

# **Gog and Magog**

When God Defends  
Israel From Invasion



a series of seven studies by John Edmiston

© Copyright, John Edmiston 2007 - may be freely used for non-profit Christian ministry but may not be sold in any way.

## Study 1 - Introduction To The Prophecy of Gog and Magog

The great “Gog and Magog” invasion of Israel and God's devastating judgment of them is found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and involves a coalition of envious nations from the “far north” invading a peaceful Israel and being comprehensively destroyed by YHWH. Most evangelical scholars view it is seen as a key event in the End Times.

In this first study we need to locate Gog and Magog in the prophetic timeline:

1. It is in the distant future, after a regathering of Israel to the land:

**Ezekiel 38:7-8 HCSB** *"Be prepared and get yourself ready, you and all your company who have been mobilized around you; you will be their guard. (8) After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them now live securely.*

2. The Gog and Magog prophecy of Ezekiel 38 739 comes after chapter 37 – the Valley of Dry Bones, which speaks of the national and spiritual restoration of the nation of Israel:

**Ezekiel 37:11-14 HCSB** *Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Look how they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished; we are cut off. (12) Therefore, prophesy and say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them, My people, and lead you into the land of Israel. (13) You will know that I am the LORD, My people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. (14) I will put My Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do it." This is the declaration of the LORD.*

3. Gog and Magog seems to come after or be part of the same time period as the Two Sticks prophecy of Ezekiel 37 – of spiritual and political unity in Israel under a Messianic King with a permanent and restored Temple:

**Ezekiel 37:22-28 HCSB** *I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king will rule over all of them. They will no longer be two nations and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. (23) They will not defile themselves any more with their idols, their detestable things, and all their transgressions. I will save them from all their apostasies by which they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they will be My people, and I will be their God. (24) My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. They will follow My ordinances, and keep My statutes and obey them. (25) "They will live in the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They will live in it forever with their children and grandchildren, and My servant David will be their prince forever. (26) I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. I will establish and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary among them forever. (27) My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people. (28) When My sanctuary is among them forever, the nations will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel."*

4. However it comes BEFORE the restored Temple of Ezekiel chapters 40-48

So we have an end time event that comes to a restored Israel living in peace, and which may be the precursor to the final building of the Temple. It is currently unimaginable that the Muslim nations of the Middle east would allow Israel to rebuild their Temple on its traditional site. Certainly the Temple cannot be rebuilt until the current enemies of the Jewish State are dealt with in some final and absolute way – either a permanent peace treaty that allows the Temple to be built, or a very decisive military victory.

The motivation for Gog and Magog is greed. There is no suggestion that they are invading for religious reasons such as to destroy and already built temple.

**Ezekiel 38:10-13 HCSB** *"This is what the Lord GOD says: On that day, thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will devise an evil plan. (11) You will say: I will go up against a land of open villages; I will come against a tranquil people who are living securely, all of them living without walls and without bars or gates-- (12) in order to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against ruins now inhabited and against a people gathered from the nations, who have been acquiring cattle and possessions and who live at the center of the world. (13) Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its rulers will ask you: Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hordes to carry off plunder, to make off with silver and gold, to take cattle and possessions, to seize great spoil?"*

The most probable scenario is that Israel is prosperous but has not yet rebuilt the Temple. The war breaks out for economic reasons. The Jews realize that God has fulfilled the prophecy, there is massive national revival and the Temple is rebuilt.

In these verses Israel is living in tranquility, safety and economic prosperity after restoring in a once ruined land. At some point Israel achieves real peace and becomes the economic envy of her neighbors. This may be due to the collapse of the oil economy of the Arab world. Israel is clearly the only super-power in the Middle East and is able to live securely: *a tranquil people who are living securely, all of them living without walls and without bars or gates*. This is certainly not the security situation in Israel today!

At no point in past history have these precise conditions occurred. The return from Babylon did not result in this but was not analogous to it. The Mongol invasion of Europe and the Middle East under Genghis Khan (Genghis = Gog? Mongol = Magog?) did not fit the prophecy precisely but was also closely analogous to it. Only the modern return after the German persecution ("from the graves") to the current "once ruined" land fits the prophecy at all well. So we are looking at a mass return of Jews to the land, great economic prosperity and peace, followed by a "Mongol style" overwhelming invasion.

In Revelation 20:8 "Gog and Magog" is used as an analogy for a universal war against god after the Millennium is concluded. However this is a DIFFERENT Gog and Magog as in Ezekiel the nations involved are specified and the battle does not involve the whole world or result in a new heavens and a new earth. Gog and Magog thus comes to symbolize a great, final and apocalyptic battle.

So where does Gog and Magog fit in the prophetic calendar:

- After a major return to the land of Israel when the ruined nation has been rebuilt
- After a time of security and economic prosperity
- At a time when Israel's neighbors stand to gain economically by such an invasion
- Before the rebuilding of the Temple
- Before or just after a great national spiritual revival
- In the End Times before the return of Christ

Many people are saying that this is the "not too distant future" and may occur in our lifetime. In the next study, God willing, we will look at who is involved – the list of nations and leaders named in the Gog and Magog prophecy.

## Study 2 - Who Is Involved?

**Ezekiel 38:1-6 MKJV** *And the Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, (2) Son of man, set your face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (3) And say, So says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the chief ruler of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. (4) And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed most perfectly, a great assembly with buckler and shield, all of them swordsmen; (5) Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, all of them with shield and helmet; (6) Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah from the recesses of the north, and all his bands; and many peoples with you.*

These verses are fairly controversial and identify the main coalition forces that comprise the army of Gog and Magog. The changed national boundaries and place names since the time of Ezekiel mean that we have to do quite some research to find out which nations are meant. We will start with the easiest and most certain and work through to the most difficult and most uncertain:

Persia = Iran

“Ethiopia” = the ancient land of Cush and = Ethiopia and Sudan / NE Africa

Libya = Put and is modern Libya plus a chunk of north Africa

Gomer = southern Russia, Caucasus area, descendants of Japheth

“Rosh” = could mean “king” or chief ruler, or it may indicate Russia or a Scythian nation (from the area north of the Black and Caspian seas, around the Caucasus)

Meshech = descendants of Japheth, Armenian area (most likely), Moscow (also possible)

Tubal = Black sea area, descended from the Hittites, copper-producing, descendants of Japheth

Togarmah = Armenian area, descendants of Japheth, supplied horses to Tyre

Magog = a descendant of Japheth, ancient Lydia a part of modern Turkey, the Turks

Gog = 1. The leader of Magog or 2. Turkey / Constantinople or 3. Turkmenistan

In addition to this is the thrice-repeated phrase “from the remotest parts of the north” (Ezekiel 38:6,15, 39:2). If we go directly north from Israel the “remotest parts of the north” would be Russia, Ukraine and possibly Belarus and Kazakhstan. Lebanon, Syria and Turkey are also directly north of Israel (but are not “remote”).

The most probable make up of the Gog and Magog army is Russia, Ukraine, Syria, Turkey, Iran, the Muslim nations of North Africa particularly Sudan and Libya, as well as the Central Asian Republics – the “stans” - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan etc.

It is no coincidence that it is precisely these nations that are the most bitter enemies of Israel today!

How does Russia get included? The news tells us that a) Russia has many Muslims, particularly in the south, 2) Russia has long historical ties with these nations 3) Russia is actively pursuing trade relationships with these nations 4) and Russia has long persecuted the Jews.

Remember this war is economic in nature “to seize much plunder” (Ezekiel 38:12) so while religion may be part of the picture the main reason is greed, and this allows non-Islamic nations to also be involved.

Three other nations are mentioned as “commentators”

**Ezekiel 38:13 HCSB** *Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its rulers will ask you: Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hordes to carry off plunder, to make off with silver and gold, to take cattle and possessions, to seize great spoil?*

Sheba and Dedan were “sons of Cush” and were nomadic trading tribes in North Africa and Arabia. Tarshish was a sea trading power, sometimes identified with Spain or with Carthage. These represent the financial opportunists, the business world. So we see the wild barbarian hordes of the Caucasus and above doing the invading and the cunning trading nations trying to figure out how to make a profit in the process!

Lastly we need to ask 'who is missing from this picture'? These Muslim nations would not attempt this today because they know that America would rapidly intervene on Israel's behalf. So there must be a very different balance of power in the Middle East than there is today. In Ezekiel 38 and 39 Israel is powerful, prosperous and peaceful and it also seems that America, Western Europe and the UN are either unable or unwilling to prevent this crisis. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan also seem conspicuously absent from the picture. Egypt and Jordan have peace treaties with Israel and Saudi Arabia and Iraq may be under strong US influence or have made similar treaties by this time. (Saudi Arabia may be “Dedan” and be trying to profit from the war, which would not be totally out of character!). The other possibility is that Iran (Persia) is in control of Iraq and Saudi Arabia by this time and so the reference to Persia end sup including these nations as well.

It also seems that the Gog and Magog coalition will have weapons and armor in abundance!

*And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, **all of them clothed most perfectly, a great assembly with buckler and shield, all of them swordsmen;** (5) *Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, **all of them with shield and helmet;****

This indicates a weapons build up and perhaps a large armored force of “horsemen” that is cavalry – possibly tanks in modern terms ( a cavalry regiment = a tank regiment). The conclusion being that the Gog and Magog invasion is a massive, well-armed Muslim and Russian army.



## Study 3 - Planned By God

In this study we will deal with the question of God's planning of the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel.

**Ezekiel 38:4 HCSB** *I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws, and bring you out with all your army, including horses and riders, who are all splendidly dressed, a huge company armed with shields and bucklers, all of them brandishing swords.*

**Ezekiel 38:8 HCSB** *After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them now live securely.*

**Ezekiel 39:2 HCSB** *I will turn you around, drive you on, and lead you up from the remotest parts of the north. I will bring you against the mountains of Israel.*

These three verses tell us that the forces of evil (Gog and Magog) are summoned by God, driven by God and led by God - indeed they are even compelled by God who puts “hooks in their jaws”. The Bible tells us that God causes Gog and Magog to invade Israel - where they will be utterly destroyed by God. The hook in their jaw is probably economic, as they are invading Israel in order to gather plunder. Perhaps the oil economies of Russia and the Middle East have collapsed. The hook in the jaw is a fishing metaphor used by the prophets:

**Job 41:1-2 HCSB** *Can you pull in Leviathan with a hook or tie his tongue down with a rope? (2) Can you put a cord through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook?*

**Ezekiel 29:2-4 MKJV** *Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. (3) Speak and say, So says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, even I, am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon who lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, My river is mine, and I have made it. (4) But I will put hooks in your jaws, and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales, and I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish of your rivers shall stick to your scales.*

In other words Gog and Magog shall “take the bait” and get “hooked” on the idea of invading Israel and becoming very rich. Someone has said “the cause of all war is unprotected wealth” and there is a grain of truth to this saying. According to Ezekiel, Israel will be prosperous and by all accounts unprotected, living peacefully without walls or gates. Israel will thus be a land of vast unprotected wealth and a target for a coalition of raiders and economic opportunists.

This leads to an obvious question – how can a land of just 6.2 million people (Israel's current population) with no oil, gas or huge natural resources generate enough wealth to excite dozens of nations, with a total population in the hundreds of millions? It seems it would be very thin pickings for such a massive group of people. There are only two alternatives. Either Israel has discovered some vast resource of gold or oil or some valuable metal sufficient for such large nations to share, or the nations comprising the Gog and Magog coalition have become desperately poor.

The comments of the surrounding trading nations indicate that Israel has become wealthy, not in financial terms as in mere cash, but in terms of tangible goods that can be carried away like silver and gold. I think we can expect Israel to become resource rich in the reasonably near future.

**Ezekiel 38:13 LITV** *Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish, and all its young lions, shall say to you,*

*Have you come to plunder a plunder? Have you gathered your assembly to steal a prize, to lift up silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to plunder a great plunder?*

That leaves us with an obvious theological question that I hinted at earlier on. How can God be behind theft, war and violence? How can God be behind an invasion of Israel? There is no hint that this is Satan's doing. Satan is a mere puppet. This is God's prophetically predicted war against peaceful Israel. God causes it, directs it, leads it and concludes it. In this instance God is directly behind the actions of the wicked and their destruction.

**Job 21:30 LITV** *For the wicked is kept for the day of calamity; they shall be brought to the day of wrath.*

**Proverbs 16:4 LITV** *Jehovah has made all for His purpose, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*

The above two verses indicate that God has a purpose even for the wicked – to judge them and destroy them on the “day of wrath”. Isaiah is very bold and says:

**Isaiah 45:5-7 MKJV** *I am Jehovah, and there is none else, no God besides Me; I clothed you, though you have not known Me; (6) that they may know from the rising of the sun, and to the sunset, that there is none besides Me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else; (7) forming the light and creating darkness; making peace and creating evil. I Jehovah do all these things.*

Part of the solution is that God only creates evil and wickedness so that it can be brought to a conclusion and destroyed forever. After the Gog and Magog event no one will ever dare to attack Israel again. Israel will be permanently secure. It is somewhat like aversion therapy on an international scale.

The Bible tells us that, during the time of the Exodus, God raised up Pharaoh and that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that Israel could be set free from bondage and enter the Promised Land (Romans 9). It is God who weaves the currents of history so that good eventually results. Even Hitler and the Holocaust may have been used to help establish the nation of Israel.

In a sense the evil is already there in the human heart. It is simply given an opportunity to fully manifest itself. Once it has manifested itself, once its fruits are evident, then it can be brought into judgment.

On a much smaller scale, God may allow you to lose your temper in a big way in front of your friends and family, so that your temper may be obvious to you and to others, so that you will be clearly faced with the anger in your heart, so that you might address the issue of your anger, and repent and deal with it for good, (and even maybe get some help from a pastor or spiritual counselor).

Evil in the human heart or the cultural heart or the national heart, generally has to be made manifest, and dealt some kind of 'mortal blow' before it can be finally dealt with. God often carefully arranges those encounters with reality. After the invasion by Gog and Magog people will realize that the prophecy has come true and that God is the God of Israel, and that His word the Bible is true.

**Ezekiel 38:16, 17, 3 MKJV** *And you shall come up on My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It shall be in the last days, and I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I shall be sanctified in you, O Gog, before their eyes. (17) So says the Lord Jehovah: Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days, by the hand of My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days and years that I would bring you against them? ... So I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself. And I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah.*

## Study 4 - Pathway To Revival

**Ezekiel 39:22-29 MKJV** *So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward. (23) And the nations shall know that the house of Israel was exiled for their iniquity. Because they sinned against Me, therefore I hid My face from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. So they all fell by the sword. (24) According to their uncleanness and according to their sins I have done to them, and have hidden My face from them. (25) Therefore so says the Lord Jehovah: And I will return the captivity of Jacob, and will have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name; (26) after they have borne their shame and all their sins by which they have sinned against Me, when they dwell securely in their land and no one terrifies; (27) when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God who exiled them among the nations. But I have gathered them to their own land, and have not left any of them there. (29) Nor will I hide My face from them any more, for I have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord Jehovah.*

These verses tell us God's heart and purposes towards Israel and the ultimate reason for the Gog and Magog invasion. God wants Israel to know that He is their God and that he loves them, has forgiven their sins, and will restore them to peace and security and pour out His Spirit upon them.

Now a mighty and terrifying war seems a strange way to do this. Why not send them cute emails or cards with huggy bears on them signed “from YHWH”? (I jest). Sometimes we need a lot more than encouraging words before we really believe that God is for us. We often need to see God in action on our behalf.

Now I do not want to minimize the love God displayed in sending Christ to die for us on the cross. That is, of course, God's preeminent display of divine love. However, due to our humanity, we also like to see God provide for, heal, bless and defend us in the so-called “real world” of everyday existence. Most people need God to “turn up for them” in the midst of their life crises if they are to fully believe that He loves them.

The Gog and Magog invasion is truly a nation-obliterating crisis. The Jews are defenseless as another Holocaust looms and millions of vengeful Muslim troops descend upon them. If ever God needs to turn up it is at this point. Many modern Jews maintain that there is no God because He did not “turn up” during the European pogroms or during the Holocaust. Others simply say that God has abandoned the Jews to their own devices. So as Gog and Magog approach the Jewish nation will be in absolute terror and great danger of total annihilation. Perhaps only a few hardy souls will pin their hopes on an ancient prophecy by Ezekiel!

Then astonishingly the prophecy will come true exactly as predicted. Fire will fall from heaven, a great plague will break out, earthquakes, and all sorts of natural disasters will occur and the invading army will be utterly consumed. It will be evident to all that God has turned up!

If this is to be God at work, then it cannot be Israel's own military defenses such as nuclear weapons, that inflict the damage. Israel does not save itself, rather it is God who saves Israel and in such a way that the Jewish people realize it forever. *So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward.*

Once this happens, and it is finally clear that God loves and protects Israel, all the Jews, all over the world shall return: *when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God who exiled them among the nations. But I have gathered them to their own land, and have not left any of them there.*



Once they have regathered in Israel the Holy spirit shall be poured out and “all Israel shall be saved”: *Nor will I hide My face from them any more, for I have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord Jehovah.*

**Romans 11:25-27 MKJV** *For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, ..that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations has come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (27) For this is My covenant with them, when I have taken away their sins."*

This helps us with our prophetic time-line. Paul tells us that the salvation of Israel happens after the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in”. So we can see that:

1. The Great Commission is completed, the full number of Gentiles comes in.
2. Those Gentiles that did not believe in Christ become hardened and plot to invade Israel.
3. Israel is spectacularly delivered from the Gog and Magog invasion by God, and finally believes.
4. All the Jews in the world return to live securely in Israel
5. The Spirit is poured out on the Jews and the Valley of Dry Bones vision is fulfilled.
6. The Temple is rebuilt
7. The End of the Age comes fairly rapidly after that point.

God's deliverance of Israel from this overwhelming threat will be so clear and so obvious that anyone who has the slightest inclination to believe will do so. Thus the Gog and Magog event is a massive demonstration that God is there, and that he “turns up” on behalf of those He loves in order to deliver them. This takes us back to our original question about why God would use a massive war to make such a theological point.

The answer is that Christianity is a redeeming faith that is worked out in real life rather an abstract philosophy that is worked out solely in the cogitations of the mind. God is proved by events, not by theorems. It took me a long time to learn this and I wasted many years trying to “prove God” intellectually to people. While there are many compelling intellectual reasons to believe in God, that is not how He is presented in Scripture. In Scripture God is the God of the Exodus, Pentecost and the Resurrection, a God who arrives on the scene and does wonders on behalf of His people, a God who proves Himself in history, and who arrives in the midst of our lives. In many ways a blind man that now sees as a result of healing prayer, or a drunk who becomes sober after a crusade is a better 'proof of God' than all the theorems of Thomas Aquinas.

Part of the turning point for me was the realization that I could not prove, by theorems, even the simplest things concerning existence or non-existence. I could not prove, by unaided logic alone, whether I had a ten dollar note in my wallet or whether water was flowing in the local creek (in Australia creeks can be dry for much of the year). All these issues of existence or non-existence could only be settled by an act of discovery, by 'going and looking' in my wallet or walking down to the creek. I had to go and consult the real world, not just my own thinking. And so it is with the existence of God, He can only be discovered by going and looking at the real world and not in books, logic or philosophy.

It is when God finally turns up in power and transforms our situation that we believe; like the disciples did at the wedding in Cana. Jesus proved Himself to Peter not through a long discourse but by turning water into wine. Yet it took the resurrection and Pentecost to finally convince them.

God's deliverance from Gog and Magog will feel like a national resurrection to the Jews. One day annihilation was certain, the next they are delivered by fire from Heaven and their prophets are at last seen to be true.

## Study 5 - The Judgment Of God

**Ezekiel 38:19-22 MKJV** For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great quaking in the land of Israel, (20) so that the fish of the sea, and the birds of the heavens, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men on the face of the earth, shall quake at My presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. (21) And I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains, says the Lord Jehovah. Each man's sword shall be against his brother. (22) And I will judge him with a plague and with blood. And I will rain on him, and on his bands, and on the many peoples with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.

When the Lord pours out His judgment upon Gog and Magog it will include:

- a) An earthquake
- b) Hailstones, fire and brimstone
- c) "Blood"
- d) A plague
- e) Men turning against each other in battle

It appears that the entire army or close to it is wiped out so that the clean-up and burial takes seven months (Ezekiel 39:14). This annihilation of millions of people by God raises some fairly deep theological questions about the nature of God and of His wrath such as:

1. Aren't we in the "age of grace" when this is not supposed to happen?
2. Cannot God achieve His purposes without killing millions of people in the process?
3. Isn't this just plain barbaric and ruthless and unworthy of God?

The answer is complex. In part God's judgment is an 'equal and opposite' reaction to the massive army that is assembled against Israel. It is not disproportionate to the size of the crime. Also this is the 'beginning of the end', the age of the Gentiles has come to closure and all the Gentiles who can be saved are now saved, or very close to it. The age of grace is winding down and only the Jews remain in God's plan of salvation. It is now time for judgment to begin on the Gentile nations who have refused to believe the gospel.

The other part of the answer is that God is complex, indeed He is very, very complex! God is so complex that He cannot be put in a neat tidy theological box such as 'God is always nice'. God is truly a God of love, but He is also a God of justice. Then He is a God of mercy, whose mercy triumphs over judgment, and then He is a God who punishes down to the third and fourth generation of those who do iniquity.

I will freely admit that part of me recoils from the idea of God leading hundreds of millions of people into judgment and destruction. There is a terrible severity to God when His grace and patience are finally exhausted and this should lead us to fear Him. Even in the New Testament we are told to revere God with "fear and trembling".

**Philippians 2:12-13 MKJV** (12) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, cultivate your own salvation with fear and trembling. (13) For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

**Hebrews 12:25-29 MKJV** See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape, those who refused him that spoke on earth, much more we shall not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven, (26) whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will not only shake the earth, but also the heavens." (27) And this word, "Yet once more," signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, (29) for also, "Our God is a consuming fire."

God is not always pliable nor is He indulgent. God disciplines even those He loves (Hebrews 12) and we are not to be overly casual in our relationship with Him. Now in our hearts we know God's love, and it seems impossible that God could be anything but love, but now and then we glimpse some of the "terribleness" of God Almighty. For instance we see the ruined life of a fallen Christian leader and tremble - knowing that sin does not go unpunished forever.

Yet God is not a sadist and He does not get any pleasure at all out of such judgment:

**Ezekiel 18:23 MKJV** Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked? says the Lord Jehovah. Is it not that he should turn from his ways and live?

**Ezekiel 33:11 MKJV** Say to them: As I live, says the Lord Jehovah, I have no delight in the death of the wicked, except in the turning of the wicked from his way, and so to live. Turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

However there comes a point where sin and rebellion prevail and people muster forces against God. They become hardened and defiant and unrepentant. Their minds become filled with evil plans and sin reaches a point where it simply MUST be dealt with. If Gog and Magog repented they would live. But they refuse to repent. Greed and hatred and darkness overtake them and they charge headlong into doom and destruction.

Gog and Magog is I believe the third greatest judgment that God will ever apply. The greatest being Armageddon, then the biblical Flood (both of which destroy all remaining life). Gog and Magog is not the same as the judgment that is found in Zechariah chapter 14 that involves an earthquake and a plague. This judgment seems to be much later in the prophetic calendar, and simultaneous with the return of the Lord with His Holy Ones. The Gog and Magog invasion is limited to Israel and it is Israel alone that experiences the great earthquake and there is no mention of heavenly signs such as it being "light at night". As I understand things Gog and Magog is not Armageddon but is a precursor to it. The "End of the Age" does not come immediately after or simultaneously with Gog and Magog, just a major political realignment and the spiritual revival of Israel. The Second Coming involves the elements of the earth being consumed by fire. Gog and Magog is just the destruction of a large army and the land continues afterward.

**2 Peter 3:10-13 MKJV** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. And the earth and the works in it will be burned up. (11) Then, all these things being about to be dissolved, what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness, (12) looking for and rushing the coming of the Day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will melt away, and the elements will melt, burning with heat? (13) But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The judgment of Gog and Magog is designed to make the whole earth fear God. If this massive, but partial judgment is ignored, then the next judgment (the Second Coming) can justly be total and entire.

## Study 6 - The Aftermath

**Ezekiel 39:4-22 MKJV** *You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your bands, and the people with you. I will give you for food to the birds of prey of every kind, and to the beasts of the field. (5) You shall fall on the face of the field, for I have spoken, says the Lord Jehovah. (6) And I will send a fire on Magog, and on the secure inhabitants of the coasts. And they shall know that I am Jehovah. (7) And I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel. And I will not let them profane My holy name any more. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel. (8) Behold, it is coming, and it will be done, says the Lord Jehovah. This is the day of which I have spoken. (9) And the inhabitants of the cities of Israel shall go out and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the javelins, and the spears. And they shall burn them with fire seven years, (10) so that they shall take no wood out of the field, nor cut down any out of the forests for they shall burn the weapons for fire. And they shall plunder those who plundered them, and rob those who robbed them, says the Lord Jehovah. (11) And it will be in that day I will give to Gog a place there, a grave in Israel, the valley of those who pass by, east of the sea. And it shall stop those who pass by. And there they shall bury Gog and all his multitude. And they shall call it, The Valley of the Multitude of Gog. .... (21) And I will set My glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see My judgments which I have done, and My hand that I have laid on them. (22) So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward.*

Most of Ezekiel chapter 39 is a detailed description of the immense destruction that will come upon Gog and Magog and clean-up after the battle that goes on after seven months right down to graphic details such as birds feasting on the carcasses.

These verses contain some very puzzling details such as the weapons such as bows, arrows and spears being used for firewood. With modern weaponry this reference seems obsolete. This may be prophetic imagery, God's Spirit speaking using the words and images that existed in the prophets mind. Ezekiel would have had difficulty describing an AK-47. We simply have to modernize it. No one can write with words that do not yet exist for them! It is evident that the army is plundered and its materials are used as natural resources for the economy of Israel.

This principle of prophetic interpretation applies also to passages in Revelation such as “stars” falling to earth. “Stars” in Greek is *aster* or 'heavenly body' such as a comet, meteor, meteoroid, asteroid, planet, star and so forth. It is an extremely general word because of the lack of telescopes at the time of writing. Even today we refer to a meteor shower as “falling stars” and everyone knows what we mean. We have to understand the constraints on the writer and update the interpretation using today's more specific terms. I do not think that Revelation is teaching that stars such as Sirius B or Andromeda will crash into the Earth but is indicating a large number meteors, meteoroids, asteroids and perhaps even a few large comets “mountains burning with fire” will strike Earth.

I do not think that Gog and Magog will be riding horses or using bows and arrows. I do think it will be a highly mobile “cavalry” army of tanks and will be armed with the latest technology of that time. It will be large, fast, armored, mobile, well-equipped and terrifying – which is what Ezekiel is trying to convey to his readers at the time, and what they would have understood.

I believe that taking the Bible seriously and literally means making appropriate adjustments for time, language and culture so the modern reader receives the original meaning of the text. Over-literalism actually ends up detracting from the meaning. For instance some commentators have said that today's passage indicates an end to oil and modern transportation because “everyone has gone back to riding horses and using bows and arrows and burning firewood”. That I think is inserting something in the

passage that Ezekiel never intended and that his original readers would never have got from it. Ezekiel lived 2,500 years ago and used the words and images of his day to communicate to the Jewish exiles he was prophesying to. When we take the text, in its original linguistic and cultural context, then we can see that an army of horses, bows and arrows and armor would have been terrifying and well-equipped and an indication of imminent doom unless God intervened.

This requires the humility to realize that the Bible was not primarily written for us. We are simply its latest readers, during this small but very interesting window in the entire sweep of redemptive history.

The clean up is massive and takes seven months and teams scour the land for human remains and bury them in a mass grave that “stops” those who pass by. The procedure used is similar to that used for toxic waste such as biohazards or radioactive material.

**Ezekiel 39:13-16 MKJV** *And all the people of the land shall bury. And it shall be a name to them, the day when I am glorified, says the Lord Jehovah. (14) And men shall separate those who continually pass through the land, burying those who passed through, who remain on the face of the earth, to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they shall search. (15) And as they pass, those who pass through the land, and any man sees a bone, then he shall build a post beside it, until the buriers have buried it in The Valley of the Multitude of Gog. (16) And also the name of the city is The Multitude. And they shall cleanse the land.*

This may relate to the plague involved in the battle. Whatever the case, great care are taken in handling and burying the remains in a designated mass grave. This mass grave will “stop those who pass by” indicating it is “off-limits to tourists”. The references to being the corpses being eaten by wild beasts and birds of the air indicates that it is an undignified death and that no one cares for these bodies. They are not repatriated to the home countries. Instead they are left to rot. This may be indicative of there being “something wrong” - such as biological, chemical or nuclear hazards.

The purpose of Ezekiel giving all these details 2,500 years so was so that when it happens that people would see that the Gog and Magog prophecy was exactly fulfilled “down to the last detail”, thus indicating a sovereign divine hand at work. The outcome being that they would glorify God by accepting the explanations that Scripture gives for the event – Ezekiel 38:16,17,22-23; 39:21-23, 27-28



## Study 7 - Final Conclusions

Our study of the Gog and Magog prophecy has yielded the following 30 or so conclusions. The verses to back them up which can all be found in Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39 and Zechariah chapters 12 and 14.

1. That “Gog and Magog” is an alliance led by Russia and Iran, and includes Sudan, Libya and the Central Asian Republics (the “Stans”), as well as the areas around Turkey, Armenia, Belarus, Syria and Lebanon. (Ezekiel 38:1-6)
2. The nations involved are all Muslim nations or like Russia have significant Muslim populations (Ezekiel 38:1-6)
3. The Arabian merchant princes (Saudi Arabia etc) will be opportunistic financial backers of the war but may not send many troops. (Ezekiel 38:13)
4. Many come long distances to fight in Israel - “from the remotest parts of the north”. (Ezekiel 38:6,15; 39:2)
5. It is in the “Last Days” and is part of God ending this current age of history (Ezekiel 38:8)
6. It is a major event prior to the Second Coming but is not the Second Coming (Zechariah 14)
7. It is probably not the same as the plague in Zechariah 14 which seems to be the Second Coming
8. It is probably the same as the invasion and deliverance prophecy of Zechariah 12 which is also followed by a time of national repentance.
9. It is just prior to the fulfillment of the Valley of Dry Bones prophecy (Ezekiel 39:29)
10. It probably precedes the rebuilding of the Temple
11. It probably occurs just as the “times of the Gentiles” are concluding and the time for Jewish restoration is at hand. (Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25)
12. It occurs when Israel is restored to the land (Ezekiel 38:8,11)
13. It occurs when Israel is economically prosperous and at peace (Ezekiel 38: 11,12)
14. Israel is relatively undefended at this time - “without walls or gates” (Ezekiel 38:11,12)
15. God lures Gog and Magog into Israel in order to destroy them (Ezekiel 38:4, 39:2)
16. The motivation of Gog and Magog is financial - “to gather much plunder” (Ezekiel 38: 12,13)
17. The invading army is armored, well equipped, and highly mobile (Ezekiel 38: 4, 15)
18. It is a vast army “like a cloud covering the land” (Ezekiel 38: 9)
19. The army of Gog and Magog is defeated by divine intervention, using the forces of nature alone, such as earthquakes, plagues, hailstones, fire and brimstone. (Ezekiel 38: 18-23, 39:3-6)
20. The weapons and other military paraphernalia left over from the battle will be recycled and used as natural resources by Israel. (Ezekiel 39:9,10)
21. Gog and Magog are buried in a mass grave in Israel (Ezekiel 39:11)
22. The grave will be in a valley which will be named Hamon-Gog or the Multitude of Gog (Ezekiel 39:11)
23. There is a protracted and involved clean-up period of seven months perhaps the bodies are hazardous in some way (biohazard, chemical or nuclear?) (Ezekiel 39:12-16)
24. God is “sanctified” - by this powerful, spectacular fulfillment of prophecy (Ezekiel 38:16, 23; 39:27)
25. The outcome is a Jewish remorse, and revival of faith, they will know for certain that YHWH is their God. (Ezekiel 39: 7, 22-29)
26. Another outcome is that the nations realize that YHWH is the God of Israel and that the prophecies of Scripture are truthful. (Ezekiel 38;16,17 ; 39;21,23)
27. The nations also realize that Israel's exile was temporary and was because of sin, not because there was no God, or because of being abandoned by God. (Ezekiel 39: 21,23)
28. It results in Israel being able to live in peace, undisturbed for a long while (Ezekiel 39:26-28)
29. All the Jews from around the world will be regathered and live peacefully in Israel (Ezekiel 39:28)
30. God has compassion on Israel and pours out His Spirit upon them. (Ezekiel 39:29)

The natural question is “when will these things be” - which is what the disciples asked and Jesus gave a detailed answer to in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke chapter 21. Jesus answer was in 'event time' that is 'when you see these events..' rather than in clock time (in the year 2027). This is a common prophetic way of doing things. It is like when a teenager asks 'when will I get a car' and the parent answers “when you can drive safely and act responsibly and have a part-time job that pays for the gas” (event time) instead of “when you turn 18” (clock time). If you put Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 side-by- side the events Jesus predicts are (in approximate chronological order of 'first appearance'):

1. Social disturbance, wars, rumors of wars, international conflict, the birth pangs of the new order
2. The gospel being preached to all nations - “and then the End shall come”
3. The blossoming of the 'fig-tree' which is national Israel
4. Jerusalem back under Jewish control after a long Gentile occupation
5. The end of the age of the Gentiles
6. False prophets, false Messiahs, deceptive signs and wonders
7. Lawlessness leading to cold and selfish behavior
8. Apostasy
9. Intense persecution of the Church, betrayal and hatred of Christians
10. Wars, plagues, and famines on a much larger scale than before (in point 1)
11. An “abomination of desolation” being set up in the Temple
12. Severe earthquakes and massive natural disasters
13. Signs and wonders in the Heavens, terrifying sights, roaring seas and waves
14. The swift and sudden appearance of Jesus 'as a thief in the night'

These events are like actors coming onto a stage until the full drama is played out. For instance the false prophets come in early and stay until the end, gradually increasing in deceptiveness.

Well where are we now and where is the Gog and Magog event? I think we are currently somewhere between point 4 and point 7. In 1945 Archbishop William Temple announced that the Church was now in every nation on earth, by 1948 Israel was a nation again, in 1967 Jerusalem came under Jewish control except for Temple Mount. When the Temple Mount is back under full Jewish control then the age of the Gentiles will have ended and Israel will be center stage. For that to happen the Gog and Magog event may have to occur first resulting in the defeat of the Muslims and the peace and security required to rebuild the Temple. But there are a lot of Gentiles yet to be saved! God is patiently waiting 'so that none should perish' (2 Peter 3:9)

Finally though we need to heed Jesus last words to His curious apostles:

*So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, at this time are You restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*  
(Acts 1:6-8 HCSB)

In other words: Just let God be God and get on with sharing the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit!