The Coming War of Gog and Magog, an Islamic Invasion?

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Ezekiel 38 through 39 tells of a future invasion of Israel by a vast coalition of nations that surround it. As we read the headlines in the newspapers of today, and witness the conflict in the Middle East, it's not hard to imagine that this invasion prophesied over 2600 years ago, could be fulfilled in our lifetime. Ezekiel 36-37 predicts a gathering of the Jews to the nation of Israel, which will be followed by this massive invasion. For 19 centuries the Jewish people were scattered throughout the world, and until May 14, 1948 there was no nation of Israel to invade. With the nation of Israel now a reality, the stage seems set for the war that will usher in the tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist; a war that will end with the destruction of Israel's enemies by God Himself, and lead to the signing of a peace treaty with the Antichrist.

As you read Ezekiel 38 and 39, it isn't just the creation of the nation of Israel that makes this prophecy seem likely to be fulfilled in the near future. The nations that God tells us will form this coalition against Israel seem more likely now than perhaps ever before to form just such an alliance. To understand the prophecies of Ezekiel about this future invasion, it's important to understand who the players will be.

There are many theories as to who will join in this future invasion of Israel. Before going through a list of the individual nations, I'll list some of the more common theories you'll hear when studying the prophecies from Ezekiel 38.

Ezekiel 38:1-6 The word of the Lord came to me; Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him and say: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army - your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops - the many nations with you.'

1. Hashemite Kingdom Theory: The Islamic Nations will come against Israel either by an Iraqi-led, Jordanian led, or Turkish led coalition. The enemy from the north refers to the areas of Syria, Turkey, and Iraq. These Islamic nations make up the lands occupied by Magog, Gomer, Togarmah, Meshech and Tubal.

2. Caucus Theory: Gog and Magog are the Arab nations in an alliance with the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union. This theory leaves out most of Russia, and includes only the southern part.

3. All Europe theory: Gog and Magog are the sons of Japeth thus the originators of
the European races. Gog and Magog therefore indicates all of Europe. This is not a widely held theory and I could find little support for it.

4. **Russian Theory:** The Hebrew word 'rōsh' in verse 3 is identified with Russia, 'Tubal' with Tbilisi or Tobolsk and 'Meshech' with Moscow, therefore Gog and Magog refers to Russia. This is one of the most commonly held views and is based on a different interpretation of the Hebrew word Rosh (used as a noun rather than adjective), similarities in the pronunciation of words, and the Greek translation of Rosh referring to a tribe of people found in what is now Russia.

5. **Indo-European Theory:** Gog and Magog include the nations descending from Japheth: Russia, the Caucasus(Turkey), Iraq, and the Islamic republics of Central Asia. The coalition is an alliance of Arab nations, Muslim republics, Georgia, southern Russia and the Black sea area.

These are some of the theories you will find if you do any research into the prophecies of Ezekiel 38. You may also find interpretations that are a combination of these, and in fact, I tend to find more evidence for a version of the Indo-European and Caucasus Theory.

Before looking at the participants of this invasion in more detail, it's important to understand that the war described in Ezekiel 38 is not the same as the war that will come at the end of the tribulation when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist and establish his millennial kingdom. How do we know this? The war at the end of the tribulation, known as Armageddon, is a world war. Revelation tells us that this battle will involve all nations. The war described in Ezekiel includes specific nations that invade Israel. Also, Armageddon is at the climax of the tribulation, while the war described in Ezekiel comes well before then.

Ezekiel 38:1-7 gives 10 names as participants in the invasion of Israel that will follow the regathering of the Jews to their homeland. First mentioned, is the land of Magog. The most common identity for Magog is in Central Asia. The Jewish historian Josephus said, "Magog founded the Magogians, called Scythians by the Greeks. Scythians were a nomadic tribe who inhabited the ancient territory from Central Asia across the southern part of ancient Russia." Today this area is inhabited by the former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and possibly northern parts of Afghanistan. All of these nations that make up the land of Magog have one thing in common - Islam. Militant Islam has been on the rise in these countries since the fall of the Soviet Union, when Islam no longer had to be practiced secretly. Radical Islamic groups such as the Islamic Renaissance Party, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islam are working to reunite central Asian nations and ultimately the entire Muslim world. It is from this part of the world that a leader will arise to bring together a great coalition of nations to invade Israel.

Probably the most debated verse is Ezekiel 38:3. There are two main views on the
identity of the Nations God is referring to in this verse. I'll list both here, and let the reader decide which sounds most reasonable.

**Rosh as Russia**

Some versions of the Bible translate the Hebrew word 'rosh' in verse 3 as a noun referring to a place in Russia. The least credible support for this view is that Rosh sounds like the modern-day name Russia and Meshech sounds like Moscow. In this translation they treat rosh as a proper name. The Greek translation translates Rosh as the proper name Ros. Because the ancient Sarmations were known as the Ras, Rashu, and Rus and inhabited Rasapu which is now Southern Russia, some feel this verse points to Russia as the prince of Rosh. Another support sited for this view is that verse 6 and 15 say the invasion will come from remote parts of the north, and Russia is more remote.

**Rosh as chief**

Other versions of the Bible translate 'rosh' as an adjective. The argument here is that in the Massoretic text the words 'chief prince' carry the accents Tiphha and Zaqeph-gadol. The Tiphha appears under the resh of the Hebrew word 'rosh'; the Zaqeph-gadol appears on top of the sin of the Hebrew word 'nish'. The Tiphha to the right, underneath the initial consonant of the world 'rosh', or chief, is prepositive and does not mark the tone syllable. The world 'nish' or prince has the accent Zaqeph-gadol which is disjunctive and indicates a pause. So, verse three would read:

"Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the prince, chief of Meshech and Tubal"

Rather than:

"Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal."

Here 'rosh' is translated head or chief as it is other times in the Old Testament.

In short, if you believe 'rosh' should be translated as a proper noun you may find the interpretation that Russia will be a part of this coalition more reasonable. If you believe 'rosh' should be an adjective here, you need only concern yourself with who Meshech and Tubal are. I tend to have a problem with the "it sounds like Russia" theory, and find the translation of rosh as an adjective more believable, but to each his own.

Meshech and Tubal in verses 2 and 6, were the names of the 6th and 5th sons of Japheth, the son of Noah (Gen. 10:2). Ezekiel 27:13 also mentions Meshech and Tubal as trading partners with Tyre (Modern Lebanon). It's likely that Meshech and Tubal refer to the ancient Moshi/Mushki and Tubalu/Tibareni who dwelled in the area around, primarily south of, the Black and Caspian Sea in Ezekiel's day. Today these nations would be in the modern country of Turkey, parts of Southern Russia and
Northern Iran. All areas with a Muslim majority.

Verse 6 adds Gomer and Beth-Togarmah to the coalition. "Gomer" was the first son of Japheth. The Gomerites were the ancient Cimmerians, expelled in 700 B.C. from the southern steppes of Russia into what is today Turkey. "Togarmah" is the 3rd son of Gomer and *beth* at the beginning of the name is the Hebrew word for 'house' or 'place of'. In Ezekiel's time there was a city in Cappodocia (Modern Turkey) known as Tegarma, Tagarma, Til-garimmu, and Takarama.

The possibility that four of the names mentioned in Ezekiel are now in Turkey makes a pretty strong argument for Turkey being a part of the invasion of Israel. Current circumstances in that country also lend this view some credibility. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Turkey has been gaining inroads into Central Asia (Magog). It is also linked to Central Asia both ethnically and linguistically, and has a growing number of political parties that support opposition to Israel, establishment of a Turkish Islamic Republic, and the worldwide rule of Islam.

Verse 5 brings three more names into the mix. God tells us that "Persia, Cush and Put will be with them".

Persia is a pretty easy one. In 539 B.C. the Persians conquered the city of Babylon. You only need look at a map of the ancient Persian Empire to see that it was centered in the nation known today as Iran. In fact Iran was called Persia until 1935 when it was changed to Iran and then to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 during the Iranian Revolution. It's no secret that Iran is an archenemy of Israel and the West, and a supporter of the Palestinians. They are actively working to get other Arab countries to change camps in their cooperation with the U.S. and Israel.

The ancient kingdom of Cush in Ezekiel's time was the land just south of Egypt on the Nile River. Today this land is occupied by Sudan. Sudan is home to the National Islamic Front, is ruled by an Islamic military dictatorship, a strong supporter of Iraq, home to Osama bin Laden from 1991-1996, and harbors countless Islamic terrorist groups. Sudan would easily fit into the coalition as it is already close allies with Iran, trading military supplies for docking rights on the Red Sea shipping routes.

Ancient Put was the land just west of Egypt, or what is today Libya. Libya is another sponsor of terrorism, and openly refuses to recognize Israel's right to even exist. When the coalition against Israel is formed, Libya won't have to be asked twice to join.

Verse 6 adds "and many people with you." The nations listed specifically are all somewhat distant from Israel. By adding "and many people with you", God may have been indicating that those nations and peoples in closer proximity to Israel will join the Jihad. Other nations that might join the alliance are Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. All of them are Islamic nations, and all of them would not hesitate to support the destruction of Israel were the opportunity to join such a vast coalition presented to
Below is a list of the nations that are listed in Ezekiel as Israel's last-days enemies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANCIENT NAME</th>
<th>MODERN NATION</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosh</td>
<td>Russia or Chief</td>
<td>Ancient Sarmatians known as Rashu, Rasapu, Ros, and Rus. OR Translated as the adjective Chief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magog</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Ancient Scythians - Islamic southern republics of the former Soviet Union with a population of 60 million Muslims. This territory could include modern Afghanistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meshech</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Ancient Muschki and Musku in Cilicia and Cappadocia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubal</td>
<td>Turkey (also southern Russia and Iran)</td>
<td>Ancient Tubalu in Cappadocia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persia</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Name changed from Persia to Iran in 1935.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia (Cush)</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Ancient Cush, south of Egypt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Ancient Put, west of Egypt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomer</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Ancient Cimmerians - from the seventh century to first century B.C. in central/western Anatolia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth-togarmah</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Til-garimmu - between ancient Carchemish and Haran (southern Turkey).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many peoples with you</td>
<td>Other Islamic nations</td>
<td>Possibly Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt</td>
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The reasons God gives us for the enemies' invasion of Israel are further proof that the attack will be an Islamic invasion.

The first reason God gives for the invasion in Ezekiel 38 is a desire by the coalition to cover the Jewish land and wipe them off the face of the earth. Urged on by a hatred of
the Jewish people they will seek to destroy them and the nation of Israel. This is the stated goal today of almost every Islamic nation in the Middle East. The only nations not currently in a declared state of war with Israel are Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan, yet they would certainly be glad to see Israel eliminated if presented with a willing leader and an opportunity to rid the Middle East of Islam's archenemy.

God tells us that they also come to "seize plunder...and to capture great spoil". Many verses in the Quran advocated plundering for the benefit of Islam and there are several instances of this war tactic throughout the history of Muhammad's life. In fact, it is a common theme in his teachings.

This invasion of Israel and attack on the Jewish people will indeed be a Jihad, but it will also be the final Jihad.

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?'"

As this invasion develops, a few countries will make a lame protest. This isn't hard to believe when you look at the indifference most nations display as Israel is repeatedly attacked by terrorists.

The specific nations who question Gog's actions are "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish". Sheba and Dedan are not hard to identify. These were ancient names for what is known today as Saudi Arabia.

Tarshish is most commonly agreed to be ancient Tartessus or the area of present day Spain in Western Europe. In Ezekiel's day, Tarshish was in the farthest west regions of the known world. By referring to Tarshish and all her merchants, Ezekiel could have been indicating that Western Europe will join with Saudi Arabia in denouncing the invasion. Interestingly, Saudi Arabia is the only Arab nation to consistently side with the West against radical Islamic elements around the world. The royals of Saudi Arabia mostly side with the West out of an interest in self preservation, and at times oppose us behind the scenes, but they would most probably put on a show of opposition to radical Islam in order to maintain the support of western governments.

A similar alliance has been seen once before during the Gulf War of the early 1990's. The U.S., Western Europe, and Saudi Arabia were allied against Iraq, while Russia, Iran, Sudan, Libya, and most other Middle East nations either aligned with Iraq, or against the U.S. either by directly opposing it, or by remaining neutral.

The good news is that God wins. God will come against the invaders Himself and destroy them. Verses 19-20 say that there will be an earthquake so great that people all over the world will tremble. In the ensuing chaos, nations will begin to turn on each
other. The confusion will lead to the largest case of death by friendly fire ever seen.

Verse 22 of Ezekiel tells us that there will be plagues, torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning sulfur. Just as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, he will destroy these invading forces. Once again, God will make it known to all the nations that He is the Lord. He will give the nations proof that He is the Holy One in Israel.

This war against Israel will pave the way for the Antichrist's military rule over the world and his demand that the world worship him as God. With Islam defeated and the Christian Church raptured, opposition to worshipping a man as God will be greatly reduced. Those who are left would have no army with which to mount much of a protest.

So, how should Christians respond to this prophecy? In Ezekiel 39:6,7, and 28 God says that this end-times battle will happen that "they will know that I am the Lord". This message that God's purpose is to cause Israel and the other nations to know He is Lord is repeated over 60 times in Ezekiel. By learning about prophecy and teaching it to others, people will be able to see the glory, majesty, and sovereignty of God in the fulfillment of His divine word. By knowing our Bible and teaching it to others, they will be able to see that there is a divine creator, and a plan for them. Through Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers us freely, there is victory and an eternity more glorious than they can imagine.

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Gog is the LAND where Magog and his brothers settled. You now know more than your pastor! It may be that the Magog invasion comes from there! Notice that God calls â€œfor a sword against him (Magog) throughout all my mountainsâ€ (Eze 38:21). The major mountainous regions in Israel are across the northern part of the nation, also along the northern center half (Judea and Samaria), and in the Southern District in the Negev desert (see topographic map below). I think that the war of â€œGog and Magogâ€ described in Ezekiel chapter 38 is a battle that happens before the tribulation. It also happens before the battle of Armageddon. The way that world events are unfolding leads me to think that the battle of â€œGog and Magogâ€ may start very soon. Gog's Coming War. Recently, I was listening to a nationally syndicated radio program, and the host made an astonishing observation. She described a recent trip she took to Israel. She talked about looking over the border into Syria. Remember, Ezekiel said the Gog of Magog invasion force will come from the north (Ezekiel 38:15; Ezekiel 39:2). So now we have three of the nations in Gog's invading force perched on Israel's northern border. Mere coincidence? I don't think so. Its secular government is gone. In its place, Erdogan is building an Islamic Republic aligned against Israel. The relationship between Vladimir Putin and Erdogan is strong and growing. All that's left to take place is a clear break between Turkey and NATO, permanently moving Turkey into Russia's sphere of influence. What is Magog? Who is Gog? And when will this invasion occur? Gog is identified as a prince of Rosh. He is associated with a land called Magog, which has two named cities: Meshech and Tubal. Little is said about Magogâ€™s location, except that it is in the remote parts of the â€œnorthâ€ (Ezek. 38:15). The invaders are urged to attack Israel, but the land of Israel is described as a territory â€œrecovered from war,â€ and the people of Israel are described as those who â€œwere gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate.â€ As pointed out previously, this would fit naturally into the prophetic picture of the first half of the, last seven years leading up to the second coming of Christ. A final reference to Gog and Magog remains. Some suggest that the Gog and Magog war must come near the start or at the start of the tribulation because people will take seven years to burn the weapons used in the invasion: â€œ(9) And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: (10) So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down.â€ In contrast, I do not see any reason why the people in Israel could not simply clean up the weapons in the land during the Millennium. A Complete Gathering of Israel. The biggest reason why I do not believe that the Gog and Magog... Bible prophecy about the Gog and Magog War described in Ezekiel 38 and 39; a massive army will gather against Israel as Russia is drawn by God by a hook in the jaw with its allies Iran or Persia, and many other Muslim nations. This makes sense in light of Gog coming from the "far north." Russia is the furthest country directly north of Israel. This may suggest that Gog is not the supreme leader of Russia at the time of the invasion. In other words, the human leader being led by the demonic spirit could be the Prime Minister of Russia at the time of the war. This is because the Prime Minister is the office below the President, who is the second in command, or "chief prince."