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C1304 – January 23, 2013 – Ezekiel 38 & 39
Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, & Libya vs. Israel - Part 2

“The Bible describes the beginning of the Tribulation period as a time of international turmoil and conflict (Matthew 24:6-7). The Gog of Magog invasion of Israel (with Russia leading allies Iran, Turkey, Libya, and the Sudan) is predicted to occur in the “last days” of Israel (Ezekiel 38:16), a time that follows our own age, the “last days” of the church (2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 2:1; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3). If we are nearing this time we should expect to see the kind of re-ordering of the world (especially against Israel) that we are seeing today. Since the Bible does not mention the United States, and the focus of the last day’s drama is in the East, many expect that there will be a decline in the West that will permit the rise of power and conflict in the East that characterize this future era. Perhaps God’s purpose in the results of the recent election was to further His purpose in bringing history on schedule to these predicted events.”¹ – Randall Price

That’s a good summary of why I am interested in these battles for Jerusalem in the last days. It seems that current events are catapulting us forward in surges to the conditions necessary for world power to shift to the East and these nations begin to organize to invade Israel. How will the west decline? I don’t know, it could be by gradual decline in economic prestige or it could be more by sudden military catastrophe such as a nuclear attack by Iran. But however it occurs, the balance of power must shift from West to East for these battles to unfold.

It seems to me there are three distinct battles even though some scholars think they are the same. For example, some say the Daniel 11:40 battle is the Ezekiel 38-39 battle. However, the Daniel 11:40 battle involves only two nations coming against Israel; Egypt and Syria, whereas the Ezekiel 38-39 battle involves five nations coming against Israel; Russia, Iran, Turkey,

Libya and Sudan. Other scholars say that the Ezekiel 38-39 battle is the Rev 16 battle. However, the Ezekiel 38-39 battle involves five nations coming against Israel whereas the Rev 16 battle involves every nation on earth coming against Israel. So these distinctions have to be maintained and therefore this argues for three distinct battles and there are other arguments for their distinction.

The first battle is Daniel 11:40-45; Egypt and Syria vs Israel. This battle, Dan 11:40 says will occur in the end times of Israel which is the end of the present era which immediately precedes the Messianic era. And things are lining up for this. I don't know if you are keeping up with the Arab Spring in those two nations but if I were you I would because it appears both countries are going to end up with fundamentalist Islamic government in the next few years. Now as things shape up for the end times a ten nation confederacy will arise with ten kings and the anti-Christ will arise among them as an eleventh king and he will have great power, enough power to force a covenant on the nation Israel and get his foothold in the Middle East. Of course he's going to allow the nation Israel to offer sacrifice in a re-built temple on the Temple Mount and I don't think that's going to make the Muslim nations very happy. So that's when I think the battle of Daniel 11:40 will unfold. Egypt and Syria will attack and the anti-Christ will protect his interests. Also, remember the two witnesses are operating in Jerusalem at the time and they can breathe fire and kill anyone they want. So they are a force to be reckoned with and so I think they'll protect Israel's Temple and sacrificial system during that time. But the antichrist will defeat Syria, Egypt and others in the region and head south into Egypt expanding his kingdom but then he will hear rumors from the north and east that will disturb him.

These rumors I take it relate to a second coalition of nations we found in Ezekiel 38-39 last week. Ezek 38:2 says this coalition will be led by **Gog of the land of Magog**. **Gog** is the political Czar from **the land of Magog** which is Russia. And he is the **captain** of the forces of **Rosh**, which is Russia, and **Meshech** and **Tubal** which are both in Turkey. Then in 38:5 you see the nation **Persia**, which is Iran, **Ethiopia**, which is really Sudan, and **Put** which is Libya. Finally in 38:6 **Gomer** and **Beth-togarmah**, and these are both in Turkey. Some older commentators placed these in Germany and it could be Germany. Right now Germany is fairly pro-Israel but their population is rapidly becoming Islamic simply due to higher birth rates

among Muslims than Germans and the German government actually came out about four years ago and stated that by 2050 Germany would no longer exist because they would be overrun with Muslims. So it is conceivable that Germany could be Gomer. But whether it's Germany or Turkey the fact remains a large coalition of five or six nations will invade Israel.

For what? What are they coming for? 38:12-13, for spoil, for cattle, which signifies a food shortage, it may be famines in the first half of the Tribulation. Also for gold and silver. It shows that Israel will be very wealthy in the last days. How will they become wealthy? Perhaps through the Dead Sea salts, those salts are extremely valuable; perhaps through discovery of natural gas and oil deposits because they've discovered a number of extremely large natural gas deposits in recent years or perhaps through the deciphering of the copper scroll which is a treasure map of gold and silver. However they come into their great wealth this Russian Czar and his coalition of nations will invade Israel to steal it. The second reason, in 38:12 is anti-Semitism, they don't like the Jews. So they invade to destroy the Jews and take the spoils of war.

However, as far as God is concerned, He's bringing them against Israel in order to glorify Himself, to set Himself apart as Holy, to vindicate His holiness. Basically these five nations are ripe for judgment and so God is going to lead them into His land and against His people in violation of Gen 12:3 and it will be the final drop that overflows their cup of iniquity and results in his mighty *orge* wrath, His destructive wrath. And through His mighty wrath all the nations will know Him. Notice 39:7, **My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.** I just find that very interesting that he says the result of this battle is His holy name will not be profaned anymore because I don't know of any time prior to the Second Coming that His name will not be profaned anymore. Certainly at the midpoint the anti-Christ will enter the Temple and exalt himself as God, profaning the name of God. So 39:7 cannot occur until the Second Coming and that shows you that in some way this battle reaches all the way to the Second Coming.

Where does the battle take place? I have all five nations coming together from the north. I'm suggesting this because the text says this in 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; 16and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. So all the forces come from the north. They're actually following the destructive path of the anti-Christ from the prior battle in Dan 11:40. Now the north is where the mountains of Israel are and the text refers to the mountains of Israel four times in these chapters, that's Ezek 38:8, 39:2, 39:4 and 39:17. Let's take a look at one of them, Ezek 39:4, **You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field.** That's in the north of Israel. And this is another hint that this battle is not the battle of Armageddon because the defeat at the battle of Armageddon does not occur in the northern mountains of Israel but from Jerusalem south into Edom. So those two battles cannot be the same and I don't think any of what is described here in these chapters is Armageddon. Some thing Ezek 39:17 relates to Armageddon because it sounds similar to Rev 19, **As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice - but where does it occur? on the mountains of Israel** and that's in the north of Israel. So they will invade from the north of Israel into the mountains and they will be defeated in the north in the mountains of Israel. The result will be a multitude of carcasses. Armageddon later will only add to this multitude of defiling bodies.

However, before they are defeated I think they will be initially successful at plundering Israel because in 39:10 it says that the spoil they took from Israel will be taken back by Israel. Notice the middle of the verse, **and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered then, declares the Lord GOD.** So these nations are initially successful at looting the Israeli's of great wealth but then they are defeated and Israel recovers their wealth.

How will these five nations be defeated? Answer, Ezek 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 land of Israel.** So the first means is an earthquake. Notice the catastrophic results in verse 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. So first, by earthquake. Second, by sword, verse 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.** So second, by chaos among the ranks of enemy soldiers, they will fight and kill one another. Third by disease, hailstones and fire, verse 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.** So third by disease, by bloodshed, by hail, etc...it’s a mighty supernatural defeat reminiscent of some of the battles in Joshua’s day and some of the plagues in the Exodus. And fourth by inoperative weapons, 39:3, **I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. 4You will fall...** So fourth, God will supernaturally render their weapons inoperative. And fifth by fire from heaven, 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.** Magog is the land of Russia and God will supernaturally send fire upon that land. The coastlands are historically where the descendants of Japheth settled and fire will be sent upon them too (Gen 10:5). So fifth by fire from heaven. And you can see then that there are several supernatural means by which God defeats His enemies and by defeating them in this manner He will make His name known in all the earth.ⁱⁱ This will be instrumental in the conversion of many nations and of Israel.

Alright, now we come to the when? When will this battle occur? This is the most difficult question to answer. The reason is because of the multitude of factors that have to be considered. It’s like trying to put together a four dimensional puzzle and I’ve been driving myself crazy the last four weeks trying to get all the pieces from the text together into one picture that harmonizes with the rest of Scripture. And I think I’ve done it, it’s just that now I have to try to communicate it and that’s the difficulty. There are many, many things going on here, man, many textual details that must be accounted for. Let’s take a look at the textual requirements. First, in Ezekiel 38:8 it says, this battle must occur **After many days.** This is a general

statement referring in the context to a period long after Ezekiel's day. Second, in Ezekiel 38:8 it says this battle must occur **in the latter years**. The **latter years** refer to the latter end of Israel's present era before the Messianic era. Third, in Ezekiel 38:8 it says the battle will occur when **the land is restoredⁱⁱⁱ from the sword**. This expression refers to a condition following battle and bloodshed. The land of Israel will have just fought and recovered from a prior battle. Fourth, Ezekiel 38:8 says the battle must occur when **the inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste**. This refers to the first regathering of Israel, the regathering in unbelief. Since 1948 this condition has been fulfilled as Jews have returned to the land of Israel and made the mountains of Israel in the north fruitful through water conservation and good land stewardship. Fifth, Ezek 38:8, 11 and 14 say that this battle will occur when Israel is **living securely, all of them**. The Hebrew *betah* "expresses that sense of well-being and security which results from having something (arms, security systems) or someone in whom to place confidence...It is significant that the LXX always translates this word with *peiphomai* "to be persuaded," for the negative notion for relying on what turns out to be deceptive...it stresses the feeling of being safe or secure. Likewise, all the derivatives have the same meaning "to feel secure," "be unconcerned." cf. the false security of the Shechemites vs. the cruelty of Levi and Simeon (Gen 34:25), of Israel vs. Gog (Ezk 38:10-11.) Proverbs 3:29 explicitly warns against taking advantage of a trusting neighbor." TWOT. Perhaps 2 Kgs 18-19 is the pre-eminent example revolving the issue of false trust vs true trust. Therefore this word **living securely** seems best in this context to refer to a time when Israel is living in a false sense of security. This condition is all the more important since it is mentioned three times, verse 8, 11 and 14. Sixth, Ezek 38:16 says that this battle will occur in **the last days**. This again refers to the last days of Israel in the present era before the Messianic era. There are other factors to consider as far as what kinds of things will happen during the battle or what things will happen after the battle; there has to be a time and a place for these things. So seventh, Ezekiel 38:19-20 says that the battle will be related to **a great earthquake in the land of Israel that affects 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**. Since an

earthquake occurs in conjunction with this battle then perhaps some correspondence may be found with one of the earthquakes in the book of Revelation. Eighth, in Ezek 39:9-10 says that after the battle the **weapons will be burned for fuel**. Ninth, in Ezek 39:11-16, the battle must conclude with a **clean up lasting seven months**. The clean up will consist of burying the dead bodies to cleanse the land. Tenth, in Ezek 39:7, God will **not let His holy name be profaned anymore**.

Alright, those are ten textual requirements that must be met for any proposal on when this battle must occur. Now let's measure and weigh the major proposals. First, some place the battle at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation. Arnold Fruchtenbaum is representative of this view when he says, "...the Russian invasion will occur before the Tribulation actually begins...this invasion must take place at least 3 ½ years or more before the Tribulation starts." Why is he putting it at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation begins? Because of the fact that the Jews will burn the weapons for seven years. And it's not feasible that the weapons would be burned during the second half of the Tribulation when they are being persecuted and could use the weapons for defense. So the major reason Arnold and others hold that it must occur at least 3 ½ years before, and it could be 20 years before, but at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation begins is because you need at least 7 years for the burning of the weapons and the only way to get that before the midpoint is to back up 7 years from the midpoint and that makes it 3 ½ years before the Tribulation begins. In support of this timing before the Tribulation he argues that all the textual requirements for this battle have already been met today. For example, he says Israel in Ezek 38:8 has to have been gathered from many nations to the land of Israel. This regathering in a state of Israel has been the state of affairs since 1948. Second, he says, Israel is said in Ezek 38:11 to be dwelling in unwalled villages. This is the living conditions of many who live in *kibbutzim* in the north of Israel. Third, he says, Israel is said in Ezek 38:8, 11, 12 and 14 to be living in security. Israel he says is living in security today and therefore this battle can occur at any time. Finally, since it must occur at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation begins then it is possible for this battle to occur before the rapture of the church. So for these reasons and the main one being the 7 years of burning, many expositors hold that this battle will occur before the Tribulation and possibly before the rapture. This view or some close

resemblance is held by David L Cooper, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, Randall Price, and Joel Rosenberg.

Now it seems unlikely to me that this battle will occur before the rapture because Ezek 38:8 says it will occur **in the latter years**. Since the **latter years** refer in context to the **latter years** of Israel and not to the latter years of the Church then this battle must occur after the rapture of the Church. Arnold answers this by saying that the latter years is broad enough to cover the last years of the church. However, I still see it as unlikely. If it did occur before the rapture of the church then modern weaponry would be destroyed before the rapture and I don't see that as a likely possibility.

Now, what about after the rapture? Could this battle occur after the rapture but before the Tribulation begins? Most proponents say that all the textual requirements for this battle to occur today are fulfilled. But it seems unlikely that they are because in Ezek 38:8 it says the battle will occur when **the land is restored from the sword** and that requires a battle preceding this one resulting in peaceful conditions. And yet you can't say that Israel is living in peace today since rocket attacks and terrorist attacks occur on a daily basis in Israel. Second, in Ezek 38:11 Israel is said to be **at rest**. The Hebrew word *saqat* means "at ease, undisturbed." Again it seems difficult to say that Israel is at ease, undisturbed and without anxiety today, especially when they face daily rocket attacks from Gaza.^{iv} Third, in Ezek 38:8, 11, 14 it says that Israel will be **living securely**. The Hebrew word *betah* means is most likely understood to be a "false security." It is merely a sense of being secure. Proponents argue that the modern State of Israel thinks they are secure because they have fought and won four wars against Arabs. This is said to fulfill the requirement of the text. And yet video surveillance has captured Israeli's in fear during rocket attacks. Polls show that most Israeli's expect to face continued attacks by neighboring Arabs and terrorist organizations. It may be better to understand *betah* as referring to a sense of being secure because of dependence upon another. The other would be the anti-Christ. Once he signs the treaty he is obligated to provide for Israel's security needs. And yet we all know this would be a false sense of security. Fourth, in Ezek 38:11 Israel is said to be living in **unwalled villages**. And yet today there are areas of Israel that have walls surrounding them for protection against unwanted terrorists. Further the Israeli government wants to build more walls to increase security. Fifth, Ezek 39:7 says that God's holy name will no

longer be profaned and the nations will know YHWH. And yet that will not occur 10 ½ years before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.^v So while I have sympathy for those who endorse a timing of the battle before the Tribulation, and it does solve some problems such as the burning of the weapons for seven years, I do not think it meets all the textual requirements.

Second, some place it at the end of the Tribulation and link it together with the battle of Armageddon.^{vi} They argue that the similarity of language between the two battles argues for their identity. However, this has several problems. First and foremost, Ezek 38:8, 11 and 14 all say that Israel will be **living securely** when this battle occurs. But Armageddon occurs in the second half of the Tribulation and Israel is not living securely then, she is under the greatest persecution she has ever faced (Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:7 and Rev 12:13-14). So it is highly unlikely that Gog of Magog is Armageddon. Second, the Gog of Magog is five nations coming against Israel but Armageddon is every nation in the world coming against Israel. This means they cannot be the same battle. So the battle will not occur at the end of the Tribulation.

Third, some place it at after the Millennium and associate it with the battle of Gog and Magog in Rev 20:7-10. Turn to Rev 20:7. The strength of their argument is that identical terminology in both passages shows their identity. Both passages use the expression Gog and Magog so they say these battles must be one and the same. However, actually they don't use the same terminology, one says **Gog of the land of Magog**, the other says **Gog and Magog**. And you can see the one in Revelation 20:7 clearly occurs after the thousand years, verse 7, **When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.** That's after the millennium. However, it's not the same as the battle in Ezek 38-39 because it is clear that Ezek 38-39 occurs before the millennium. So these battles must

be separated by at least 1000 years. Second, if they are the same and occur after the millennium then how would there be time to **burn the weapons for seven years** since we go immediately into the New Heavens and New Earth? There is no time to burn weapons for a period of seven years. Third, if they are the same and after the millennium how would there be time to **bury the corpses for seven months** to cleanse the land? And why would you care about cleansing the land when the New Heavens and New Earth immediately follow anyway? Fourth, there are only five nations in Ezek 38-39 whereas every nation on earth is involved in Rev 20:7-10. So again, these seem like different battles. In conclusion, it is not likely at all that the Ezek 38-39 battle is the same as the Rev 20:7-10 battle. They are separated by at least 1000 years. Why then do they both use the terms Gog and Magog? The point is that the battle after the millennium is reminiscent of the one before the millennium in that in both battles God supernaturally rains down fire to defeat His enemies. So the Ezek 38-39 battle does not occur at the end of the millennium.

Fourth, some place Ezek 38-39 at the middle of the Tribulation (or just before). Renald Showers is representative of this view when he says, "...it can be concluded that the invasion of Israel by Russia and its allies will take place during the first half of the Tribulation, probably shortly before its midpoint." In determining this timing certain clues from both Daniel 11 and Ezek 38 and 39 are to be observed. First, in Ezek 38:8 this battle is said to occur **in the latter years**. As we said last week the Jews divided history into two periods, the present era and the Messianic era. Since the Messianic era is eternal and has no end then the latter years must refer to the end of the present era. This period is also known as the Tribulation period so it must occur in the Tribulation period. Second, in Daniel 11:44 the anti-Christ hears **rumors from the North and East** of Israel that disturb him. It just so happens that the several of the enemy nations of Israel in Ezek 38-39 are located North and East of Israel. Therefore it is plausible that the rumors he hears of the nations of Ezek 38-39 planning to invade Israel. This places the battle after the Daniel 11:44 battle which occurs in the first half of the Tribulation. Third, further support of this argument is found in the fact that Ezek 38:8 says this battle occurs **when the land of Israel has been restored from the sword**. Since no other battle we know of occurs before this battle except the battle of Dan 11:40 then this battle probably follows the Daniel 11:40 battle. Again, this is the first half of the Tribulation. Fourth, in

Ezek 38:8, 11 and 14 Israel is said to be **living securely**. The Hebrew word *betah* refers to having a sense or feeling of security because of reliance on something or someone. While it could be their sense of security due to their powerful military it seems more likely it is their sense of security due to dependence upon the anti-Christ. This no doubt is a false security since he will turn on them at the mid-point. Fifth, if this battle concluded at least seven months before the mid-point of the tribulation they could bury the dead to cleanse the land before the mid-point when the anti-Christ would turn on them or they could bury the dead in the millennium for the first seven months as a transitional carry over. The land will have been ravaged by the sword, the birds and beasts of the field will pick the bones clean, then Israel could bury the bones for seven months into the millennium to cleanse the land. That this is entirely feasible is seen by the fact that some of the features of the pre-millennial world carry over into the millennium. For example, Egypt will be a desolation for 40 years, Babylon and Edom will lie desolate and burning for 1000 years. So it is feasible that the burying of the dead for seven months will be a memorial of the pre-millennial battles that God fought for Israel, particularly since Ezek 39:11 says that the valley where they will be buried **will be called the valley of Hamon-gog**. Verse 13 says in the Hebrew it will be a memorial to them on the day that I glorify Myself, declares the Lord GOD. So I have no problem seeing this burial occurring in the first seven months of the millennium as a memorial for Israel of God's great victory over their enemies. Sixth, the **burning of the weapons for seven years** could also take place in the millennium. Clearly they will be burning them for fuel instead of having to go gather firewood. Fuel is always valuable, particularly when it is readily available and free. Whatever the weapons are they can be used for fuel in the millennial environment which differs substantially from the pre-millennial environment. This also fits well with Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 where the prophets predict no need for weapons in the millennium since there will be no war in the millennium. So for these reasons it does seem best to place the beginning of this battle sometime during the first half of the Tribulation, perhaps close to the midpoint, but the bodies and weapons remaining until the end of the Tribulation awaiting a large cleanup during the millennium. While all scholars do not hold to this total picture I've described, several scholars do hold that the battle will occur near the middle of the tribulation, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Herman Hoyt, Manfred Kober, Renald Showers and Mark Hitchcock.^{vii}

Fifth, a unique view of the timing is held by Harold Hoehner who wrote that the battle is not one event but a series of events that occur over the last half of the Tribulation, a period of 3 ½ years. He says, “It is interesting to note that all the...views see the events of Ezekiel 38-39 as occurring at one time. None of the views separates the two chapters. However, these two chapters should be viewed as describing events that are spread over a period of time. Such a solution has some clear advantages textually. Chapter 38 refers to events in the *middle* of the tribulation, and chapter 39 refers to events at the *end* of the tribulation. Rather than one battle, there will be a campaign or a series of battles lasting three and one-half years.” Let me show you what he’s seeing. On one hand he sees the fact that Israel has to be dwelling in a false sense of security when this battle begins. That means somewhere around the end of the first half to the middle of the Tribulation. On the other hand, notice Ezek 39:7, **My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.** Now is that really going to occur at the midpoint of the Tribulation? No, that’s not going to occur until the end of the Tribulation when the Messiah comes to reign in His kingdom. So it seems you have things that relate to the first half of the Tribulation up to around the middle and things that relate to the end of the Tribulation. So maybe he’s saying these things are stretched out over a period of years. First, he argues, this fits well with the flow of Ezekiel which is charting the restoration of Israel in chapters 33-39, followed by chapters 40-48 charting Israel’s life in the kingdom. Second, Israel is said to be living in security when this attack begins. The Hebrew *betah* indicates a false security. It makes good sense that this will be the situation during the first half of the Tribulation when the anti-Christ has already confirmed a covenant with the nation Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation. Third, Ezek 39 indicates that it is referring to events that occur at the end of the Tribulation because mention is made only of the nations in the north and not the south. It is conceivable that the kings of the south have been defeated at the mid-point but not the kings of the north who will come to their demise at the end. Fourth, God’s name will no longer be profaned when Ezek 39 is consummated. This cannot be at the midpoint because God’s name will be profaned for another 3 ½ years. Fifth, the seven year destruction of the weapons for firewood would be much more likely to occur at the end of a war rather than during a war when they could be used for

defense. They will therefore be burned during the first seven years of the millennium. This agrees with Isaiah and Micah who said that in the kingdom swords would be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks (Isa 2:4; Micah 4:3). Sixth, Ezek 39 depicts Israel as a restored nation that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and living securely in the land under God's protection. This is not the situation at the midpoint but at the end. In conclusion, there is no question that Hoehner's view solves several problems and is much better than many other proposals. The only possible criticism is to the point that Ezekiel refers only to the north in Ezek 39 when in fact he has already begun to refer only to the north as early as Ezek 38:14-15. The simple reason may be that the king of the north leads the invasion. However, all in all I find his proposition appealing.

Nevertheless, as you might have guessed, I have my own proposal. Five nations will invade Israel for spoil during the first half of the Tribulation when Israel is at rest and living under the false security of the anti-Christ. God will conclude this battle about the mid-point by supernatural means of earthquake, sword, hail and fire. The obvious supernatural victory by God will be a testimony to all nations and to Israel and will serve as a major means of their conversion. The multitude of dead bodies and weapons will remain on the land defiling it. Since the anti-Christ will begin his persecution of the Jews at the midpoint they will not be able to clean up the dead bodies at that time. However, the birds and beasts of the field will pick away at the flesh cleaning them down to the bone. The later battle of Armageddon will contribute to this messy defilement of the land. When the Messiah returns at His Second Coming the nation Israel will burn the weapons for fuel for seven years providing free energy for Israel for these early years of rebuilding. The Messiah will also instigate a clean up of the dead bones to cleanse the land in preparation for His kingdom. The clean up will last seven months and the bones will be buried in a valley re-named Hamon-gog as a memorial to God's victory. A city will be built for the clean up crew given the name Hamonah, another memorial to God's victory. These two memorials will remain throughout the entire 1000 years serving as a warning against any who might consider revolting against Christ's kingdom rule. However, these memorial warnings will not be heeded. When Satan is released the final battle of Gog and Magog will occur.

ⁱ <http://www.worldofthebible.com/Documents/2012%20Winter%20newsletter.pdf>

ⁱⁱ This battle it says in Ezek 38:8 will occur in the latter days of Israel when the land has recovered from the sword and they are living securely. And I believe this battle will also begin during the first half of the Tribulation. However, all prophecy scholars do not agree. Ezekiel 38-39 have been a heavily trafficked area of Scripture so I've had to spend a lot of time working through the various proposals as to when this battle will occur. Why am I so concerned about when these battles occur? Because some have placed the Ezekiel 38-39 battle possibly before the rapture of the church and I wanted to investigate such claims. That is why so many prophecy reports have been watching Iran and Russia so intensively. And I'm not saying we shouldn't watch them, but what I am saying is that the Arab Spring has given rise to dramatic changes in Egypt and Syria and from what the Bible says an Egyptian-Syrian alliance against Israel will likely occur before a Russia, Iranian, Turkey, Libya and Sudan alliance. So we want to keep our eyes on Egypt and Syria. As far as Syria is concerned there is a war going on between the forces of the present government, the Assad Regime and the Syrian Rebels who are radical fundamentalists. And the Obama Administration is supporting the radical fundamentalists in overthrowing the government. This is more of a concern due to the fact that the tide is turning and the Syrian Rebels are now going on the offensive. And if they are victorious then Syria will become a radical Islamic state in the Middle East that is anti-Israel and anti-America. As far as Egypt is concerned the new Muslim Brotherhood government is persecuting Coptic Christians, kidnapping young girls, selling them to Muslims; they're attempting a genocide against Christians and Jews in Egypt. Things are shaping up for an Egyptian-Syrian alliance against Israel and America. So if we keep our eyes only on the Iranian issue I think we'll be missing out on a major part of the equation; Egypt and Syria. At the same time we have to watch Iran because if they acquire nuclear weapons then they could be the cause of the decline of America. And I think that is a very serious issue. Netanyahu is saying that Iran is the world's problem and they're going to be sorry if they don't do something about it. And I'm convinced that all these current developments are setting us up for end-times and that means it may not be long at all till the rapture. So we should be giving the gospel to all the people we love because once the rapture all unbelievers will enter into the worst time the world has ever seen or ever will see, a terrifying time unparalleled by anything in the history of the world.

ⁱⁱⁱ This Hebrew word (*sub*) could refer to a "retirement" from battle meaning a time of peace.

^{iv} Thomas Ice admits this is the one phrase that is not currently met in the State of Israel.

^v Arnold Fruchtenbaum's answer to this is to place a gap of time between Ezek 39:16 and 17. *The Footsteps of the Messiah* (Revised Edition), pp 114, 121-122, 347. His view seems to be as follows. He sees the Law of Recurrence occurring between Ezek 38:1-23 and 39:1-16 with a gap of time of at least about 10 ½ years between 39:16 and 39:17 followed by a description of the carnage at Armageddon. The exact minimal gap depends on when precisely he places the beginning of the Campaign of Armageddon. According to his chart on page 272 it appears to occur about 2/3 of the way through the second half of the Great Tribulation. That his view implies a gap of time is evidenced on pages 114 and 121. The remaining part of the chapter, 39:17ff is linked with the Campaign of Armageddon on

page 347. So Dr Fruchtenbaum sees two battles being referred to in Ezek 38 and 39. The Battle of Gog and Magog from 38:1-39:16 with a 10 ½ year gap of time followed by the Campaign of Armageddon from 39:17-20.

^{vi} Technically there is no battle called Armageddon. Armageddon is the assembly point of all the nations on the earth from which they will deploy. Properly the battle or more properly the war is known as the Great Day of God, the Almighty (Rev 16:14).

^{vii} Hitchcock says, “While no view of the timing of Ezek 38-39 is without difficulty, the best view is that the invasion will occur during the first half of the tribulation when Israel has her guard down due to her covenant with Antichrist (Dan 9:27).” Mark Hitchcock, *The Battle of Gog and Magog*, pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Hitchcock-TheBattleofGogandMag.pdf

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