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C1303 – January 16, 2013 – Ezekiel 38 & 39
Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, & Libya vs. Israel

Let me remind you briefly that this series is dedicated to the battle for Jerusalem in the last days. And really at the heart of the battle for Jerusalem is the battle for God's name. Don't forget that Jerusalem is the only city where God chose to put His name. And since one's name in the Bible is related to one's reputation then God has chained His reputation to the city of Jerusalem. It's that city that God will establish the throne of His rule through the Davidic house over the whole earth. And since Satan doesn't want God's name known then Satan wants to take over the city of Jerusalem and establish the throne of his rule through his man the anti-Christ. And so the battle for Jerusalem is really a battle between whose name is going to be exalted, God's or Satan's. And that is why Jerusalem is said to be a cup of trembling to all the nations round about in the last days. They are raging under Satanic influence and fleshly impulses against God in the last days.

Now we have looked at what I consider to be the first of three battles for Jerusalem in the last days. The first battle is Daniel 11:40-45 and I gave you a map charting the movements described in those verses. This battle is Egypt and Syria vs Israel, two increasingly anti-Semitic nations that will turn their sights against Israel in the last days. Textually they are attacking the anti-Christ who is not even in the land of Israel at the time. So they will attack Israel while he is outside the land. And an attack on Israel is an attack on the anti-Christ since he has already forced a treaty on Israel according to Dan 9:27. Therefore to keep his end of the treaty and to keep his foothold in Israel he will respond to the Egyptian and Syrian forces by attacking them from the north and defeating Syria, Lebanon and northern parts of Jordan. He will then enter the Promised Land and defeat the Egyptian and Syrian forces in the land, and finally he will pursue the fleeing Egyptian forces into Egypt and defeat them. Next on his agenda is Libya to the west and Sudan to

the south but he will hear rumors from the north and east of Israel and this will halt his military campaign in north Africa, forcing him to return to Jerusalem where he will set up his military tents.

I'm taking it that these rumors are rumors related to the nations of Ezekiel 38 which we will look at tonight. A coalition of nations are making an alliance and planning to enter into the land of Israel. So Daniel 11:44 links with Ezekiel 38 and I find it interesting that Daniel and Ezekiel's lives crossed over one another. They were both living in Exile in Babylon and Daniel probably outlived Ezekiel so Daniel may have had access to Ezekiel 38-39. Whether he made the linkage or not I don't know, I doubt it. But I'm taking the rumors of Daniel 11:44 that come from the North and East of Israel and connecting that with the coalition of forces that are described as planning an evil thing against the nation Israel in Ezek 38-39.

Now before we look at these nations in Ezek 38 there were two questions that came up last week after our study of Daniel 11:40-45. One of them dealt with the remark I made about the first seal of Rev 6 which I referred to as world disarmament. Turn there and I'll show you why I consider this world disarmament. What I mean by that is that all modern weaponry will be confiscated and destroyed in some manner. It may be by an organization like the UN, I don't know but the powers that be will force disarmament on the world and this will give rise to a period of peace. It's really a false peace; the world thinks they have peace and safety because they don't have any AK-47's and AR-15's, that type of idea. And 1 Thess 5 speaks to this same time when the whole world will be rid of weapons and they say, "peace and safety." But then the world will quickly learn that the problem is not AK-47's and AR-15's, the problem Isaiah says is the heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it, man is depraved. And so ridding the world of modern weapons won't stop the wickedness of man. They'll still have hate and murder in their hearts. But now without modern weapons they'll have to turn to ancient implements of war; swords, shields, horses, those kinds of things. And that's what I'm seeing in the first two seals.

Start with the second seal actually. Let's work backward. Sometime it helps to look at things from a different way than you are accustomed to looking. Notice in Rev 6:4 we have the second seal and when it is opened behold there is a red horse. The red horse signifies war and bloodshed. "and to him who

sat on it," it says, "it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another, and a great sword was given to him." Now if he took peace from the earth then there has to be peace before seal two.

And that brings us back to seal one. Seal one as you see is in verse 2 and when this seal is broken there comes a white horse. The white horse signifies peace, but I'm saying it's only a false peace, an apparent peace due to the disarmament which you see from the rest of the verse, "and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." Notice he had a bow but he didn't have any arrows. Typically bows need arrows. I mean you can club someone with a bow but it helps to have arrows. And you might argue that it's world dis-ammunition because he has the weapon but he has no ammunition and fine with that. One way the UN or some other global organization could eliminate modern weapons is eliminate the ammunition. But in either case the end result is the same. Modern weapons won't be useful and so the world will think they have attained peace, but as the end of the verse indicates it will be a very short lived peace and by seal two that peace is taken away and now you have war and verse 4 says they will slay one another. That Greek word refers to being killed by the sword, it's the same word used of the weapon Cain used to kill Abel; Cain murdered Abel with a sword (1 John 3:12) and so it's at this point that the world is forced to use ancient implements of war. Joel 3:9-10 says that in the Tribulation time men will beat their plowshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears. World disarmament is coming and men will be forced to turn agricultural equipment into weapons of war.

The second question someone brought up is in Daniel 11:40 when the anti-Christ attacks Syria will Damascus be destroyed? Damascus is the capital city of Syria and you're thinking of Jer 49:23-27 where Damascus is going to be set on fire. I think it's a good possibility. If Jer 49:23ff is not referring to a past defeat of Damascus then it is speaking of a future one and it would be the anti-Christ who would set fire to the city of Damascus. I think that is the most likely interpretation.

Now after that military defeat of Syria and Egypt he hears rumors and that's where I think Ezek 38 and 39 come into the picture. These chapters are admittedly some of the most difficult chapters in all of Bible prophecy, this is really challenging. We hear a lot about this battle today through prophecy

experts. Joel Rosenberg has talked about this *ad nauseum* and he's pointing to the possible Russian-Iranian alliance and the nuclear threat of Iran and connecting that with Ezek 38-39. However, one thing I want to be totally clear on. There is no nuclear attack on Israel in Ezek 38 and 39 or on anyone in Ezek 38 and 39. There is no hint of a nuclear attack at all. Foreign nations enter into the land of Israel for spoil, for cattle, for gold and silver, and you don't enter a territory you are going to drop a nuclear bomb on. So all that Rosenberg stuff is just a lot of hot air. Now that doesn't mean that Iran and their acquiring nuclear arms is an insignificant geopolitical development. To the contrary it is extremely significant. Iran may use nuclear weapons against us. They may be the cause of the West's decline, which seems to be a pre-requisite for Bible prophecy unfolding. And for that reason what's going on in Iran is very serious. But Iran is not going to drop a nuclear bomb on Israel in Ezek 38 and 39 or anytime if you ask me. A lot of the hype Rosenberg is raising is to sell books, it's not the text. See, what people do is they don't study the text in depth, they just study it on the surface and that allows you a lot of room to slide around, but if you look at the text in depth you can't slide all over the place, it ties you down, and the biblical picture, which is the important one, comes into focus. But as long as you tune your ear into all the hype you don't see the text in focus. You gotta know the text.

Now as I've mentioned, the most difficult part of this prophecy is the timing, when will this battle occur? And I've already alluded to the fact that I think it begins during the first half of the Tribulation after the Daniel 11:40 battle. But we'll reserve that question for coming weeks because you have to get familiar with the text before you can even think about handling it. So tonight I want to follow just a basic Bible study method. Always, always there are three steps; observation, interpretation and application, in that order. So we start with observation and in this step we are like an investigator, we are looking for clues, we are asking questions, who, what, when, where, why and how? And that's basically what we're going to do tonight, we're going to answer the who and the why and the where will be obvious.

Now to get the context we start with Ezekiel 38:1 and this is where we are introduced or re-introduced to Ezekiel. **And the word of the LORD came to me.** Ezekiel was a prophet. God revealed Himself verbally to Ezekiel. He was in Babylon because he had been taken into Exile to Babylon in 597BC. So he was in the same place as Daniel. Daniel we saw went into Exile to Babylon in

605BC. But they are now both in Babylon and they were both prophets, they received the word of God and ministered it to the Exiles of Babylon. Now just from the looks of it Ezekiel received a lot more prophetic material than Daniel. That doesn't make him more important, it just means there's more. Daniel is only 12 chapters long but Ezekiel is 48. And Ezekiel, like Daniel is one of those extremely challenging books.

We don't have time to teach the whole book and I probably don't have the skill. But generally speaking, starting in Ezekiel 33 he transitions his focus and for seven chapters his prophecies center on the restoration of Israel. For example, this is where you find the prophecy of the new covenant; God pouring out His Spirit on all Israel. This is where you find the prophecy of the dry bones and the question, can these bones live? And the dry bones are then given muscles and sinews and flesh and yet they did not have the breath of life and then they are given the breath of life. The point is there are two stages to Israel's restoration just like there were two stages to Adam's creation. The body was formed but it had no life and then the breath of life was breathed into the body and it became a living soul. Now the body in Ezekiel 37 refers to Israel's regathering in unbelief which is the situation we see today since 1948. The imparting of the breath of life to that body refers to Israel's regathering in belief which is yet to come. But we learn that Israel's restoration will occur in two phases. Another prophecy in this section is two sticks and each stick represents one of the two divisions of the kingdom; Israel and Judah. And the two sticks are joined together and made into one. And that prophecy is teaching that when Israel is restored the two kingdoms will be one like they were under David. So all these chapters from Ezekiel 33-39 are speaking about the time of Israel's restoration and various things that will take place in association with their restoration. And our chapters, Ezek 38 and 39 fall within that restoration section.

Now if we were to press on into the glories of Ezekiel 40-48 you would find a very extensive prophecy about the Temple. The Temple is scheduled to be rebuilt by the Messiah in Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom. And there will even be sacrifices that will atone for sin and that section of Scripture will really challenge you. Why are there sacrifices in the kingdom when Jesus has already been sacrificed? Alright, so they serve a specific purpose and that's another series. But the Temple will be rebuilt in the millennial kingdom and there will be sacrifices. Finally the land divisions in the millennial kingdom

are outlined and that's important because it shows that at last Israel will enjoy her land and her covenants will be fulfilled.

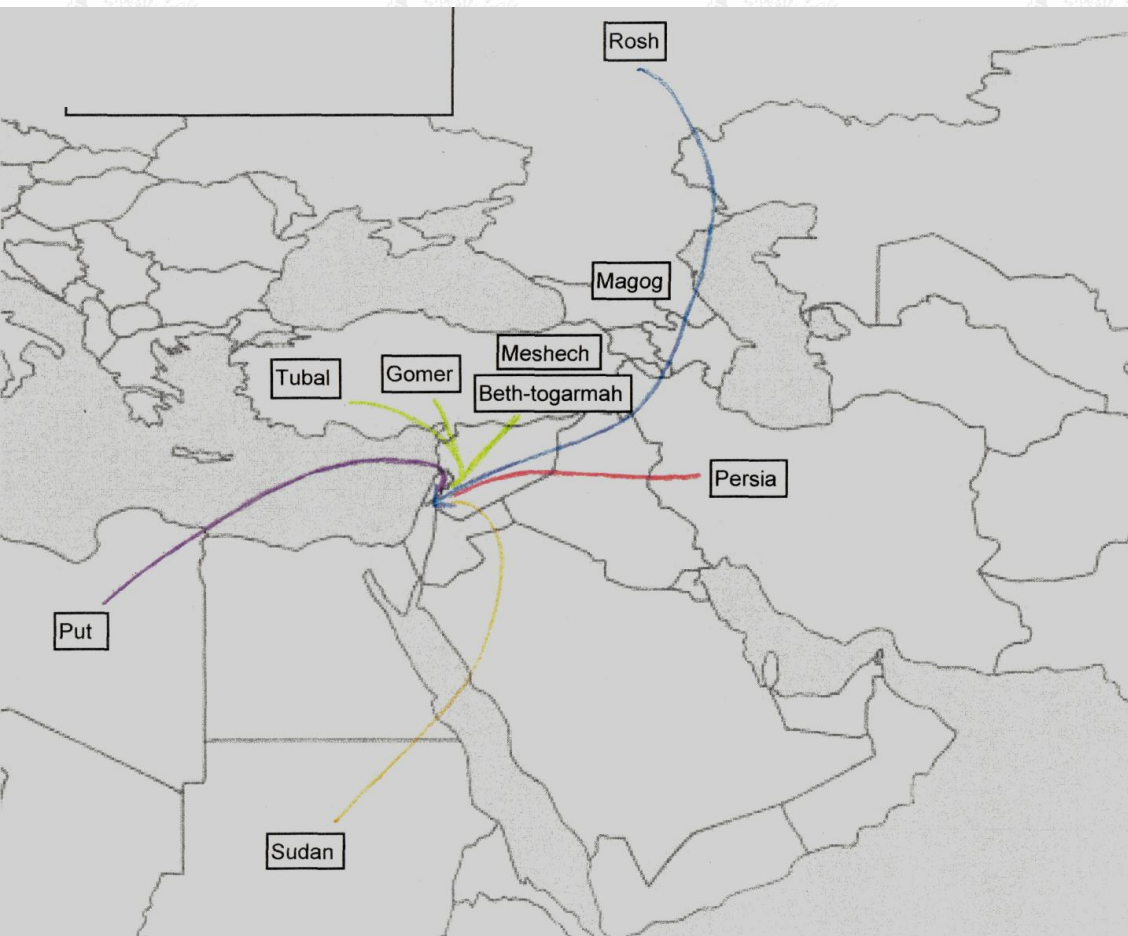
Now we're interested in Ezek 38-39 because there is a battle described here or perhaps two battles, that's something I still have to solve, but typically this battle is called the Battle of Gog and Magog even though that's a misnomer. But that's our interest because again it's an attack on the land of Israel and on the people of Israel in the last times and therefore it's an attack on God. And the results are, of course, that God is victorious and the enemies are defeated and so this prophecy would give Israel hope while she was in Exile; that even though she would face hard times under divine discipline ultimately one day she would be restored to her land and while she was there she would be attacked but God would protect her. Hope for the future, that's a major purpose of prophecy. If you don't know prophecy, you don't have hope.

So let's start observing starting in Ezekiel 38:1, **And the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel, saying, "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog.** Ezekiel is commanded to set his face **toward Gog**. Now the Hebrew preposition toward may mean "direction," look in the direction of Gog as you make this prophecy or it may mean "against" meaning look sternly toward them. And since in verse 3 God says **I am against you Gog**, using the exact same preposition then probably Ezekiel is to set his face against Gog by looking in the direction of the land of Magog with a stern look on his face because God is angry at them.

Now who is this **Gog of the land of Magog**? Well **Gog** is not a personal name. It's a word that means "the top of something." It's used of the top of the altar and of the top of a house, which is the roof. So this is a title of the top ruler. We'd refer to him as a Czar of some sort. So **Gog** is his political title like Czar. And the fact he's mentioned eleven times in Ezek 38-39 shows that he's very important in the prophecy and God is very angry at him.

And notice where he is from? He's **of the land of Magog**. **Magog** is listed in Gen 10:2 as one of the 70 nations that migrated to various places on the earth after the flood. And you might observe at this time that **Meshech** and **Tubal** later in this verse as well as verse 5, **Ethiopia** and verse 6, **Gomer** and **Beth-togarmah**, all are nations listed in Gen 10 as having migrated from

the Tower of Babel after the flood. So it seems Ezekiel is tracing these people from Babel to wherever they migrated. So if we can identify where these nations lived in Ezekiel's day and identify who lives in those regions today then we can identify the modern nations that correspond to those geographic areas. That seems to be a key.



So **Gog of the land of Magog**. **Gog** we already said was the political title of a Czar like ruler. He arises out **of the land of Magog**. Where is **Magog**?¹ These were the Scythian's that ruled along the Caucasus Mountains along the northeast of the Black Sea. Today these nations are southern Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. But the majority of it is Russia so we'd say **Magog** is the land of Russia. That makes **Gog** a Russian Czar and Ezek 39:6 says that his land, **the land of Magog**, will be torched by God for attacking Israel.

Now what do we know about Russia. Russia was one of three major superpowers in the 20th century along with Germany and the US. But after

the cold war they lost their super-power status. Since then they have been allying with Arab nations to regain their status and a foothold in the oil rich Middle East. So they're also anti-Semitic. They have a growing Islamic population and with the population growth rate within a few decades they will be overrun with Islam. At the present time they are overwhelmingly atheistic and materialistic and you can see from verse 13 that they invade Israel in order to capture spoil, to seize plunder, taking away silver and gold, cattle and goods. So they may be invading because of economic collapse and famine. So that covers the Czar, Gog of the land of Russia.

Then we have the fact that this Czar is called **the prince of three nations; Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**. Actually some people think Rosh just means "chief" and so it should be lower cased and translated as the chief prince. However, Thomas Ice has compiled five compelling evidences that in fact Rosh is Russia.ⁱⁱ Even though Russia was not a word until the 11th century AD it ultimately derives from **Rosh**. So **Rosh** refers to Russia.

He'll be prince of Russia. Now **prince** is another title, this is his military title, it means "general" or "captain." So Gog is both the political Czar and the military General who leads this coalition of forces against Israel.

Now he's also the General of **Meshech**. Who is **Meshech**?ⁱⁱⁱ Meshech was another nation that migrated out after the flood. They occupied the land southeast of the Black Sea which is in present day Turkey and I've given you a map showing the regions of where these people settled.^{iv}

Tubal. Who is **Tubal**?^v Another nation that migrated out after the flood. 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.

What do we know about Turkey? They're Islamic but they've been secular. But in the last two or three years the people have been dissatisfied so they've started electing more fundamentalist Muslims to positions of power. So according to the current trend it would be no surprise if they allied with Russia in an invasion against Israel.

The other armies involved in this invasion are mentioned in verses 5 and 6. **Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them *with shield and helmet*; ⁶Gomer 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. **Persia** is the ancient name of modern Iran. Iran did not begin to be used in foreign usage until 1935. So **Persia** is Iran and clearly since the 1979 Iranian revolution when Khomeini came to power the government has been run by the religion of extremist Islam. They express openly their anti-Western and anti-Israel stance. And they are now seeking to become a nuclear power which would completely change and destabilize the Middle East region. So it would be no surprise at all if Iran allied with Russia in this invasion against Israel.**

Also verse 5, **Ethiopia**, but this is the Hebrew *Cush* and it refers to the nation on the southern border of Egypt which is actually Sudan. We saw last week in Daniel 11:43 that Sudan would follow at the anti-Christ's heels. This means that before he could conquer Sudan he would have to turn his forces back. Sudan would then be at his heels. Knowing that they were the next nation on the anti-Christ's agenda they will ally with Russia, Turkey and Iran against Israel. Interestingly, Sudan is one of only three Muslim nations in the world with a militant Islamic government. In the last 25 years they have become close allies of Iran. So it would be no surprise if Sudan entered into a Russia led alliance with Iran and Turkey.

Then **Put**, and **Put** is known in the Bible as the nation to the far west of the border of Egypt. That region today is Libya. We saw last week in Daniel 11:43 that Libya was also on the anti-Christ's agenda but they too would follow at his heels meaning that he would have to turn his forces back prior to conquering them. Since Libya would know that he was about to attack them they too will join this coalition of forces against Israel.

What do we know about Libya? Well, we know they're anti-Semitic. We know that during Qaddafi's rule they acquired a massive arsenal of weaponry from Russia. We know they sponsor terror around the world. They are a terrorist state. However in recent years they have been destroying much of their bombs, mustard gas and other materials that could be used to make nerve gas. In any case, it would be no surprise if they joined forces with a Russian led invasion against Israel.

Finally verse 6, **Gomer**, another nation that Gen 10 describes as migrating out after the flood. These were the Cimmerians, they initially settled in the south of Russia but by Ezekiel's day had migrated to central Turkey. So **Gomer** along with Meshech and Tubal are all located in modern day Turkey.

Finally **Beth-togarmah**, another nation that migrated out from the flood. They were the Phrygians and they eventually settled in eastern Turkey.

So the places these eight groups migrated to are all basically located within five nations; Russia, Turkey, Iran, Libya and Sudan. And the battle will be led by the political Czar of Russia called **Gog** who is the captain of the armies. All these nations will make an alliance with the Czar of Russia to attack Israel.

Having identified the who let's turn our attention to the why? Why will they attack Israel? There's a divine cause and a human cause. This is one of those passages where you see God's sovereignty and human responsibility together. The divine cause is proved seven ways. God has seven reasons for this alliance attacking Israel. First, in 38:3 and throughout the passage it is proved by His name. **the Lord GOD** is the Hebrew *Adon YHWH* and emphasizes God's sovereignty over the nations. The very fact God uses this name of Himself when introducing this prophesy indicates that He is the ultimate cause of the coalition of nations coming against Israel. Second, in 38:4 and 39:2 it is proved by His action. God says **I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws**. The Hebrew for **turn** is *sub* meaning "repent, change of mind." It is in the Polel perfect meaning an intensive action. God will take an intensive action to change the mind of Gog such that they will be lured to Israel. They could be lured to the wealth of Israel in the last days. Third, in 38:4 it is proved again by His action. God says, **I will bring you out, and all your army, horses, and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired**. The Hebrew word for **bring** is *yasa* and means "to go out a movement from one location to another. It is a Hiphil perfect meaning a causative action. God will cause them to go out of their land into the land of Israel and the implements of war show that it will occur after the disarmament. Fourth, in 38:8 it is proved once more by His action. God says, **After many days you will be summoned**. The Hebrew word for **summoned** is *padaq* and means "to exercise oversight by taking action to

cause a considerable change in circumstances.” It is a Niphal imperfect, a passive action. God will call them to the land of Israel by changing their circumstances considerably. Perhaps they are in desperate need of food and money in the last days. Fifth, in 38:16 it is proved by another of God’s actions. He says, **It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land.** The Hebrew means what it says. God will bring them against His land. The land belongs to Him. In Leviticus God says, “The land is mine.” And He is bringing these nations against His land. Sixth, in 39:2 it is proved again by yet another action of God. God says, **I will turn you around, drive you on.** The Hebrew for **drive** is *sisse* and means “to lead on.” In the Piel it is an intensive action. God in a way is the one who actually leads them on from the remote parts of the north against the mountains of Israel. Finally, the seventh proof that this battle occurs because of God’s sovereignty is that it is God’s word. In Isaiah 39:8 God says, **Behold it is coming and it shall be done,” declares the Lord GOD. “That is the day of which I have spoken.”** The words **I have spoken** refer to a divine promise or declaration. God has spoken and He will do it. So for seven textual reasons, regardless of who you think God is, if you don’t like it that God is sovereign you will have to adjust your view of God to the text because God declares Himself to be the One who will sovereignly bring these nations out of the north and against His land Israel. As Isaiah says, God creates calamity and I would say this is a mighty calamity. And yet the fact that God causes calamity does not make God evil because men always do what they want to do.

And there are two proofs of this in the passage. First, in 38:10 it is proved by human thoughts. **It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind.** These nations will have thoughts to attack Israel in that day. Second, in 38:10 again, it is proved by human planning. **and you will devise an evil plan, and you will say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates.** The tenor sounds as if the plan is devised because Israel is an easy target.

So in the end, the reason why these nations will attack Israel is because God has sovereignly decided to bring them against His land and judge them. At the same time the men in these nations will have thoughts in their mind that

result in a plan of attack against Israel. This is one way of expressing how God is sovereign and man has choice. As I have taught you many times before, man always does what he wants to do and at the same time God's plan always comes to pass. Every passage relating divine sovereignty and human choice can be explained by this very simple explanation.

Another follow-up question that needs answering is What for? What are the goals of this battle? And since both God's sovereignty and human choice are involved then both God and man have specific goals. First of all God. What are God's goals for this battle? Why is He bringing it about? There are six reasons. First, in 38:16 and 23 it is to sanctify God before the nations, **It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.** The Hebrew word for sanctified means to vindicate His holiness. God has not judged these nations for their evil but that does not mean that His wrath is not storing up for the day when He will. And by this the nations will surely see that God is holy. Second, in 38:23 it is to magnify Himself before the nations. **I will magnify Myself.** The Hebrew word **magnify** means to show how great I am. God will show just how great His power is when He judges this coalition of nations. Third, in 38:16, 23; 39:6, 7 the goal is that the nations will know Him. Reading 38:23 again, **I will...make Myself known in the sight of many nations.** God is known through what He does in history. And when the nations see His awesome power judging this immense human army they will have no doubt who God is. They will recognize Him. Fourth, in 39:22 it is that the nation Israel will know He is their God from that day forward. **And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward.** And this verse alone should show you that it is impossible for this battle to occur before the Tribulation because the nation Israel will not know Him as their God before the Tribulation. It will not be until the end of the Tribulation that the nation Israel will know the Lord is their God from that day onward. Fifth, in 39:13 it is for God to glorify Himself. **and it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself.** God is into glorifying Himself. It's His ultimate purpose, to glorify Himself. And finally, in 39:17ff it is to provide a sacrifice of men for the birds and beasts of the field to eat. Verse 17, **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 on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood...etc...etc... So there you have the five purposes from God's point of view and He will be perfectly successful.

On the human side, what is their goal? Why do they want to attack Israel? Why would a country the size of Russia want to attack a country the size of Vermont? There are two reasons. First, in Ezek 38:12 it is to capture spoil. The nations are saying, I will go **“to capture spoil and to seize plunder.** Some of this plunder is mentioned specifically in the middle of verse 13, **Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?** What spoil could little tiny Israel have that big Russia would want? Besides the explicit mention of **cattle** which may indicate famine in Russia there is **silver and gold.** Great economic wealth will be possessed by Israel in the last times. Let me share a short story with you. As you know the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves near Qumran beginning around 1937. One of the scrolls that was found is called the copper scroll. Actually it is not a scroll but a sheet of copper with writing on it. In essence it is something like a treasure map that describes 64 different caches where large numbers of talents of gold and silver and other precious items are hidden. A talent is near 75 pounds and there are hundreds of talents listed as hidden. To date none of these caches have been found. However, just last summer Randall Price was carrying out his final excavation at Qumran. He discovered by satellite bronze, silver and gold buried deep on the plateau within the permitted area. They tried to reach it during the dig but once they reached the permitted depth they needed to get permission to go beyond this depth. In October he confirmed the anomaly with a GPR team. They then made request; he made request to reach the confirmed anomalies but were rejected by the proper authorities. In any case, it could be a cache of hidden bronze, silver and gold that gives hints on how to decipher the copper scroll. If so this could put Israel in a remarkable economic position and make them a desirable target of other countries.^{vi} Second, consider the value of the Dead Sea Salts. There are something like 45 billion tons of valuable chemicals in the Dead Sea. This is a vast source of wealth. Finally, in recent years Israel has discovered several large natural gas and oil reserves that can make them energy independent. More finds could potentially make them extremely wealthy. Whatever developments precipitate, in the last days Israel becomes very wealthy, so wealthy that they will come within the crosshairs of Russia.

Second, the middle of verse 12 reveals that these nations will come against Israel because they hate the people of Israel. Not only to capture spoil and to seize plunder, but also **to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations.** Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan and Libya are all anti-Semitic so it is no surprise that they will attack Israel. They want Israel obliterated from the planet. Yet God says He who curses Israel will be cursed (Gen 12:3). So these nations will come under the curse of God when they try to invade and God will be glorified before all nations through His mighty victory.

Finally, there are two follow up comments on the purpose of this battle. First, it may be instrumental, along with the ministry of the two witnesses in bringing the nation Israel to belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Ezek 39:29 says, **I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel.** This would refer to the fulfillment of the new covenant with Israel. Since this occurs at the end point of the Tribulation then perhaps, in some way, this battle will extend all the way to the end of the Tribulation. That is, it may not occur all at one point but over a period of time. Surely this astonishing victory by God will be a tool God uses to bring the nation Israel to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Zechariah 13:8-9 tells us that in that day 2/3 of the Jews in the land will be cut off and 1/3 will be left, they will be refined like silver and tested as gold, they will call on the name of the Lord and He will answer them. God will say, "They are My people," and they will say, "The Lord is my God." Surely this battle is instrumental in bringing the 1/3 to that point. Isaiah asked, "Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons. 9Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery? says the LORD. Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb? says your God." Surely God is great and will do this. A second follow up comment on the purpose of this battle: this battle may be instrumental in bringing many from the Gentile nations to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Ezek 39:6 says, **And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD. 7My 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.** It is likely a fact that

more people will come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah during the short seven year Tribulation than all of Church History! This mighty victory appears to be a key instrument God uses to draw the nations to the realization that Israel's God is the God of history and the only One to worship so that they might be saved.

In conclusion, in the latter years when the nation Israel is regathered in the land and the land is restored from the sword and they are living securely and at rest in unwalled villages then Gog, the political Czar of Russia will lead the armies of Russia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan and Libya against Israel. Their purpose for invading the land is to take the wealth of Israel but God's purpose is to magnify His name and sanctify Himself and glorify Himself before all nations. Clearly this battle will be instrumental in the salvation of Israel and many Gentiles for they shall know Him.

ⁱ 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.”ⁱ Josephus and Greek writers say that the name Magog is associated with the Scythians who were ferocious warriors. The Caucasus Mountains run NW to SE between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Most of the mountains are located in areas of southern Russia and Georgia.

ⁱⁱ 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/Ice-\(Part4\)Ezekiel 38&39.pdf](http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Ice-(Part4)Ezekiel%2038&39.pdf)

ⁱⁱⁱ Some have erroneously identified Meshech as Moscow because of the similar sounds. However, this identification has no etymological basis.

^{iv} These people were the Moschi, a people inhabiting the Moschian Mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas.

^v Some have erroneously identified Tubal as Tobolsk, a Russian city because of the similar sounds. However, this identification has no etymological basis.

^{vi} <http://www.worldofthebible.com/Documents/2012%20Winter%20newsletter.pdf>

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