

GOG AND MAGOG

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We have all seen evangelistic ads such as “Russia in Bible Prophecy” used by evangelists. Do the statements made in these evangelistic meetings have as firm a basis in Bible prophecy as, for example, the prophecy of Daniel 2? It is good to be up to date in evangelism. But what is even more important than being up to date is to be doctrinally sound so far as Bible truth is concerned.

A fitting introduction to a study of Ezekiel 38 is found in the last three verses of chapter 37: “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (verses 26-28).

This passage tells about God setting up His sanctuary in the midst of Israel forever. Significantly, there would even be heathen (nations, or Gentiles) who would be in existence and would witness the fulfillment of God’s glorious purpose to Israel (which purpose is covered in chapters 35 and 36 of Ezekiel, as well as in chapter 37). In the light of the glorious destiny that Israel of old might have fulfilled, and considering the fact of the failure of Israel as a nation to fulfill its destiny, it is evident that verses 26 and 27 will only be fulfilled as outlined in Revelation 21 and 22. It is also apparent that verse 28, “the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore,” would then parallel the wicked seeing the New Jerusalem, as outlined in Revelation 20, and would be followed by the attack of the wicked on the Holy City and upon God’s holy people (Rev. 20:9). In this sense, then, there is a parallel between Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20, just as the use of the names Gog and Magog in both passages would imply.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 would have been literally fulfilled at some point in time after the Babylonian Exile, if only Israel had lived up to the conditions God had revealed to them. However, they failed, and the promised prosperity never materialized. In logical sequence, then, there was no possibility of the picture presented in Ezekiel 38—a combination of heathen nations launching an onslaught against

peaceful, prosperous Israel—ever being literally fulfilled, with all the details exactly as they might have been. However, in broader perspective, the struggle between right and wrong will proceed along the same general line, and the final outcome, the triumph of good over evil, will be as certain as though Israel had lived up to its glorious heritage.

We encounter in Ezekiel 38, a terrifying spectacle of the final effort of Satan to annihilate God's people. "Son of man, set thy face against Gog" (Ez. 38:2). We will encounter Gog again in Revelation 20:8, after the thousand years. Gog in that verse is Satan, another name for the devil. Gog is a mutation of the same root from which we get Agog. Agog was the title of the king, the leader, the Duchy of the Amalakites. Thus the word "Gog," so far as I have been able to determine, means: boss, leader, dictator, or general. "Magog," with "ma" in front of "gog" makes it a matronymic name, meaning the family of Gog.

Therefore, Gog and Magog stands for the leader of the family. If we understand the significance of Revelation 20:8 correctly, Gog and Magog means Satan and his followers. It represents Satan, the leader of the evil angels, and those that sided with him, as well as all the wicked persons in every age. The Lord tells Ezekiel, in Chapter 38:2, "Set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal and prophesy against him." Gog is the chief prince.

Let us take a look at Ezekiel 38:5, where he lists, "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet. (6) Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (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?"

What are all these names? I suggest that we turn to Genesis 10 and study this catalog of genealogies where we discover that these names Meshek, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish have been taken (not randomly, but selectively) from the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. I have come to the conclusion that these names are sampling names of the populations of the whole world. Out of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, we shall see in Ezekiel in the second half of

Chapter 47 and also Chapter 48 that there are twelve tribes of the children of Israel who are taken as samples of those whom God is calling.

Gog and Magog represent Satan and his family. Satan is the chief prince, the leader of all the world of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth. I, long ago, discarded any thought that these names can be associated with current people or current cities. Meshek is sometimes associated with Moscow and Tubal with Tubalsk, but I don't think there is anything in that information. I have read very learned etymological studies of these names.

In fact, there is a Master's Thesis in the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary files, written by Theodore Lust, entitled "A Linguistic and Geographical Study of the Names of the Nations of Ezekiel 38 and 39" in which he shows that there is no etymological connection between any of these names and any current city or people. We have to go back to Genesis 10 and allow the Bible to interpret itself.

These were names of the descendants of Sherri, Ham and Japheth. By these the world was populated. Satan is their chief prince. He is captain, boss, dictator of his own family. Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 is focusing on giving to us a picture of Satan and all his followers. The Lord says, having given His Gospel message, "I am against Satan and his family."

Ezekiel 38:4, "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." Some of us may have seen fishermen of big fish which require a gaff, a hook that is slipped into the gill of the fish to pull him in. The Lord says, "I am going to put hooks, gaffs, into the gills or the jaws of this wild beast, this dragon, and bring thee forth, thou and all thy army, horses, horsemen, clothed with all sorts of armor, great company, bucklers, shields, handling swords."

Ezekiel 38:7 tells us to get ready, "Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them." So the Lord here is giving Ezekiel a vision of the marshaled hosts of the world. They are no longer restless seas. They are no longer dry and unmoving deserts. They are a vast army, organized, equipped, prepared, led by their chief prince, Satan. The Lord says, "I am going to put hooks in your jaws and draw you back" (Ez. 38:4).

To try to get the Bible to explain to us what the Lord is telling Ezekiel, go to Ezekiel 39:1, 2, “Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: (2) And I will turn thee back, [‘And leave but the sixth part of thee,’ as the margin indicates for that phrase] “strike thee with six plagues, or draw thee back with an hook of six teeth” (Ez. 38:4). Here is a six-toothed gaff the Lord is going to put into Satan and his followers and draw them back. Thus the six-toothed hook with which God is going to restrain Gog and Magog, Satan and his army, this points to the six plagues. The function of the six plagues then, is to restrain Gog and Magog. But when?

Ezekiel 39:2 “And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel. (3) I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. (4) Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.”

This phrase helps us get the timing as to when Satan comes and when his army will be given to the birds. Revelation 19:17, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God. (18) That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”

He saw the beast and kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the Throne. The timing of this is just before the second coming of Christ, because Revelation 19:11 says, “I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” Christ came and verse 14 says, “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

Ezekiel 38 coupled with Genesis 10 and Revelation 19, give us the time span of this prophecy. Just before Jesus comes, Satan and his army are going to be mustered against God’s people. The Israel of God, the true people, the 144,000, gathered from all the tribes of the

children of Israel. Satan is going to come against them to destroy them with all his organized forces ready. The Lord says, "I am going to pull thee back by six plagues. Thus the function of the first six plagues of Revelation 15 and 16 is to restrain Satan and his followers from annihilating the hated sect, as the *Great Controversy* points out.

Ezekiel 38:22 ends with great hailstones, "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 is the seventh plague. Then the prophet spans a thousand years and mentions fire and brimstone that constitutes the final weapon by which Satan and his evil family will be annihilated.

Now I feel we can approach Ezekiel 38 and 39 with the perspective of the Holy Scripture. The prophet is bidden to announce to the Covering Cherub of Ezekiel 28, who has now become Gog and has a family made up of members that have been expelled from heaven, and all the wicked who have refused to accept the call of the Gospel. He says, "I am against thee, Gog and Magog. I am going to restrain you from your attempt to annihilate the people of God by striking you with six plagues, and then destroying you premillennially with the great hailstones."

Now let us look at Ezekiel 38:8, "After many days [Revelation 20 enumerates these as a thousand years] 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 always been waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them." Thus the Holy City comes down. God's people, gathered out of every nation, are safely within the walls and battlements, and around them, Gog and Magog, according to Revelation 20:8 have mustered an exceeding great army.

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." Then the Lord gives a prediction. Ezekiel 38:10, "It shall come to pass that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought."

We now read the last order of the day by the captain of the wicked, Satan himself. [these are the very words that Satan is going to use as he marshals his final army] (11) "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 bar nor gates.” He can see the walls and he can see the gates. (12) “. . .To take a spoil? . . . to take a prey?” Verse 13 then asks, “Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold [from the cities and streets:] to take cattle and goods, to take away great spoil?”

Ezekiel 38 is a complement to Revelation 20, Gog and Magog, Satan and his followers surrounding the city and Satan giving the orders to attack the city. (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?” [The devils believe and tremble.] I feel he definitely knows and believes. James 2:19 says, “. . . the devils believe, and tremble.”

Ezekiel 38:15, of Satan it is written “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 might army. (16) . . . 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. (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? (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. (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.”

The fishes, the good fish and the bad fish and the wheat and the tares will be separated, mountains moved at My presence, thrown down, and the steep places shall fall. (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. (22) I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood. . .” The word “plead” in the year 1611 when the King James version was written meant “to accuse.” In the English court system today, a Pleader is the Prosecuting Attorney.

God is saying in Ezekiel 38:22, I will prosecute, “I will plead against him [Israel] 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. (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.”

BEFORE AND AFTER THE MILLENNIUM

Ezekiel 39 takes up some of what Ezekiel 38 covered and enlarges on the time before and after the millennium. There are parts of Ezekiel 39 that are difficult to understand. Ezekiel 39:4 is simple, “Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.” The words, “I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort.” And verse 17, “Speak unto every feathered fowl.”

We see this in Revelation 19:17, “I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.” The feathered fowl are called and it is the supper of the Great God. Verse 18 expands on the supper, “That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. (19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.”

This is a picture of the second coming of Christ as the millennium starts with the feathered fowls there to do their part. “Christ spoke about this when He talked about two being in a bed, two working at a mill, two in a field. One shall be taken and the other left” in Matthew 24:40 and 41. The question was asked, “Where shall they be taken?” Jesus said, “Where the bodies are, there the eagles, the buzzards, will be gathered together.” Ezekiel 39:8, “Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken.” Just as we read in Revelation 16:17, “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’”

Ezekiel 39:8, “Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken. [Just as it reads in Revelation 16:17] (9) And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons.” I think now we have spanned the millennium.

From the city they shall go forth and see the wicked as ashes under their feet. The details, I don't know about “the burying of them for

seven months” in verse 12. Evidently the Lord gives the redeemed inside the city time enough to view the havoc upon this beautiful planet that Satan has wrought through his sin and rebellion.

The Lord then says in verse 21, “I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.” Thereby, the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.

The final result of allowing Satan to have his way before and after the millennium is to reveal to the universe the quality of person that Satan really is. It also gives the redeemed within the city time to realize that those who are destroyed are destroyed because they chose to go their way. Ezekiel 39:14, “They shall separate out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.”

This may mean, and I have had thoughts like this many times—why does God allow His people to behold the post millennial debouche of Satan and his hosts as they try to attack the city. Surely, he knows that his attempts are futile, but do the people within the city know?

Let me illustrate, as I have given this illustration many times before. If by chance my mother is not in that celestial city, and if by the mercy of God and His compassion I am saved, I look around for my mother in the heavenly courts and she is not there. I would go to the celestial clerk and ask for her file. I look at the records of her life and discover that her secret sins have precluded her entry into the abodes of glory. I accept the evidence, but in my heart of hearts I wonder, “Was it just? Did she know? If she had known my Jesus as I know Him, would she not have repented?”

The millennium with its work comes to its close. In the excitement of the descent of the City, I am thrilled. As I come back to this earth, I see its cities broken down. I see its forests dead. A thousand years of cold and darkness has killed every form of life. It is desolate beyond words. Then I see Satan and his angels, and I watch with interest as the wicked are resurrected. I look out over those battlements to see if I can find my mother. There I see her! I have forgotten how human beings looked having enjoyed the glory of the better land for a thousand years. I see her marked with sin. I see the lines of rebellion in her face that I had never noticed before.

Suddenly, I see about the City the Throne, and above the Throne the Rainbow, and Christ upon his Throne. I see it all. I wonder now when the panoramic showing of the great controversy is enacted, as the scrolls are opened, and every person sees the part he/she played, what will mother do? Will she fall in repentance? When the last scene ends, I see Satan lead that act of devotion. On his knees he exclaims, "Just and holy are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." I see it all.

Then I see Satan rise and rouse his followers. Mother rises, and with her thin fingers wants to claw away the jasper walls, and pull down the pearly gates, and dethrone the nail-pierced Saviour upon His Throne. I see it. Then, and really only then, do I know that God has judged correctly. My judgment was faulty. All those outside the city cannot be saved. They must be obliterated. I see it. God is sanctified, finally, fully, eternally in my mind, and in the minds of all the redeemed, and in the minds and hearts of all the lost, and in the view of all celestial beings, as well as the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 39:22, "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. (23) And the heathen shall know that the House of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity." My people, all their sufferings were only that they might live and that they might be cleansed.

(27) When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. (29) Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." This pouring out will be forever and ever.

In Ezekiel 38 and 39 we have the two phases of the attempt made by Gog and Magog [Satan and his followers] to annihilate God's people and take possession of this earth. Premillennially, God restrains them from their nefarious tasks by the six plagues. At the time of His second coming, Christ destroys them with the hailstones. The bodies of the lost are devoured by the buzzards. The earth is plunged into darkness for a thousand years. After many days (a thousand years) Christ will come down. Light will shine on this earth from the city. The redeemed will be there. They will see Satan and his minions again attempt to destroy God's people, God's Throne, and

God's City. Fire and brimstone will cleanse the earth. God's people will go out and see the ashes, see the remnants of that rebellion. At that time the parts they are given to play post-millennially will settle forever that God is just and holy and true, and sin has no excuse, that the wicked have no escape. The saved, infused with the Spirit, will live in peace forever.