

One Huge Event in Prophecy

Please turn with me to the second to the last Old Testament book called Zechariah. There God gives us the key to understanding His plan for the last days of Earth. Everything in God's mind centers upon one place, one city, one word and that is JERUSALEM.

When Jesus told His disciples and us about the future he built every word of it around one spot on earth. All that He says about His second coming is tied to Jerusalem. Jesus said keep your eye on Jerusalem. I am ascending from the Mount of Olives (the center of Jerusalem then and now) and I am returning to the Mount of Olives. According to the Lord, the end of the world centers around Jerusalem.

The most mentioned place in the Bible is a city called Jerusalem.

The center of the world and the prophetic universe is the same city.

Jerusalem should be your favorite city. After all, it's the city that God has chosen for Himself in 1 Kings 11:13 "However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

Ancient maps put Jerusalem In the center of the world, and I think they were right.

Jerusalem is also God's timepiece. The final events of world history will culminate there with the glorious return of Jesus Christ to the Mount of Olives.

Mentioned over 800 times in God's Word¹—Jerusalem is a very important place. It was in Jerusalem that God promised Christ's coming as the Lamb of God to Abraham. It was here that David was promised a future son that would have an endless kingdom. It was here God has worked. In:

Jerusalem! Three thousand years of lifetimes! Abraham and Isaac upon the altar of Moriah, a stone's throw from here! David, the shepherd-king, watching Bathsheba from a distance. Jeremiah, mourning for the exiles. Jesus, teaching in the Temple. Peter's betrayal. Jesus, walking the Way of Sorrows! Dying with forgiveness on his lips. Peter, shouting the good news in the streets on Pentecost! He is risen! Call on His name and live forever with Him!²

But this week Jerusalem showed up alongside of that four-letter-word I mentioned two weeks ago, continues to capture my spiritual attention in the news reports. When Iran attacking Israel and then Jerusalem is added, that is huge on the radar screen of God's plans for the

¹ Jerusalem: 814 times in 766 verses; Zion: 160 times in 160 verses; City of David 46 times in 46 verses.

² Bodie & Brock Thoene, *Jerusalem Vigil*. New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 186.

future. Remember, Israel is the barometer that indicates when storms lie ahead for this world. Israel is God's timepiece for telling prophetic time.

That is the problem that the Old Testament prophet Zechariah (12:3) calls the heavy stone or burdensome stone. Please stand with me as we listen to God's Word:

And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it (KJV).

One Huge Event is On The Prophetic Horizon

This week Iran stated their total dedication to give "strategic depth" to the Jihad to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli control. Israel has not controlled Jerusalem until recently. Babylon took Jerusalem 2,600 years ago, then Persia 2,500 years ago, then Greece 2,200 years ago, then Rome 2,100 years ago, then the Moslems 1,300 years ago, then the Ottoman Turks 500 years ago, then the British 90 years ago; and then just over 40 short years ago God allowed Israel to once again have Jerusalem as their very own capitol of their nation.

The series of events God's Word describes, surrounding a group of nations seeking to attack Israel and liberate Jerusalem, written in detail 2,600 years ago by God, has been murky, fuzzy and out of focus for all of those centuries until recently.

Let me just briefly point out what God says. Turn with me to Ezekiel 36-39. These chapters describe what I like to describe as—what may be the next big event on God's plan for Israel.

Overview:

- Ezekiel Chapter 36-37 pictures the exiled Israelites scattered around like a pile of bones—dry and dead. Then Ezekiel describes the Lord sending forth a call that begins to stir and draw Jews from all over the world. This event began in the late-19th century as the Jews began migrating towards the area now called Israel. By the mid-20th century they became a recognized nation called Israel; and through wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, and onward they have developed an exceedingly great army.
- Ezekiel chapters 38-39 are directly following the description of the return of the nation of Israel. In these two chapters a war is described by God through Ezekiel's eyes that features armies coming from what would be described as Islamic Nations with Iran out in front, joining with Russia (clearly described in 2,600 year-old terms). This event has often been described by Bible teachers as the war of Gog and Magog.

So, Ezekiel 36-37 describe the return of God's Chosen people of promise to the Land. Then, the next two chapters (38-39) describe a massive attack launched against the national gathering of Israel, returned and united as one nation. But the question always comes, "When is this?"

Which Battle of Gog and Magog

Over the years various Bible teachers have studied the events of Ezekiel 38-39. The "Gog and Magog" battle as this event is called must be carefully distinguished from other prophetic battles described in the Bible.

- First, Ezekiel 38-39 are not to be confused with **the Battle of Armageddon** described by John in Rev. 19:11-21, because Armageddon clearly follows the end of the seven-year Tribulation period that is precipitated after the rapture of the church.
- Secondly, Ezekiel 38-39 are not describing **the Final Battle** with similar names recounted in Rev. 20:7-9, because this battle clearly follows the release of Satan at the close of the millennial reign of Christ.

So when exactly does this battle, described in such detail in Ezek. 38-39, take place? We are not sure, but we do have an abundance of clues. Here they are:

- **A United Israel** is attacked: a nation back in the Land, united as one undivided nation for the first time since the end of Solomon's reign in 931 BC (37:18-22).
- **A Secure Israel** is attacked: a nation that is safely and confidently living in their own land (38:8, 11-12, 14).
- **A Prophetic Israel** is attacked: It is in a time God's Word describes as in the "latter years" (38:8). If this means that the Anti-Christ has established a treaty with Israel as described in Daniel 9:26-27, then it could be during the first half of the Tribulation period. This may be a time when something like the old Roman Empire gets restored in Europe, headed by a strong ruler who later revealed as the Antichrist. He agrees to protect Israel for seven years (Dan. 9:27), corresponding to the length of the Tribulation period. This becomes the seventieth week of Daniel (9:25-27).
- **A Hated Israel** is attacked: the Ruler of a Northern Confederation, known as "Gog" covets the wealth of Israel (38:12-13) and invades Israel to take the wealth and destroy the Land.
- **A Protected Israel** is attacked: as God is described as stopping and destroying the invading army with such a huge blow that it takes seven months to bury the dead (39:12); and Israel takes 7 years to burn all the abandoned war gear (39:9-10).
- **A Deceived Israel** is attacked: because when the Western Ruler/AntiChrist sees that Gog is no longer a threat, he sets himself up in the rebuilt Temple of the Jews as the leader of the world, breaking his covenant with the Jews (Dan. 9:27), and identifying himself as the "Abomination of Desolation" which signals the great tribulation to begin on the earth.

Should these names be connected with Russia? If we first identify the areas against which Ezekiel prophesied and then determine the countries that occupy those land areas today, we can decide. Ezekiel's Rosh does not point to Russia, nor Meshech with Moscow, just because they are similar sounding words. Ezekiel was describing historical places his readers (2600 years ago) understood. Yet, using those places this still comes up very clearly as Russia:

- Some of the countries named by Ezekiel were located back then, in what is now the geographic region of Russia.
- The attacking armies are said to come “from the far north” (Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2). This probably includes the land bridge between the Black and Caspian Seas, now part of the former Soviet Union, which just this summer Russia has started invading and taking back (Georgia).

So Much So Fast

In terms of recorded history, so much has happened so fast. So pause for a moment, and look at the big picture of what we just saw. These chapters are remarkable now, because of the events of just the past 60 years. For all the 26 centuries since Ezekiel penned God's Word, there was no re-gathered nation called Israel as is described coming back in Ezekiel 36-37.

And so, there was no Israel to be the target of the coalition of Islamic nations and Russia, from the time Ezekiel wrote (about 600 B.C.) until 1948. So simply stated, for 2,600 years—there was no nation of Israel for any nation to militarily attack!

Century after century of Bible teachers looked at these two chapters as remote, and so vague, and almost impossible to ever take literally. But then starting in the late 1800's people started talking about making a place for Jews to again live.

The Scriptures slumbered along as God watched over His Word to perform it (Jer. 1:12). Slowly it seems that Ezekiel 36-37 began to appear. And point by point, each of the details that Ezekiel saw in the distant past over 2,600 years ago fell into reality.

The Rebirth Of Israel

After Ezekiel's bones grew into a living breathing nation, God continued to watch over His Word and because Hitler struck with such savagery and incomprehensible carnage that the world was moved to do something. In 1948 the nations of the world united in the form of the UN, and voted to establish a homeland, a nation that was named Israel.

In a short period of time—there was a nation called Israel that could be attacked militarily.

But then 50-plus years passed and Iran never seemed to join Russia in any way to march against Israel—until last year. Again the God who watches over His Word was waiting and directing the rulers of this world to do His bidding.

God has already described in detail what will happen in the future. Every time what He has declared will happen—happens, it is literally just what He said. But when examined closely, those involved make their own decisions and have no intention or awareness of following God's plan!

We live in the most written about period of time, from God's perspective. Fully 20% of the Bible is consumed with describing the events that God calls the end of days. These end of days are more described and detailed for us—than even the days when Christ walked the shores of Galilee.

The end times Biblical prophecies are powerful pictures of the God we can trust, Who has plans for the future. Here are just a few of His plans:

Trust the God Who Sees Israel as a Nation in the Last days

In Ezekiel 36-37 the God who rules tells us that Israel will one day be reborn as a modern country, that Jews will pour back into the Holy Land after centuries of exile, that Jews will rebuild the "ancient ruins" and make the deserts bloom, that Israel will develop a vast and powerful military, and that Israel will become remarkably wealthy (Ezekiel 38:12-13).

These prophecies have all come true in our lifetime. They began to be fulfilled in the early 1900s, accelerated in 1948 and 1967, and continue to come true to this day.³

Did the British politicians and early Zionists that fought for the establishment of the nation of Israel do all that because they wanted to or because God ruled over them?

Both are true, of course. That is how God works. God was watching over His Word to fulfill it!

To benefit from the power of the God who declares the future, we need to see what He has done. Note with me the specific predictions found in Ezekiel 36-37 that have already come true. These chapters that foretell the future of Israel as a nation, were written almost 600 years before Christ's birth!

1. The return of the Jews to the Holy Land after centuries in exile.

*Ezekiel 36:10-11 "I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the **cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.** 11 "I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; **I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings.** Then you shall know that I am the Lord.*

*Ezekiel 37:12, 21 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, **I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.** 21 "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely I will take the children of Israel **from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;***

³ Paraphrased from Joel Rosenberg blog 5.5.05 <http://joelrosenberg.blogspot.com/>

Did the countless thousands of Jews all over the world (100 nations and counting) get up one morning and each decide to obey God's Word that said they would return? No they just had a longing to be safe, to be free, to have a land of their own—and in all that they obeyed the God who is watching over His Word to fulfill it!

2. **The rebuilding of the ancient ruins in Israel.**

*Ezekiel 36:36 "Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have **rebuilt the ruined places** and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it."*

Did God make the early settlers name their cities after the Biblical sites they were building upon? No, they wanted to tie themselves to the past, their heritage and God's Word! God was watching over His Word to fulfill it!

3. **The re-blossoming of desolate, desert lands to produce abundant food, fruit and foliage**

*Ezekiel 36:8-9, 30, 33-35 "But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall **shoot forth** your branches and **yield your fruit** to My people Israel, for they are about to come.⁹ "For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and **you shall be tilled and sown.** 30 "And I will **multiply the fruit** of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 33 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the **ruins shall be rebuilt.**"³⁴ "The **desolate land shall be tilled** instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.³⁵ "So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become **like the garden of Eden**; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'*

Israel today supplies billions of dollars of fresh fruit and flowers to Europe and the Arab world from land that was once absolutely desolate.

Did those agricultural engineers, irrigation pioneers, and desert scientists devote their lives to Israel in its wasteland condition just to make Ezekiel come true? No. God was watching over His Word to fulfill it!

4. **The creation of an "exceedingly great army".**

*Ezekiel 37:10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an **exceedingly great army.***

Did the atomic scientists, the military weapons engineers and the businessmen that listened to them all want to fulfill Ezekiel? No, they were trying to protect themselves, defend themselves and make a living. But in the process became the third or fourth most powerful military in the world when the atomic weaponry is factored in. God was watching over His Word to fulfill it!

Trust the God Who Declares an

Anti-Israeli Coalition will Attack Israel

Twenty six hundred years ago, the prophet Ezekiel predicted clues to identify when this would happen,

*"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."*
(Ezek.38:8 NAS)

Note this would happen in "the latter years" after the Israelites were scattered throughout the world and the land of Israel became a desolation for a long time. History is witness to all of this.ⁱ

Trust the God Who Declares The End of those who Come "Like A Storm"

*Ezekiel 38:5,9, 18-22 "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 9 "You will ascend, **coming like a storm**, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you." 18 "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord God, "**that My fury will show in My face.** 19 "For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,20 'so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.'21 "I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord God. "Every man's sword will be against his brother.22 "And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; **I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.***

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iranian leaders have uttered a seemingly endless series of curses against Israel, calling the Jewish people evil, insisting that the Holocaust never happened, and threatening to wipe Israel "off the map."

Ahmadinejad says Israel will soon disappear⁴

Monday, June 2, 2008

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad predicted that Muslims would uproot "satanic powers" and reaffirmed his prediction that the Jewish state will soon be wiped off the map, the Agence France-Presse news agency reported Monday.

⁴ http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=080602124328.f6eyi8y1&show_article=1

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad predicted on Monday that Muslims would uproot "satanic powers" and repeated his controversial belief that Israel will soon disappear, the Mehr news agency reported.

"I must announce that the Zionist regime (Israel), with a 60-year record of genocide, plunder, invasion and betrayal is about to die and will soon be erased from the geographical scene," Ahmadinejad said.

"Today, the time for the fall of the satanic power of the United States has come and the countdown to the annihilation of the emperor of power and wealth has started."

Joel Rosenberg, a contemporary evangelical writer says, "When Ezekiel lists Persia in 38:5 (the name of Iran up until 1935) he was recording the words of the God who sees and knows exactly what will happen in the future. Amazingly today's news bears witness to Persia (Iran's) deep hatred of Israel. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad used the same word that God used in his speech in April 2006:

"Like it or not, the Zionist regime is heading toward annihilation," Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said at the opening of a conference in support of the Palestinians. "The Zionist regime is a rotten, dried tree that will be *eliminated by one storm*."⁵

Ezekiel 38:9 specifically says that God's enemies will "come like a storm" to destroy Israel, but are destroyed by a supernatural earthquake and firestorm unleashed by God Himself.

When Jesus explained the entire scope of end times events, He paused and concluded with two commands in v. 36 for us who listen to Him. We can learn what Jesus said were our responsibilities as believers (Luke 21:29–38)

"Watch therefore, and pray always..." (Luke 21:36)

Pray is the word for beg, implore and beseech, it is an intense word!

What are you Begging God for?

Jesus revealed that all of the magnificent buildings of Herod would become rubble. . . and that nothing on earth ever lasts; but Jesus came to His disciples with an offer of something they could become a part of that never ends.

What are you intensely asking (begging) God to be doing through your life that will last forever?

Christ said here is something anyone in my family can do! Here is what you do that I love, and I make your investments in these areas last forever. Jesus said:

⁵ <http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/ahmadinejad-israel-a-rotten-dried-tree/2006/04/15/1144521534197.html>

- **I collect all of your prayers - PRAY!** Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. (KJV)
- **I multiply sacrificial gifts - GIVE!** Mark 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. (KJV) **do rest**
- **I count souls you lead to me - WIN!** Daniel 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. 1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth
- **I remember humble service - SERVE!** Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (KJV) **do rest**
- **I love missionaries that do outreach - GO!** Matthew 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (KJV)

To obey Jesus we must "watch and pray". That is how we can resist the temptations that lure us. Then we will be ready when our Lord returns.

APPENDIX/Notes Unused

36:33-36. When Israel is restored and the land . . . cultivated, people will note that this wasteland will be like the Garden of Eden.

36:37-38. God will also cause the nation to increase numerically. Ezekiel, a priest, compared the swelling population of Israel to the numerous . . . flocks of sacrificial animals gathered for the feasts in Jerusalem. As tightly packed herds jostle for space because of their vast numbers, so Israel's ruined cities, then empty and desolate, will be filled with flocks of people.

The vision of the dry bones revived (37:1-14)

37:1-10. God transported Ezekiel by the Spirit (cf. 3:14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:5) to a valley . . . full of bones. There he noticed that the bones . . . were very dry, bleached and baked under the hot sun.

God gave life to these dead bones. As Ezekiel was giving this prophecy, he saw a remarkable thing. The bones came together (Ezek. 37:7), flesh developed, skin covered them (v. 8), breath entered them, and they stood up (v. 10).

37:11-14. To what did this vision refer? God said it was about the nation of Israel (the whole house of Israel) that was then in captivity. Like unburied skeletons, the people were pining away and saw no end to their judgment:

The sign of the two sticks united (37:15-28) After Solomon died the nation of Israel split asunder, in 931 b.c. 37:18-28. The uniting of the sticks pictured God's restoring and reuniting His people in the land as a single nation (cf. Hosea 1:11).

38:1-6. On the identification of the proper names in these verses see the preceding paragraphs under ?6. Gog's attack on Israel will actually be orchestrated by God. 38:10.

38:7-9. This attack will be against Israel, whose people will be gathered from many nations and will be living in safety. Gog and his allies will go against Israel in massive strength, advancing like a storm and a cloud (cf. v. 16).

38:10-13. Gog's purpose in the attack will be to plunder and loot unwallled and unsuspecting Israel, which will be rich

38:14-16. Gog's attack against Israel will come from all sides. Gog will come from the far north. With him will come his allies from the east (Persia=Iran), the south (Cush=Sudan, southern Egypt, and northern Ethiopia), and the west (Put=Libya). They will advance against . . . Israel like a cloud (cf. v. 9) that covers the land. This awesome army will overrun all obstacles as effortlessly as a cloud sailing across the sky.

This attack will be another means of God's displaying to the nations His holy character and sovereign power. In going against Israel, the nations will come to know God for He will show

Himself holy (cf. 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 39:27). As a result of the unsuccessful attack Israel will be delivered and God glorified.

38:17-23. Gog's attack will be crushed by God Himself. God asked Gog, Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel? 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).

Ezek. 38:21. Fear and panic will sweep through the forces so each army will shoot indiscriminately at the others.

The slaughter of the armies will be aided by additional "natural" catastrophes, including torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning sulphur (v. 22). The rain will combine with dirt and debris from the earthquake to produce massive mud slides and floods. Large hailstones will pelt the survivors, killing many (cf. Josh. 10:11). The "burning sulphur" might be volcanic ash.

39:1-8. The invading armies will be totally destroyed by God.

39:9-11. Those who will come to plunder Israel (38:12) will themselves be plundered. Israelites will use the fallen soldiers' weapons for fuel. . . . for seven years.

39:12-16. The number of soldiers killed will be so great that for seven months the house of Israel will be burying them. The operation will be so vast that a town will be set up in the valley at the gravesites to accommodate those cleansing the land. It will be named Hamonah "a form of the word "hordes."

39:17-20. Another result of Gog's defeat will be a feast for the wild animals.

Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them [Ezek. 37:8].

We have here a method which I want you to notice. The first state of the bones is that they are scattered, dry, and dead. Then gradually they come together, and the sinews and flesh come upon them. This is a process?it is not instantaneous at all. At this point in the vision all you have is a bunch of bodies, actually corpses; it is just an undertaking establishment down in that valley. They are no longer bones, but bodies with flesh upon them. They are human beings even, but they do not have any life in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army [Ezek. 37:9?10].

Now what has happened to these bones has occurred in three stages: (1) they were scattered bones, just as dead as they could be; (2) then they came together, and flesh and skin came upon them?they were bodies, but dead bodies; and finally (3) they were made alive. We will find in these three stages a real key to understanding Bible prophecy concerning the nation Israel.

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 [Ezek. 39:2].

?Leave but the sixth part of thee? is literally ?I will six thee,? or better still, ?I will afflict thee with six plagues.? These plagues are listed in chapter 38 verse 22 as pestilence, blood, overflowing rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. This is the way God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 19:24).

J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

ⁱ **Who Is Coming Against Israel?** Ezekiel 38:1-6 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,² "Son of man, set your face against **Gog, of the land of Magog**, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,³ "and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.⁴ "I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.⁵ "**Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya** are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;⁶ "Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you.

In **Ezekiel 38:1-6**, the Hebrew prophet gives a list of obscure names that will form a united coalition. As I read these six verses listen to the historic records, geographic locations, and modern day countries that reside in those exact places described—and how they are all slowly aligning themselves against Israel.

- **Gog** is described as being "of the land of Magog" and as the "prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." Most Bible scholars believe Gog is not a name but a title, like Pharaoh or Czar. He is a dictator who will hatch an "evil plan" (38:10).
- **Magog** = Leading Bible scholars say this is Russia and republics of the former Soviet Union. The first century Roman historian [Josephus](#) said the "Magogites" were the peoples whom the Greeks called "Scythians." [Scythians](#) were a fierce, blood-thirsty civilization that settled north of the Baltic Sea in [what is now Russia and the European republics of the former USSR](#). The first century historian Josephus wrote in his classic work,

Antiquities of the Jews, that the "Magogites" are the people that the Greeks refer to as "Scythians." Study the history of the ancient Scythians and you will quickly discover that these were a brutal and bloodthirsty people that settled north of the Black Sea in the area we now call Russia and the former Soviet republics. In Moscow the State Historical Museum on Red Square has numerous Scythian artifacts prominently displayed. Russia is proud of its Scythian tradition, and this helps us pinpoint Russia as the modern country to which Ezekiel was referring.

- **Rosh** = Russia. True, Ezekiel never uses the word Russia. Instead, he says a dictator referred to as "Gog" will arise in the land of "Magog," and will be the "prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." Other Bible scholars note that when Ezekiel mentions "Rosh" he is using the root word for Russia. Others believe "Meshech" refers to Moscow and "Tubal" refers to the Tubal River in Siberia and the Siberian city of Tobolsk.

Numerous leading Bible scholars agree that Russia will certainly be the leader of the anti-Israel coalition in what Ezekiel describes as "the last days."

- **Meshech** = Some Bible scholars say this is Moscow, others believe it refers to Turkey
- **Tubal** = Some Bible scholars say this refers to the city/region of Tobolsk in Russia along the Tobol River; others say it refers to a section of modern-day Turkey. (Interestingly, in 1964, massive reserves of oil and gas were discovered in the Tobolsk region of Siberia and people now refer to the region as the ["energy center of Russia."](#))
- **Persia** = This was the [official name of Iran](#) until 1935
- **Cush** = Sudan and Ethiopia
- **Put** = Libya, and possibly Algeria and Tunisia
- **Gomer** = Turkey, but also possibly Germany and Austria
- **Beth-togarmah** = Armenia and the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia

"Many peoples with you" who will attack along **"the mountains of Israel"** = Other countries will be involved in the coalition as well, notably countries that border the mountains of Israel. This includes Lebanon, Syria and possibly Jordan.