not to misuse them and thus bring about our own temporal judgment and loss of eternal rewards! "

Ezekiel 38:13 "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'" :

[Sheba](#) - Eastern Arabia

[Dedan](#) - Arabia

Sheba - 23x - Gen 10:7, 28; 25:3; 1 Kgs 10:1, 4, 10, 13; 1 Chr 1:9, 22, 32; 2 Chr 9:1, 3, 9, 12; Job 1:15; 6:19; Ps 72:10, 15; Isa 60:6; Jer 6:20; Ezek 27:22-23f; 38:13

Dedan - 10x - Gen 10:7; 25:3; 1 Chr 1:9, 32; Jer 25:23; 49:8; Ezek 25:13; 27:15, 20; 38:13

Tarshish - The location of Tarshish, known for its wealth (Ps 72:10; Jer 10:9; Eze 27:12, 25), is uncertain. The Gr. historian Herodotus identified it with Tartessus, a merchant city in southern Spain.

HCSB - Sheba (Ezek 27:22), Dedan (Ezek 25:13; 27:20), and Tarshish (Ezek 27:12) are mentioned in chapter 27 as engaged in trade with Tyre. Sheba, located in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula (modern Yemen), was known for its trading (Job 6:19; see Ezek 27:22; 1Ki 10:1-2).

Capture...seize...plunder...carry away...take away - These verbs describe the ravenous, greedy motivation of Gog.

Have you come to capture spoil - Israel has recently discovered large natural gas reservoirs ([Israeli natural gas](#) and [Here](#))

KJV Commentary - The development of Israel since 1948 has been phenomenal. It is also a known fact that the mineral wealth in the Dead Sea is of almost incalculable value! Much of it is used for production of fertilizer. These chemicals, together with modern technology in farming by irrigation and increasing amounts of natural rainfall, could make it to be the breadbasket for a large part of the world. Israel also stands at the crossroads of world commerce. Whoever controls Israel could control much more.

Ezekiel 38:14 "Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?":

NLT - "Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: When my people are living in peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself.

NIV - "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?

When My people Israel are living securely (cp Ezek 34:27, 28, 38:8, 11, 39:26) - Is Israel living securely in 2013? Few would say they are.

On that day (Ezek 38:10, 14, 18, 19, 39:8, 11) - Compare "**latter years**" in Ezek 38:8, "**in the last days**" Ezek 38:16.

My people (Ezek 38:14, 16, 39:7, cp My land Ezek 38:16) - Israel is described as belonging to Him. An attack on them is in essence an attack on God, something that is not advisable! (cp Saul's experience in Acts 9:1-6). Undoubtedly the nations either do not know Israel is God's people or they have no fear of God or a combination of both.

Lind comments - Ezekiel's message is international, for the conversion of the nations. This international conversion is by means of Gog: When through you, O Gog, I display my holiness before [the nations'] eyes. God's holiness here has two sides: the destruction

of Gog's peripheral power politics, and the salvation of the quiet people, those living at the earth's center (cf. Hos. 11:9, "the Holy One"). For Ezekiel, this conversion of the nations may not mean that they will become "mono-Yahwists" (monotheists, worshipping only Yahweh, the Lord), but that they will acknowledge the God of Israel, rather than their own militaristic national gods, as head (or at least a member) of their pantheon. Certainly it means also the acknowledgment of God's quiet people as the navel of the earth (38:11-12). For spiritual and moral leadership, they are dependent on Israel.

Ezekiel 38:15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army;:

You - Gog's route of attack is predicted.

Remote parts of the north (cf Ezek 38:6; 39:2) - On a modern map, the closest countries directly to the North of Israel are Lebanon, Syria (slightly to the east), Turkey, Ukraine, Russia, Russia being the most remotely **north**. Israel has been attacked from the north by Assyria, Babylon, and the Hittites.

Remote (uttermost - ESV, remotest - HCSB) (03411)(**yarkah**) means a remote area, the far end, something distant, far away (eg, Jdg 19:1, 18, 2Ki 19:23)

Yarkah - 28 times - extreme rear(1), far(1), flank(1), hold(1), inner recesses(1), innermost part(1), rear(6), rear part(1), recesses(2), remote part(2), remote parts(5), remotest parts(5), within(1).

Gen 49:13; Ex 26:22f, 27; 36:27f, 32; Jdg 19:1, 18; 1 Sam 24:3; 1Kgs 6:16; 2 Kgs 19:23; Ps 48:2; 128:3; Isa 14:13, 15; 37:24; Jer 6:22; 25:32; 31:8; 50:41; Ezek 32:23; 38:6, 15; 39:2; 46:19; Amos 6:10; Jonah 1:5.

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew phrase **remote parts of the north** with **eschatos** (from ek = from = primarily refers to place - the extreme, most remote) and **borras** (north)

Riding on horses - These could be literal horses but some commentators postulate these are vehicles of war (which would not have existed in Ezekiel's day).

Naylor - Gog will engage in blitzkrieg against Israel, looking for a decisive knockout blow. 'Blitzkrieg' is a German Second-World-War term meaning 'lightning war': enemy forces sweep rapidly over their victim's terrain.

Ezekiel 38:16 and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the Land . It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.":

Like a cloud to cover the land (cp Ezek 38:9) - This simile leaves little doubt that the invasion will be "omnipresent" and appear as an overwhelming force arrayed against tiny Israel. **Like a cloud** could also allude to a massive invasion via the air, but it certainly does not exclude a land invasion (cp Jer 4:13).

The last days (cf latter years Ezek 38:8) - This phrase occurs 14x in the OT - Ge 49:1; Nu 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29; Isa 2:2; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; 8:23; 10:14; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1.

See related phrase - The Last Hour (scroll down)

I will bring you against My land - Emphasizes God's sovereign control of these events. Evil brought against His holy Land will bring about good in the end!

So that - Expresses the purpose for God's bringing the invaders upon Israel.

The nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog. - Gog means it for evil, but God causes it to work together for good (cp Ge 50:20)! How great and mysterious is our Living Lord! God's deliverance of Goliath into the hands of David was that the earth would know God...

This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth **may know that there is a God in Israel**, and that all this assembly **may**

know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands." (1Sa 17:46-47, cp 2Ki 19:19)

Disciple's Study Bible - EVANGELISM, Mass--God often uses strange methods to bring the mass of the people to an awareness of His glory. Here He even used Gog, a godless source, to declare His greatness. But our Lord uses all means. **Therefore, if He will use Gog, how much more will He use us, as we attempt the evangelization of the masses! (Ed: Are you as convicted as I am?)**

Constable - God used Gog to demonstrate His holiness (unique deity) in their eyes. Yahweh would raise up Gog as He had raised up the Pharaoh of the Exodus to demonstrate His power when He overthrew him.

"Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and **I will be honored** (Hebrew = kabad = to be heavy, "weighty" worthy of respect) through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so. (Ex 14:4, 7:5, 17)

Ezekiel 38:17 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them?:"

Ezek 38:17-23 is in a way a preview of the destruction of Magog and her armies in Ezekiel 39!

Are you the one whom I spoke in former days through my servants the prophets of Israel- God had apparently prophesied Gog's attack. Bible Knowledge Commentary says that "This has caused some confusion among interpreters because no direct reference to Gog is made by any of the previous writing prophets. Perhaps this means earlier prophets had predicted the coming of invading armies against Israel in the last days, which Ezekiel now associated specifically with Gog (cf. Joel 3:9-14; Zeph. 3:15-20)."

Constable - The Lord asked rhetorically if it was Gog about whom He had spoken through His other servants the prophets many years earlier. "Are you he of whom the prophets spoke?" Yes, he was. This was not the first revelation of a powerful enemy whom God would bring against the Israelites (cf. Deut. 30:7; Ps. 2:1-3; Isa 14:24-25; Isa 26:20-21; Isa 29:1-8; Jer. 4:5; Jer 6:26; Jer 30:18-24; Joel 2:20; 3:9-21; Zeph. 1:14-18; Zeph 3:8, 15-20).

Ezekiel 38:18 "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the Land of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "that My fury will mount up in My anger.:"

God will avenge His people by shaking the earth (Ezek 38:19), causing the attackers to kill each other (Ezek 38:21) and a rain of hailstones, fire and brimstone (Ezek 38:23).

On that day (Ezek 38:10, 14, 18, 19, 39:11)

The land (Erets) - The Promised Land. Israel. God's land ("My land" - Ezek 38:16) It is notable that Israel is **NEVER** called "Palestine" in the Bible. Other names of "the land" include "Canaan" and "the land of Israel."

The Land - This specific phrase 12x in 12v - Ezek 38:2, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19; 39:12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and all but Ezek 38:2 refer to the Land of Israel.

My anger (Come up doth My fury in My face) - "Face is literally, "nose"; in Hebrew, the idiomatic expression for anger, as men in anger breathe strongly through the nostrils. Anthropopathy: God stooping to human modes of thought (Ps 18:8)." (Jamieson)

Because we spend so much time in the Modern Church in the New Testament and so little time in the Old Testament, we have lost sight of the truth that God is a God of righteous **anger** and that He is always just in displaying His **anger**.

Joel Rosenberg - As the forces of the Russian dictator (Gog) and his military coalition — including Iran, Libya, Algeria, Sudan, Turkey and other key Islamic nations — converges against the State of Israel in the last days, the Hebrew Prophet Ezekiel tells us that at the last moment when there seems to be no hope for Israeli Jews the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is going to supernaturally intervene.

Ezekiel 38:19 "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the

My zeal and in My blazing wrath - God intervenes to save His people. This is another confirmation of God's promise in the Abrahamic covenant...

And I will bless those who bless you, And **the one who curses you I will curse**. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Ge 12:3)

On that day (Ezek 38:10, 14, 18, 19, 39:11)

Joel Rosenberg reminds us - What you won't find when you study Ezekiel 38 and 39 is any country coming to Israel's aid. It will look like Israel is about to be wiped off the map, but you won't find the E. U. coming in to help. You won't find the United Nations—The European Union. The European Union is not in here. You won't see any evidence of that. You won't see the United Nations coming to Israel's rescue. You won't find the United States, no—there's no country that comes to Israel's rescue according to the text. And that's what we have to focus on is the text, not our own desires or what will happen. But One does come to Israel's aid, and it's the Lord God Himself....It's amazing because God says that for the first time really since since He intervened with Pharaoh back in Egypt and parted the Red Sea and brought the plagues He is going to intervene in a similar manner, to that degree of a dramatic intervention.

A great earthquake - The same phrase is found in Rev 6:12-note, Rev 11:13-note and Rev 16:18-note. As discussed in the next verse, although the earthquake is in the **land of Israel**, **all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence** implying the whole earth is shaken! The earthquake in Rev 16:18, 20 is not a possibility as Israel could hardly be described as living securely during the Great Tribulation (Mt 24:15-20, 21, Da 9:27-note, Da 12:1-note).

Ezekiel 38:20 "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground.:

The fish of the sea (etc) - The point is that all the earth would "shake at" God's presence. This implies that the earthquake was felt worldwide (in the oceans, the air, the forest, all mankind).

HCSB - Such listings of animals are used to allude to the entire created order in the creation story (Gen 1) and elsewhere (Gen 9:2; 1Ki 4:33; Job 12:7-8).

All the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence- Of what will this shaking consist? Will it be a financial shaking, a spiritual shaking, an emotional shaking? Undoubtedly it will include all those elements, but we don't need to spiritualize it, for it will also be a literal physical shaking caused by the great earthquake described in Ezekiel 38:19. In the recorded history of the world, there has never been an earthquake that has shaken the entire world! God is shaking things up so that He might get every person's attention so that all will know that God is the LORD (Ezek 38:23)!

The mountains also will be thrown down - Interpreted literally, there apparently will be major upheavals in some of the mountains of the earth as a result of this earthquake. As an aside, when these events take place (Gog invading Israel, a great earthquake, etc), it will be clear to those who are alive at this time and who know the Word of God, that God is fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39. As of September, 2013, one can only give an "educated speculation" about the timing of these "earth shaking" events. One thing can be said for certain - the geo-political scene is such that these events could all transpire in the not too distant future. **Regardless, one of the major purposes of prophecy and our anticipation of God's fulfilling of prophecy, is that this expectation and assurance of this prophecy's perfect fulfillment in God's perfect timing, should cause all saints to daily walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called! Prophecy is not given to stimulate our curiosity, but to spur us on to godly living in this present evil age! Is that the effect your study of Ezekiel 36-39 is having on your life? If not then perhaps you might want to examine your motives for studying these great prophetic chapters. Peter would "Amen" this "exhortative caution" for he wrote that...**

the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**, looking for (what you are looking for will or should radically impact for what or Whom you are living!) and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!...Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent (aorist imperative** - Do this Now! This command comes as if from a general in a great battle and conveys a sense of urgency!) be

found by Him in **peace, spotless and blameless** (2Peter 3:10-12-note, 2Pe 3:14-note)

Joel Rosenberg - Ezekiel tells us that this earthquake will shake the entire globe and "all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence"

Ezekiel 38:21 "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother.:"

Every man's sword will be against his brother - The enemy forces will become so frightened and disoriented by the great earthquake that they will turn and starting fighting each other. (See similar descriptions in Jdg 7:22, 1Sa 14:20, 2Chr 20:23, Hag. 2:22; Zech. 14:13).

Joel Rosenberg - The devastation is so horrific that Ezekiel 39 tells us it takes the Israelis seven months to bury all the bodies of the enemy forces (Ezekiel 39:12-16).

Ezekiel 38:22 "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.:"

NLT - I will punish you and your hordes with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur!

I will enter into judgment with him - Who? Gog, one many conservative, literal commentators feel is Russia.

HCSB - These judgments against Gog are consistent with the covenant curses of plague (Dt 32:24), bloodshed (Dt 32:42), flood (Gen 6), hail, fire, and brimstone (Josh 10:11). The defeat of Gog by the sword and natural elements highlights God's role as Creator and Governor of nature. The destruction is also reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18-19). ([Holman Christian Study Bible - Type in Scripture - under Study Bible click "Read" for full note - very nice!](#))

John MacArthur feels that "The descriptions here are identical to that of the last half of the 7 year tribulation in Rev 6:12-17; 11:19; 16:17-21; 19:11-21." This interpretation certainly is worth considering.

Fire and brimstone - This day ("on that day" Ezek 38:19) is the most horrifying day in human history in modern times and recalls God's destruction of the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Beloved, do we not see the world catapulting into a moral cesspool, a rapidly escalating wickedness and evil that casts off all restraints, especially the "restraints" from the Almighty God! Are these days not becoming like the evil, amoral days of Sodom and Gomorrah? And what was God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah?

Ge 19:24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven

Ezekiel 38:23 "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.""..:

They (many nations) will know that I am the LORD - God's purpose in bringing about these tumultuous events in His Land of Israel which is at the "center of the world" (Ezek 38:12) is repeated from Ezek 38:16 ("in order that the nations may know Me")

Joel Rosenberg - Why does the Lord act? The Lord tells us directly in 38:23. The nations have forgotten that God still loves the Jewish people. He still loves the nation of Israel. They are not perfect, but He loves them and has made promises to them and He intends to keep those promises (Ed: Despite the teaching of the increasing popular belief in "Replacement Theology."). And He wants the rest of the world to know there is a God in Israel.

Know (yada; Lxx uses ginosko = know by experience) means the nations will know by observing and reflecting (thinking) and by experiencing these events - they will come to see and understand God is the One and Only Living and True God. This "revelation" of His character to the entire world suggests that this is at the end of this age and at the dawn of the "new age" of the Millennium, which would place these events in the last 7 years (**Daniel's Seventieth Week - The Seven Year Period**). This is of course not meant to be a dogmatic statement, but is presented for you to ponder.

Know that I am the LORD - 63x -

Ezek 6:7, 10, 13f; 7:4, 27; 11:10, 12; 12:15f, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 14:8; 15:7; 16:62; 17:24; 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 22:16; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22ff, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25f; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27; 35:4, 9, 15; 36:11, 23, 38; 37:6, 13, 28; 38:23; 39:6f, 22, 28

Creationist Henry Morris - The great global convulsion will save Israel and destroy five-sixths of the armies of Gog (Ezekiel 39:2KJV), so many that it will take seven months for their burial (Ezek 39:12-14). The nations of the world will be forced to recognize that this is an act of God--not merely in the legal sense, but as a very real case of direct intervention in the affairs of men by the God of creation. Most men will still reject Christ as personal Savior, but they will all "know that I am the LORD," says God. Pure atheism will no longer be an option.

Millard Lind - RECOGNITION FORMULA - You/They shall know that I am the Lord occurs in the book of Ezekiel about 60 times. Besides this, there are a few related recognition statements:

They Shall Know that There Has Been a Prophet Among Them (Ezek 2:5; 33:33).

They/you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken (Ezek 5:13; 17:21)

You shall know that it was not without cause that I did all ... (Ezek 14:23).

All flesh shall know that I the Lord have drawn my sword (Ezek 21:5).

You shall know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath (Ezek 22:22).

They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them (Ezek 34:30).

The nations ... shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt (Ezek 36:36).

You shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act (Ezek 37:14).

The nations shall know that ... Israel went into captivity for their iniquity (Ezek 39:23).

The formula is used of both Israel and the nations; judgments upon them both will cause them to know the God of Israel. Likewise, God's saving acts for Israel will cause both Israel and the nations to acknowledge the Lord. This acknowledgment comes not through reasoning or philosophy but by God's intervention and prophetic interpretation of historical events. (Believer's Church Bible Commentary-Ezekiel)