

# The Battle of Gog

📖 Ezekiel 38-39

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We are doing a series called Major Prophetic Passages. We started with Daniel and are now working on a few texts from Ezekiel on our way to Revelation. The chapters we are working with in Ezekiel are 37, 38 and 39. These chapters fall in the restoration section of Ezekiel, which is chapters 33-39. Last time we worked with Ezek 37:1-14, a very famous section known as The Valley of Dry Bones and which inspired the Negro Spiritual "Dem Bones." By way of review in 37:1 God put Ezekiel in a vision by means of His Spirit. In vision Ezekiel saw a valley full of scattered bones. This signified the nation Israel in exile scattered among the Gentile nations. In verse 2 God caused Ezekiel to pass around and through the bones so that he would come to the realization that there were very many bones just lying on the surface of the valley and the bones were very dry. This signified that Israel had been in exile for a very long time, so long that verse 11 indicates they had no hope of ever being restored. In verse 3 the Lord said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel answered with faith saying, "O sovereign LORD, You know." From the human perspective, they could by no means live but if the sovereign Lord wanted them to live, He could make them live. In verse 4 the sovereign LORD commands Ezekiel to prophesy for the first time. Say to them "O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." Upon doing this the sovereign LORD says in verse 5, "I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD." In verse 7 Ezekiel uttered his first prophecy. "So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them." The first prophecy is a prophecy of stage one of Israel's restoration. It means that the nation Israel, being in exile among the Gentile nations for a very long time, would at some time in the future be physically restored to the land. The physical restoration is viewed as a process and not occurring all at once. This physical restoration began in the 1880's with the rise of Zionism and culminated with the State of Israel in 1948. Stage one has been fulfilled with the modern state of Israel in the land. But there is no breath in them because they are in the land in unbelief. So, verse 9 is the sovereign LORD's command to Ezekiel to prophesy for a second time. "Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the sovereign LORD, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'" In verse 10 Ezekiel uttered his

second prophecy. "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army." The second prophecy is a prophecy of stage two of Israel's restoration. It is not a process but will occur all at once. This spiritual regeneration of the nation is still in the future. The signification of Israel as an exceedingly great army means that when Israel is spiritually regenerated they will rise to become the greatest nation on the planet. The following vv 10-14 confirm this interpretation and we presently live after stage one but before stage two.

A question is, what factor or factors might God use to bring about the future spiritual regeneration of Israel? There is not just one single factor but a multitude of factors. However, one of the factors is described in Ezekiel 38-39. Ezekiel 38-39 describe an invasion of Israel known popularly as the Battle of Gog and Magog but more accurately it should be known as the Battle of Gog because the figure Gog is used 11 times in these two chapters. But what we will see is it really describes the coming Islamic invasion of Israel. And interestingly it is not a nuclear attack on Israel headed by Iran but an actual ground invasion into the northern mountains of Israel. As you can see on the map in your bulletin, there is a coalition of nations converging in the north of Israel. Let's see how we get to the fascinating conclusion that this is God's answer to Islam and what the timing of this battle might be. Today we just want to work with two issues; first, the players, who are the nations that form this coalition. The nations are not too difficult to identify; second, the timing, when will this battle occur. The timing of the battle is very difficult and that's why six different views have been posited by excellent Bible teachers. And whenever you see solid Bible teachers varying to this extent you know it's a time to exercise grace. Take, for example, Arno Gaebelein, brilliant Bible teacher in the early 1900's, died before the physical regathering of Israel in 1948 but believed it would come to pass on the basis of Scripture. He posited that this battle would occur at the beginning of the millennium because Israel would be regathered in the millennium and living in peace, which are two major pre-conditions for this battle to occur. Then take another great scholar, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Messianic Jew who probably literally knows more about the Bible than any Jew on the planet. He posits that this battle will occur at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation. Then another great Bible teacher, J. Dwight Pentecost, taught at DTS for over 50 years, is another brilliant mind. He posited that this battle will occur at the middle of the Tribulation. These are all people with IQ's over 150 and their IQ's are dedicated to the greatest book ever written, the word of God, and they all differed on the question of timing. So, when you see this you show respect and exercise grace because you know you are not the first mind to wrestle with this and it must be extremely difficult. You may not be seeing all the issues. So, here's a place to exercise humility. We may know more than Daniel but we still don't know everything. Walvoord very wisely said that we don't have it all figured out yet but those living when these things unfold will understand. So what we do now is search for the best explanation, the view that has the least problems and stay with that until we gain better understanding.

Two things we know are what makes this so difficult. First, we know that the battle can't occur until Israel is physically regathered in the land and living in security because Ezek 38:8 says these nations will be summoned in the latter years when Israel has been regathered from many nations to Israel and are living securely. Second,

we know that by the end of the battle Israel is spiritually regenerated because Ezek 39:22 says the house of Israel will know that the LORD is their God from that day onward. So, we know Israel is already physically regathered but the debate centers on what exactly constitutes Israel living in security. Are they living in security now? With terrorist attacks and rockets being fired into Israel? Will the Hebrew word for security allow for that? If so, how can you relate the battle to their spiritual regeneration which other passages place near the end of the Tribulation? In short, when is Israel living in security such that this battle can take place and serve as a catalyst for Israel's spiritual regeneration?

Before we look at the timing let's look at the players. What nations are going to come against Israel in the latter days? By the way, latter days here would refer to the latter days of Israel and not the Church. There is a latter days of the Church but Ezekiel is looking at the latter days of Israel. In the latter days we see a coalition of nations listed in verses 2, 5 and 6. In verse 2, Magog, Meshech and Tubal, in verse 5, Persia, Ethiopia and Put, and in verse 6, Gomer and Beth-Togarmah. We aren't familiar with most of these nations because they are ancient names. They are listed in Gen 10 the Table of Nations, as people groups that migrated out from the Tower of Babel. And wherever they put down roots we don't know, but they were known to Ezekiel and we want to recover them, see if we can identify what modern nations correspond to these names. There has been a lot of speculation about who these nations correspond to. My sources are scholars like Gesenius and ancient sources like Josephus. So I'm not getting this from some popular prophecy teachers who so often identify them by saying this name sounds like. For example, Meshech is sometimes identified as Moscow because they sound similar. Historically etymological studies have shown that just because two words sound the same does not mean they share the same etymological heritage. Scholars like Gesenius spent their whole lives studying the history of names, and it's those kinds of scholars I'm getting my information from and comparing them with ancient writers like Josephus and Herodotus.

In 38:1 Ezekiel says, **And the word of the Lord came to me saying, <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog. Gog** is not the name of a nation and it's not the name of a person either. It's a title for a top person. The word itself just means "the top of something." So it's a title for a person who holds a top position in the future. We'd say he's a political leader in the end times. He's mentioned eleven times in Ezek 38-39 and so he is a very important political leader.

Next we see that this leader is from **the land of Magog. Magog** is a nation. Now you see why it's not really accurate to title this chapter the Battle of Gog and Magog. Gog is a title for a person. Magog is the name of a nation. So if we're going to title the chapter anything we might call it the Battle of Gog, since he's the political leader behind the battle, or maybe better, the Coming Islamic Invasion, since, as we'll see, almost all of the nations involved in this coalition of forces are Islamic nations. So the political leader will be from the nation of **Magog**. What nation is **Magog**? Jerome, an early church father, said that "Magog was the Scythian nations...who live beyond the Caucasus and the Lake Maeotis, and near the Caspian Sea, and spread out even

onward to India.” Josephus and Greek writers say that the name Magog is associated with the Scythians who were ferocious warriors. These people settled in the Caucasus Mountains that run NW to SE between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. This is southern Russia, Georgia and a lot of the -stan nations; Khazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkemenistan and Azerbaijan. So the leader of this coalition of forces will be from one of these nations and they may all merge at some point under mother Russia so that we are looking for a future political leader from Russia. In verse 2 we’re also told that this political leader is **the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**. **Prince** is another title. It’s a military title. So the same Russian is going to be a political and military leader who is over the three nations listed in coalition; **Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**.

Then we have the fact that this Czar is called **the prince of** three nations; **Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**.<sup>1</sup> First, who is **Rosh**? Scholars say that “The ancient Rosh people... have been traced back to Tiras, a son of Japheth (Gen. 10:2), who migrated to the Caucasus Mountains in Southern Russia” and “are one of the genetic sources of the modern Russians of today.” And even though Russia was not a word until the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD it has been shown that ultimately it does derive from **Rosh**. Therefore, **Rosh** refers to Russia. Second, who is **Meshech**?<sup>2</sup> Some have erroneously identified Meshech as Moscow because they sound similar. However, Meshech migrated to the land southeast of the Black Sea. These people were the Moschi, a people inhabiting the Moschian Mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas.<sup>3</sup> Meshech is part of present day Turkey. Third, who is **Tubal**? Some have erroneously identified Tubal as Tobolsk, a Russian city because of the similar sound. However, this identification has no etymological basis. They’re always linked with **Meshech** in the Bible. And like **Meshech** the descendants of **Tubal** settled southeast of the Black Sea in modern day Turkey. So **Meshech** and **Tubal** are both populations in modern day Turkey. **Rosh** is Russia. The Russian political and military leader will lead a coalition of forces from Russia and Turkey. And we see in verse 3 that God is against this leader and the coalition of nations that he leads against Israel. “**Thus says the Lord GOD, the sovereign God, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.**” And in verse 4 we see what the sovereign God is going to do. He’s going to put a hook into their jaws like a fish and bring them out and all their army, all of them to make their advance against Israel.

In 38:5 we see other nations involved. **Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet;** **Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.** **Persia** is easy to identify. Who is **Persia**? **Persia** is another name for Iran. Iran was known as Persia until 1935. So Iran will be a part of this coalition with Russia and Turkey. Is this really too hard to imagine? Okay, **Ethiopia** is the translation but this is the Hebrew *Cush* which always refers to the nation on the southern border of Egypt. What’s the nation on the southern border of Egypt? Sudan. So Sudan will ally with Russia, Turkey and Iran against Israel. Then **Put**. Where do we put **Put**? **Put** is known in the Bible as the nation to the far west of the border of Egypt. What nation borders Egypt on the west today? Libya.

In 38:6, **Gomer**. Who is **Gomer**? Its popular to say **Gomer** is the Germans but that's inaccurate. Gomer initially migrated to the south of Russia but later in Ezekiel's day migrated to central Turkey. They were the Cimmerians. So **Gomer** is another nation in this list that was located in modern day Turkey in Ezekiel's day. Lastly, **Beth-togarmah**. Who is **Beth-togarmah**? They were the Phrygians and they eventually settled in eastern Turkey.

So all eight of these ancient nations are today within five nations; Russia, Turkey, Iran, Libya and Sudan. What this passage is predicting is a coalition of these five nations against Israel. What do we know about these nations? Most of them are Islamic. That's why I refer to this as the Coming Islamic Invasion. You say, Russia is not Islamic? But what do we know about Russia? Russia was one of three major superpowers in the 20th century along with Germany and the US. After the cold war they lost their super-power status. Since then they have been allying with who to regain their superpower status? Arab nations in the oil rich Middle East. They are trying to make a comeback. They also have a growing Islamic population, especially in the south from all the -stan nations. And with the low birth rate of Russians and the high birth rate of Arabs moving in to southern Russia a major shift in demographics is taking place. Demographers predict that within a few decades Russia will be overrun with Islam. Everyone else on the list is clearly an Islamic nation. Turkey only moderately until recently but they are increasingly becoming more and more radical. Iran, clearly since the revolution of 1979 when Khomeini came to power the government has been run by the religion of extremist Islam. They hate Israel. How many times have we heard them say they want to drive Israel into the sea? They're trying to get a nuclear bomb. But if you read this chapter they don't drop a nuclear bomb on Israel. They invade Israel. So they may drop it on America but they don't drop it on Israel. Libya has been in bed with Russia for years. They sponsor terror around the world. They hate Israel. What about Sudan? Sudan is one of only three Muslim nations in the world with a militant Islamic government. In the last 30 years they have become close allies of Iran. Would it be any surprise if these five Islamic nations invaded Israel? It wouldn't be a surprise at all. The stage is already set in many ways for this invasion.

Now the more difficult question of when. When will this battle occur? There are six views, all held by very good men who genuinely disagree. I'm going to dispense of the views that I consider least likely first so we can focus on the more likely views. First, the battle will take place at the beginning of the millennium. This was the view of Gaebelein. Gaebelein argued that Israel has to be living in peace and security. Since the millennium is a time of peace and security then this battle will occur at the beginning of the millennium. He explained that when Christ returns He has to put down many enemies and the last vestige of His enemies would be this coalition of nations. The most obvious problem with this view is that Isa 2:4 says that there will be no war during the millennium. Another problem is that the war results in Israel's regeneration but Israel must be regenerated before the millennium begins. So this view really doesn't have much going for it. Second, the battle will take place after the millennium. This view rests on the identification of the terms Gog and Magog in Ezek 38 with the same terms in Rev 20:7-11. Since Rev 20:7-11 is clearly after the millennium then why not view it as the same battle described here in Ezek 38-39? Well, a problem with making them the same is that everything else in Ezekiel 33-39 precedes

the millennium. So if Ezek 38-39 are after the millennium they are out of place in the order of Ezekiel. Another problem is that in Ezek 38-39 eight nations are described as coming against Israel whereas in Rev 20 all the nations on earth are described as coming against Israel. A further problem is when there would be seven years to burn the weapons since the New Heavens and New Earth come? Or why even bother burying the dead for seven months to cleanse the land since the New Heavens and New Earth come at that time. A better explanation for why Ezek 38-39 and Rev 20:7-11 both use Gog and Magog separated by at least the millennium is because the battle in Ezek 38-39 becomes so legendary that it will be the battle to which all future battles are likened. Andy Woods says, "This usage will be very similar to today's use of the term "Waterloo." Sometimes we hear people say, "I've met my Waterloo." In doing so, they are not saying that the Battle of Waterloo is literally being fought again. Rather, because Waterloo represented a great past conflict, it is used in the sense of a remembrance or a yardstick or a common way of depicting their own present conflict."<sup>4</sup> In fact, in Ezek 39:11 the valley where they bury Gog and all his armies is memorialized by being given the name "Hamon-Gog" which means "the multitude of Gog" and 39:16 says the city where the buriers reside will be memorialized by the name "Hamonah" as a reminder of the destruction of Gog. So there are two battles of Gog, so to speak, one before the millennium that is so legendary that the future conflict after the millennium is compared to it. Therefore, the view that Ezek 38-39 will occur after the millennium is not the best view. Third, the battle will take place before the tribulation. This is a view held by a great number of my well-respected colleagues. Tommy Ice, Randall Price, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the late David Cooper and more popular writers Joel Rosenberg and the late Tim LaHaye. Arnold Fruchtenbaum 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." One of the questions this raises is whether it will be before the rapture. Remember, the rapture does not begin the Tribulation, so there is time between the rapture and the tribulation. But once you posit this battle could happen before the tribulation then it opens the door that it might occur before the rapture too. Stanley Maughan, in his dissertation on Ezek 38-39 actually posited this as a possibility. But it's important to note that when they express this view they are careful to guard against saying it must happen before the rapture because that would destroy imminency. So they say that it may occur before the rapture but it doesn't have to. Fruchtenbaum says that it has to occur at least 3 ½ years before the tribulation. His reasoning and the reasoning of most of these scholars is that after the battle the weapons will be burned for seven years. They know that Israel will be under persecution during the second half of the tribulation and so they want the weapons all burned before the second half. So that backs you up seven years which is 3 ½ years before the tribulation begins. The real question is whether that will be a time of peace when Israel is living in unwalled villages at that time. Since we aren't living then no one can really know. However, they argue that they already have peace and live in unwalled villages today, such as some kibbutzim in the north. I would argue that they are not living in that condition today because the situation on the ground is not what the Hebrew words require. The Hebrew word *betah* requires a false sense of security. That is possible because they have won four major wars against the Arabs and they may think they are secure. But the other Hebrew word *saqat* means "at ease, undisturbed, without anxiety." I don't think they have that today. Terrorist

and rocket attacks continue on an almost daily basis. Israeli polls show they do not think that the attacks will stop. Surveillance cameras show Israeli's running in fear during rocket attacks. It is difficult to say they are living at ease, undisturbed and without anxiety, especially as Iran gets closer to having nuclear weapons. Even Thomas Ice, who holds this view to have the least problems, admits that this one word is difficult to reconcile with the present conditions in Israel.<sup>5</sup> Further, is Israel living in **unwalled villages**? Not by my estimation. There are massive walls surrounding hundreds of miles of villages in Israel. They are trying to build more walls in order to increase security. All this casts doubt on whether the conditions are ripe for this invasion to happen today. A final problem is that Ezek 39:7 says that God's holy name will no longer be profaned and the nations will know the Lord. Yet in the second half of the Tribulation the abomination of desolation will be set up profaning His name and the nations will not know the LORD.<sup>6</sup> So while I have respect for those who think the battle will occur before the Tribulation, and it does solve some difficulties such as the burning of the weapons for seven years and burying the bodies for seven months, I do not think it is the best view. Fourth, some place it at the end of the Tribulation and identify it as the battle of Armageddon.<sup>7</sup> The argument is that the similarity of language between the two battles argues for their identity. However, the battle of Gog is eight nations coming against Israel whereas Armageddon is every nation in the world coming against Israel. Further, Armageddon occurs when Israel is under persecution whereas Ezek 38 says Israel is living in security when this war happens. So I think it is highly unlikely that this battle will occur at the end of the tribulation and is just another description of Amageddon. Fifth, a great number place Ezek 38-39 at the middle of the Tribulation (or just before). John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Herman Hoyt, Manfred Kober, Renald Showers and Mark Hitchcock. 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 follow 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,

Sixth, Harold Hoehner says Ezek 38-39 occurs in two-phases beginning near the end of the first half of the Tribulation with its aftermath dovetailing with Armageddon at the end of the second half with the burying of the bodies and burning of the weapons transitional features that happen at the beginning of the millennium. I think this is the best view. 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. This would explain how Israel could be spiritually regenerate by the end of Tribulation in connection with the aftermath of this war. It seems the major problem has been trying to force everything in Ezekiel 38-39 into one event rather than seeing it in two phases. 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 and I'll share that with you next week. Basically can we solve this passage by dividing the chapters into two-phases? Is it possible to see a phase one early and a later phase describing the aftermath which dovetails with the aftermath of Armageddon?

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ice disagrees and gives five reasons for translating it as a proper name Rosh referring to Russia. cf [www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/lce-\(Part4\)Ezekiel 38&39.pdf](http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/lce-(Part4)Ezekiel%2038&39.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Some have erroneously identified Meshech as Moscow because of the similar sounds. However, this identification has no etymological basis.

<sup>3</sup> These people were the Moschi, a people inhabiting the Moschian Mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas.

<sup>4</sup> Andy Woods, Middle East Meltdown, p 24.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Ice admits this is the one phrase that is not currently met in the State of Israel.

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<sup>6</sup> 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 about a 10 ½ year gap of time followed by the Campaign of Armageddon from 39:17-20.

<sup>7</sup> 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).