

Gog-Magog

Satan's Final Assault and God's Ultimate Victory

A

38 The word of the Lord came to me: ²“Son of man, set your face toward **Gog**, of the land of **Magog**, the chief prince of **Meshech** and **Tubal**, and prophesy against **him** ³and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ⁴And I will turn you about and put **hooks into your jaws**, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great **host**, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. ⁵**Persia**, **Cush**, and **Put** are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶**Gomer** and all his **hordes**; **Beth-togarmah** from the uttermost parts of the north with all his **hordes**—many peoples are with you. ⁷“Be ready and keep ready, you and all your **hosts** that are **assembled** about you, and be a guard for them. ⁸After many days you will be mustered. In **the latter years** you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were **gathered** from many peoples upon **the mountains of Israel**, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them. ⁹You will advance, **coming on like a storm**. You will be like **a cloud** covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

B

39 “And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ²And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel. ³Then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. ⁴You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. ⁵You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord God. ⁶I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the Lord. ⁷“And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken.

¹⁰“Thus says the Lord God: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme ¹¹and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,’ ¹²to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. ¹³Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its leaders will say to you, ‘Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to seize great spoil?’

¹⁴“Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord God: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, will you not know it? ¹⁵You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. ¹⁶You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

¹⁷“Thus says the Lord God: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?

⁹“Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, ¹⁰so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord God.

¹¹“On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea. It will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried. It will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog. ¹²For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. ¹³All the people of the land will bury them, and it will bring them renown on the day that I show my glory, declares the Lord God. ¹⁴They will set apart men to travel through the land regularly and bury those travelers remaining on the face of the land, so as to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make their search. ¹⁵And when these travel through the land and anyone sees a human bone, then he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-gog. ¹⁶(Hamonah is also the name of the city.) Thus shall they cleanse the land. ¹⁷“As for you, son of man, thus says

¹⁸But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger. ¹⁹For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. ²¹I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²²With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. ²³So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many

the Lord God: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field: 'Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. ¹⁹And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. ²⁰And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,' declares the Lord God.

²¹"And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. ²²The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward. ²³And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. ²⁴I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them. ²⁵"Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. ²⁶They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, ²⁷when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. ²⁸Then they shall

nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. ²⁹And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 38-39

Supernatural Protectors of the City of London

He was born before the arrival of human settlers on [Albion](#), named after his mother Albina who with her 32 sisters, the daughters of Diocletian, King of Syria, were banished to the remote uninhabited isle where they were impregnated by [demons](#) (sons of God) and give birth to a race of [giants](#)—at least according to the *Matter of Britain*, the body of medieval legendary material associated with its founding. Where is Albion? Twelfth century historian and cleric [Geoffrey Monmouth](#) ([*The History of the Kings of Britain*](#), 1.16) tells us that Brutus the grandson of Aeneas the hero of Troy came to the isle and named it Britain (*bruti*), apparently after himself.

Over the course of time, Brutus sailed to Albion and came upon a remnant of **twenty last giants**, including a twelve-foot behemoth named **Gogmagog** who was so strong that he could tear up an oak-tree as though it were a hazel wand. He killed the giants, all except for Gogmagog whom he left alive so that his companion **Corineus**, a descendant of the Trojans who fled the war could wrestle with him in a match to the death. The air vibrated with their panting breath when suddenly Gogmagog gripped Corineus and broke three of his ribs. But the Trojan summoned his strength and heaved Gogmagog up on his shoulders, and turning as fast as he could under the weight, hurried off to the nearby coast. He clambered up to the top of the mighty cliff, shook himself free and hurled the deadly monster far out to sea, felling him on a sharp reef of rocks where he dashed into a thousand fragments that stained the waters with his blood, thus clearing the way for the Britons to found their kingdom.

Effigies of two giants were recorded in 1558 at the coronation of Elizabeth I and were described as “**Gogmagot the Albion**” and “**Corineus the Britain**,” but they became known as **Gog and Magog** over the years. New figures were carved in 1709 and permanently displayed in the Guildhall

in the City of London until 1940 when they were destroyed in a German air-raid. They were replaced in 1953.

Every year on the second Saturday in November, large wicker effigies of the two giants are paraded through the streets of the City of London where they serve as [the symbolic guardians of the tiny city](#).¹ Anyone who knows anything about the City of London knows that it is only 1.12 square miles *within* London, utterly autonomous, essentially the financial epicenter of planet earth, and has many dark and seedy conspiracies associated with its founders and control over the formation of world events for centuries. In fact some today think that the war being waged before our darkened eyes centers on taking down their evil system that has held so many peoples in their servitude. And [their protector is Gogmagog](#), the archenemy of the saints?

Gog and Magog: A View of the Landscape

Its Literary Design

After last week's biblical-theological story of [Amalek](#) and the great battle predicted by the prophet Balaam that

¹ All this is found at "[Gog and Magog](#)," *Wikipedia*, last accessed June 20, 2026.

will culminate in the Gog-Magog crisis, we saw how Balaam prophesied against **Agag** who became **Og** the giant or **Gog** in the LXX and how he also prophesied against Amalek, who is the ancestor of Agag and Haman. This in turn became the Amalek pattern, a kind of repeating historical type and shadow of the final Gog crisis. This week I want to take a look at the actual text of **Ezekiel 38-39** as well as its inspired commentary in **Revelation 20:7-10**. But before we look at the spiritual and prophetic implications of this text, let's first understand its **literary shape**.

The text itself comes to us as a series of **two** parallel **oracles**. One in Ezek 38, the other in Ezek 39:

- A** — Oracle against Gog: “I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal” (38:1-9)
- B** — Gog’s evil plan to plunder and pillage Israel (38:10-13)
- C** — Gog comes like a cloud (38:14-17)
- D** — God’s wrath & judgment: earthquake, sword, pestilence, rain, hailstones, fire, sulfur (38:18-23)
- A'** — Oracle against Gog: “I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal” (39:1-5)
- B'** — Reversal: Israel plunders those who plundered them (39:6-10)
- C'** — Gog becomes a feast for birds and beasts (39:11-20)
- D'** — God’s mercy, restoration, Spirit & vindication of His holy name (39:21-29)

Compellingly, these four paralleling sections closely (though not identically) match the **woven structure** of the passage, which comes as a two column, four row weave. This weave demonstrates **God's absolute sovereignty** over both human *and* supernatural evil. In Row 1, Column A shows God sovereignly hooking and drawing Gog like **Leviathan** from the uttermost parts of the **north**—a cosmic region associated with chaos and hostile spiritual powers—while Column B reveals that even this invasion is under God's control and serves His purposes. Row 2 highlights the reversal of evil schemes, as Gog's desire to plunder is turned back upon him. Row 3 intensifies the cosmic dimension: Gog advances like a dark cloud from the far north, only to meet total defeat as his hordes are buried in the land of Israel in the "**Valley of the Travelers**," after which they become a grotesque **sacrificial feast** on the mountains. Finally, Row 4 moves from divine wrath that shakes the created order to the climactic mercy of restoration, as God vindicates His holy name and pours out His Spirit upon His people. The structure as a whole reveals that God uses even the most terrifying supernatural enemies from the cosmic north to judge evil, display His glory, and bring about the ultimate renewal of His people.

The Interpretive History

The fact that we have two paralleling columns or chapters has led to some [interesting interpretations](#). For example, writing around 1940, David Cooper therefore saw two distinct *invasions* where he said, “[Ezekiel 38:1-39:16](#) is a prophecy of an invasion of the land of Israel by Russia and her associates, which occurs before the Tribulation. In [Ezekiel 39:17-29](#) is another prophecy regarding the invasion of Palestine by the armies of the world, which, as we know from related passages, will occur at the end of the Tribulation.”² He and others are trying to wrestle with this complicated text, but there are at least three problems. First, as we saw last week, there simply is [no ancient place known as Rosh](#), let alone in Russia which wasn’t even remotely called that until the Vikings. Second, notice how he doesn’t split the two battles according to *the chapters*, like you might expect when this is how the oracles break down, but has the second battle begin at the end of Ch. 39. Finally, he isn’t making good sense of the fact that John in Revelation uses the totality of Chs. 38-39 in Revelation 20 *after* the millennium, but

² [David L. Cooper](#), [*When Gog’s Armies Meet the Almighty in the Land of Israel*](#) (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1940. Reprint, 1970), 2.

also uses the very part Cooper wants to be the second battle in *Revelation 19*, supposedly *before* the millennium.

Christianity has long had a habit of **reading current enemies like Russia** into the Gog-Magog prophecy. This **is nothing new**. Since almost the beginning, interpreters have looked at whatever enemy was threatening God's people in their own day and declared, "This is Gog." In the early fourth century, Eusebius said Rus is the **Roman Empire** (*Demonst. of the Gospel* 9.3.6). In the late fourth century, while the Goths were invading Rome, Ambrose of Milan wrote, "**This Gog is the Goth**" (**Ambrose**, *Exposition of the Christian Faith* 2.16.138), directly applying Ezekiel's prophecy to the barbarian invasions of his lifetime. Centuries later, Marco Polo identified the **Mongols** (whom he called Tartars) with Gog and Magog as he traveled through their lands.³ During the Reformation, Martin Luther repeatedly taught that the **Ottoman Turk Muslims** were Gog and Magog, even publishing his translation of Ezekiel 38–39 as a warning to his people.⁴ So when modern prophecy teachers identify

³ **Marco Polo**, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1844), 268.

⁴ **Matthias Riedl**, "**Gog and Magog or Allies? The Perception of the Ottoman Empire in Martin Luther and Thomas Müntzer.**" In *Endzeitvorstellungen in den verschiedenen Kulturen*, ed. Felicitas Schmieder (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

Russia as Gog,⁵ they are simply continuing a very old pattern of seeing the headlines of their own generation and putting that as the meaning of the text.

But newspaper eschatology has never set well with me, even though I grew up in it. It almost always proves wrong. And that's where you need to know that this [isn't the only way](#) it has been interpreted. There is something called the [Alexander Romance legend](#), where very early Christian Syriac writings and prophecies portrayed Alexander the Great as building a massive wall or gate in the far north (often in the Caucasus region) using supernatural strength to pull mountain passes together to imprison the destructive hordes of Gog and Magog until the end of the age. Interestingly, this same prophetic imagery was taken up in Islam. The Qur'an and later Islamic sources picked up this same story, teaching that Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj would one day be released as a sign of the end, bringing destruction upon all peoples until Allah himself destroyed them.⁶

⁵ [Bochra Dakhli](#), "[Gog and Magog: A Recent Interpretation](#)." *Academia.edu*, 2023; [Hal Lindsey](#), with C. C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 59-71.

⁶ Others include [Emeri van Donzel](#) and Andrea Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Syriac and Islamic Sources: Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Boston: Brill, 2009); [A. A. Seyed-Gohrab](#), F. Doufikar-Aerts, and S. McGlinn (eds.), *Embodiments of Evil: Gog and Magog, Interdisciplinary Studies of the 'Other' in Literature and Internet Texts*, Iranian Studies Series (Leiden, Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2001); [Ory Amitay](#), "[Alexander the Great in Jerusalem, c1: The Greek Alexander Romance \(Epsilon\)](#)," in *Alexander the Great in Jerusalem: Myth and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025).

Into Alexander's supernatural legend, consider how some Fathers **did not understand an actual human** leader to be the source of this invasion, but *supernatural* evil. Though some taught—as we saw last week with the Esther idea, that it had already been fulfilled in the OT times or during the Maccabean period (Andrew of Caesarea), **Augustine** (*City of God* 20.11; Oecumenius; and others) generally understood Gog and Magog symbolically as **the devil** and his people, or as the proud nations of the worldwide city of the devil who will launch a final persecution against the church before the consummation of the age. That closely aligns with our interpretation from last week of fathers like **Tertullian** (*Against Marcion* 3:18) and **Justin** (*Dialogue* XC; XLIX) who described Amalek as ultimately a satanic foe.

In fact, there are very powerful reasons in both Ezekiel and Revelation to see that at the end of the day, this is a spiritual attack—at least at its roots—even if it does somehow possess hordes of humans to somehow attack God's people. It is the same kind of spiritual attack that has been waged against God's people since the OT and this is its climactic moment. This is what I want to now turn our attention to as we look at Ezekiel 38-39.

The Gog Oracles (Ezek 38-39)

Since there's so much here, we are going to take this in chunks rather than verse by verse. Our first section is **Ezek 38:1-9** (Row 1, Col A). Here the Word of the LORD commands the prophet to set his face against Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and to declare divine opposition to him and his vast coalition of nations. Astonishingly though, God announces that he himself will sovereignly intervene by **putting hooks in Gog's jaws** (4) and dragging him and his massive army out to attack the land of Israel. This coalition—drawn from Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, Beth-togarmah, and many other peoples—will come from the uttermost **parts of the north** in the latter years against a people who have been restored and now dwell securely. The passage presents this invasion not as the result of mere human ambition, but as something divinely orchestrated, with God personally summoning and directing Gog and his hordes like a wild beast under His control. *God*, not Gog, is the instigator of this event. God, not Gog, is the Sovereign!

There are three more things to think about here. The first is how **God has “hooks put in his jaws”** (**Ezek 38:4**). This is the language used elsewhere for **Leviathan**. **“Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook ... can you put a rope**

in his nose or piece his jaw with a hook” (Job 41:1-2)? This means, quite bluntly, that Gog is being likened to Satan, for Satan is Leviathan—the Dragon. As Isaiah says, “In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish *Leviathan* the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the *dragon* that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1). And John in Rev 20:2 calls him, “the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the *devil and Satan*.” This is your first clue that something else is going on than merely the latest manifestation of a nation rising to conquer the world. The supernatural nature of this foe is reinforced in Amos 7:1 LXX which discusses “One locust ... Gog, the king.” Calling Gog a locust reminds us of the demonic hordes that come out of the abyss in Revelation 9.⁷

Second, the origin of this army is in “the uttermost parts of the north” (Ezek 38:6). While this is a geographical reference, it is much more than pure geography. For this is *cosmic* geography! **Cosmic geography** refers to the ancient biblical worldview where physical directions, locations, and natural features carry spiritual or supernatural significance, reflecting the structure of the unseen realm. In the Bible, the north is repeatedly portrayed as the direction from which hostile,

⁷ For much more, see my sermon “[The Final Battle: Gog and Magog](#),” RBCNC (9-19-21).

chaotic, and rebellious spiritual and military powers arise. Especially, it is the location of Baal-Satan, the great enemy of the OT's mountain. **Isaiah 14:13** declares Lucifer's desire to sit on the "mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north." "Mount of Assembly" in Hebrew is "har mo'ed," and through the change of language and different letters, this becomes the source of our word Armageddon (the "h" drops off).⁸

Third, it is important to notice two things about **the human armies**. First, they come from the four corners of the earth: south, east, west, and north. This symbolizes a universal assault rather than a mere local war.

Nations of the Gog-Magog Crisis of Ezekiel 38-39					
Text	Nation	Direction from Israel	Text	Nation	Direction from Israel
38:2	Meshech	N	38:6	Gomer	N
38:2	Tubal	N	38:6	Bet Togarmah	N
38:5	Persia	E	38:13	Sheba	S
38:5	Cush	SW	38:13	Tarshish	W
38:5	Put	W	39:6	The Coastland	NW ⁹

⁸ See my sermon, "Armageddon: Assembling on the Mount of Assembly," RBCNC (7-11-21): 8-11; also **Charles C. Torrey**, "Armageddon," *HTR* 31.3 (1938): 237-48; **Meredith G. Kline**, *God, Heaven and Har Mageddon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf&Stock, 2006), 51-57; **Kline**, "Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium," *JETS* 39.2 (June 1996): 207-22; **Michael S. Heiser**, *The Unseen Realm* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 368-75.

⁹ Table in **Sverre Bøe**, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as Pre-text for Revelation 19,17-21 and 20:7-10*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe* 135 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 310.

Second, we know where all of these places are, and they aren't anywhere near Russia. Those in the north are all found in ancient Anatolia, or modern Turkey.



As we saw last time, the whole Russia idea comes from a misunderstanding of the word “*rosh*” (head, first).¹⁰ Thus, the ESV translates it not “Prince of Rosh” but “chief prince.” This is a powerful entity. In fact, calling him a chief prince (*archon* in LXX), because of his association with Satan, could easily bring to mind the angelic “princes” (archons) of **Dan 10:13, 21**—the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece,” and Heiser has argued that in fact the “chief prince”

¹⁰ The LXX does in fact have Rosh as a place name. However, the Dead Sea Scroll does not, nor does Aquilla. Nor, would I argue, does the Hebrew.

of Ezekiel 38-39 “is likely a divine being with geographical rule.”¹¹

In all of this it is critical to see that it is God who is gathering (Ezek 38:7) and *assembling* (8) Gog. God is sovereignly *orchestrating* this great crisis in what is called “the latter years” (8) which in NT eschatology refers to the Second Coming of Jesus.

Now, instead of continuing with Ch. 38, I want to *contrast the parallel* at the beginning of ch. 39, as it will immediately bring out some important insights. While Column A (38:1-9) focuses on God summoning and mobilizing Gog, Column B (39:1-8) focuses on *God defeating and destroying Gog*. God raises him up to be thrown down, so that God alone might be glorified for all events in the last days.

In 39:1-8, God turns Gog about again—but this time to bring him to his ruin. “Behold, I am against you, O Gog ... And I will turn you about and drive you forward ... Then I will strike your bow from the left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. You shall fall on the mountains of Israel” (39:1-4). Not his home mountain the far recesses of the north, but in God’s land. The same divine

¹¹ Michael Heiser, “The Divine Council in the New Testament: The Archons,” in *Behind the Façade* Vol. 3, No. 9 (Feb 2005): 33. In this short piece, he cites his book *Islam and Armageddon*, which is long since out of print. 32-34.

sovereignty that summoned Gog in chapter 38 now **actively disarms and overthrows** him in chapter 39. What begins as a divinely directed invasion in Column A ends as a divinely directed slaughter in Column B. The movement between the two oracles is therefore from mobilization under God's hand to destruction under God's hand. God indeed controls all events in human history exactly as he desires. Therefore, whatever this battle is to be about in its final iteration, **why should you fear**, O people of God? For God is directly sovereign over it from beginning to end. He will rain fire on Magog and they will know that he is the LORD (6). He will make his holy name known and not let it be profaned anymore (7), so that he might alone be glorified as sovereign over all things. This is why God tells you ahead of time.

Row 2. We turn back now to **38:10-13**. In this section, God reveals the evil intentions behind Gog's invasion. On the day of the attack, thoughts will arise in Gog's mind, and he will devise a wicked plan (10). Notice how even though God arouses him and directs his steps, that it is **his own heart that becomes evil**, not God's. Nor did God force this into Gog's heart. That's how sovereignty and responsibility

work together. The king devises his plan, but the Lord determines his steps. There are two agents, not one, involved. Gog is not a puppet, but he is the clay.

He will look at Israel— a land of unwalled villages whose people are dwelling securely — and decide to attack them because they appear defenseless and prosperous. Gog’s motive is purely predatory: he plans to plunder and seize spoil, carrying away silver, gold, livestock, and goods. The text emphasizes that Israel has been gathered from the nations and now lives at the “center of the earth” (12), cosmic geographical language for the navel, the *axis mundi*, the spiritual place around which the world spins. As Gog prepares his massive army, certain merchants (from trading places such as Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish—that is from Arabia to Spain) question his motives, asking whether he has assembled his hordes simply to take plunder. The passage makes it clear that Gog’s invasion is not driven by justice or provocation, but by greed and opportunistic violence against a peaceful and restored people.

Moving to its pair (39:9-10), the complete reversal of Gog’s evil intentions is dramatically displayed. After Gog and his hordes are destroyed, the people of Israel — those living in the cities — will go out and gather the weapons of

the fallen army. They will use these weapons as fuel for fire for **seven** full years. The number is clearly symbolic for the perfect amount of time. Shields, bucklers, bows, arrows, clubs, and spears will all be burned, so that the people will not need to gather wood from the countryside or cut it from the forests. In a striking reversal, those who came to plunder Israel will themselves be plundered. The very people Gog intended to despoil will now loot the plunderers and carry off their goods. What was meant to be Israel's loss becomes Israel's abundant gain.

We turn back to **38:14-17** and **Row 3**, before Gog's fall in Ch. 39. In this section, the Lord instructs Ezekiel to confront Gog with **a rhetorical question**: When God's people Israel are dwelling securely in their land, will Gog not take notice and come against them? The answer is that Gog will indeed arise from his place in the uttermost parts of the north, advancing with a vast **horde** of horses and riders — a great and mighty army. He is portrayed as coming up against the land of Israel **like a cloud** covering the land, evoking an overwhelming and ominous presence. Gog is the Storm! But *God* then declares that it is he himself who will bring Gog against His people “**in the latter days**,” and that this invasion had already been prophesied long ago by the

prophets (17), at the very least a reference to “north” as the direction of evil in the Psalms and prophets, if not also to the Balaam prophecy specifically.¹² In other words, what appears to be Gog’s aggressive initiative is actually part of God’s sovereign plan that was announced centuries earlier in “northern” prophecies.

Its pair is 39:11-20. The Lord declares that He will give Gog a burial place in Israel — specifically in the “Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea” (11). This valley will become a massive graveyard that blocks the way of travelers, and it will take the people of Israel seven months (again, symbolic) to bury the dead. Special teams will later be appointed to search the land for any remaining bodies so that the land can be cleansed. The scale of the slaughter is so great that a city in the valley will even be named Hamonah (“Multitude”), echoing the very name Abraham (father of a multitude of nations; Gen 17:4-5).¹³ The section then shifts to a dramatic invitation from God to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to come to a great sacrificial feast on the mountains

¹² Psalm 48:2; Isa 14:13; Job 37:22; Joel 2:20; Jer 19; etc. See Jiri Moskala, “[Toward the Fulfillment of the Gog and Magog Prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39](#),” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18.2 (Oct 2007): 247-50. 243-73. On Balaam, see the Targums and LXX.

¹³ See Kline, *Har Mageddon*, 261.

of Israel. They are called to eat the flesh of princes, warriors, mighty men, horses, and all the fallen hordes of Gog.

In contrast to 38:14-17, where Gog advances like a storm-cloud from the far north in apparent triumph, 39:11-20 shows the complete humiliation and reversal of that advance. The one who came to conquer and plunder ends up as dinner for birds and beasts, and his massive army of *gibborim* (“the mighty” but translated as *gigantes*; giants by the LXX) becomes nothing more than a burial project that takes seven months to complete. What began as a terrifying invasion in chapter 38 ends as a grotesque feast and a massive graveyard in chapter 39.

In light of these *gibborim*, let’s zoom in on this Valley of the Travelers for a moment (Hebrew: *ge ha'overim*). This is one of the more intriguing geographical details in the Gog oracle. The name “Valley of the Travelers” is deliberately ironic and carries deeper supernatural meaning. According to both the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, the Hebrew term *‘ōbērîm* (“Travelers” or “those who pass over”) isn’t referring to someone like Marco Polo, the famous “traveler” to China and Mongolia. Rather, it refers to the spirits of the dead who cross the boundary between the world of the living and the

realm of the dead. This usage finds a direct parallel in Ugaritic texts, where the *'brm* are identified with **the Rephaim** — divinized spirits of dead warriors and kings who were summoned in ritual meals (the *kispum*).¹⁴ In fact, this valley is in the same general territory as king Og reigned over—king Og the Rephaim giant! Remember Og-Gog-Agag?

The Valley of the Travelers, which will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog and though possibly a word-play in Hebrew on Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) and on Haman's later name, is likely located in Transjordan, east of the Dead Sea,¹⁵ in the region of ancient Moab (roughly modern-day central/northern Jordan) rather than in Jerusalem. Moab was also filled with giants called **Emim** (**Deut 2:11**; cf. **Gen 14:5**), meaning “**terrors, horrors, giants**,” until the Moabites dispossessed them. This area lies directly south of and adjacent to Bashan, the heartland of Rephaim/giant traditions that was densely covered with dolmens (megalithic tombs) and

¹⁴ See **Klaas Spronk**, “Travellers,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 876-77. I was first made aware of this by Dr. Heiser. See especially **Michael S. Heiser**, “[Naked Bible Podcast Transcript: Ezekiel 38-39, Part 2](#),” *Naked Bible Podcast* 153 (April 8, 2017).

¹⁵ As opposed to up north east of the Sea of Galilee. Derek Gilbert has uncovered some fascinating clues as to why this is and it involves Balaam's prophecy of Sheth-Seth that we looked at last week as being a cipher for Sodom, the discovery of this ancient city in recent years being identified as Tall el-Hammam, as well as the largest dolman field of a cult of the dead found in the Transjordan. This will appear in his upcoming book *War of the Watchers, Book I*.

ritual installations connected to the cult of the dead; by placing Gog's burial in the "Valley of the Travelers," Ezekiel is portraying the defeat and permanent internment (resting place) of what were once feared as powerful semi-supernatural beings that later people worshiped in their cult of the dead. The seven-month burial process and the organized search parties that follow emphasize the need to completely cleanse the land of their polluting presence.

We also should think about [this ghoulish feast](#) for a moment where the birds and beasts eat flesh and drink blood of the *gibborim*. Recall how Gog is being described using the satanic language of [Leviathan](#) and then how in vs. 17 it says to the birds, "[Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast ... you shall eat flesh and drink blood.](#)" In the second temple time period, the Jews talked a great deal about Leviathan being the main course of [the eschatological banquet](#) (1En 60:7-9, 24; 2Bar 29:4; 4Ezra 6:49-52; Midr. Pss. 23/7 on Ps 23:5a; etc.).¹⁶ Leviathan is a sea-beast, a dragon, even being symbolized in the beast of Revelation, so you have to think metaphorically here. The idea in Eze-

¹⁶ [William K. Whitney Jr.](#), *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in the Second Temple*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 63, ed. Peter Machinist (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

kiel seems to be that creation itself (birds and beasts) consumes the defeated chaotic forces of Gog and his demonic horde). And the fact that Bashan (vs. 18) is mentioned, is just one more element of the supernatural anatomy of this battle, for this is that realm of Og and the Watchers going from the Sea of Galilee up to Mt. Hermon. But there is a sense in which Jesus himself will give us the privilege of partaking in consuming evil once and for all, similarly to how we metaphorically partake in his body and blood at communion now—the very thing that brought about Satan’s legal defeat.¹⁷ More on that in a moment.

Let’s turn to the final pairing—**Row 4**. In **Ezekiel 38:18-23**, the Lord declares that “**on the day**” (another reference to the final battle before the Second Coming), Gog comes against the land of Israel, his fury will be aroused (18). God announces that there will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel (19) — so powerful that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, every creeping thing, and all humanity will tremble before him. Mountains will be thrown down, cliffs will fall, and every wall will collapse to the ground, for this quake is **the coming of God**

¹⁷ For more see **Douglas Van Dorn**, “[The Messianic Banquet: Feasting on Leviathan, Feasting on Christ](#),” *RBCNC* (5-28-23).

himself (20). The LORD then says *he* will summon every kind of terror against Gog, and that he will execute judgment with pestilence and bloodshed, along with torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and sulfur raining down on Gog, his hordes, and the many peoples with him (21-22). The passage ends with God declaring that He will magnify and sanctify Himself, making Himself known in the sight of many nations (23).

Contrast this destruction of Gog with its pair: 39:21-29. God explains [the purpose behind the entire Gog invasion](#). It is hardly because the world is out of God's control! Rather, the LORD declares that he will set his glory among the nations, and all the nations will see His judgment that He has executed (21). The people of Israel will know that it was because of their sin and uncleanness that God had previously hidden His face from them and handed them over to their enemies (22-24).

However, God now announces [a dramatic reversal](#). It is the culmination of 39 chapters of text and it naturally leads us into the final section of Ezekiel's Temple ([Chs. 40-48](#)). He will restore the fortunes of Jacob, have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and be jealous for His holy name (39:25). The people will forget their shame when they dwell securely

in their land (26). God emphasizes that He brought them back from the nations, gathered them, and vindicated His holiness before the eyes of many nations (27-28). Finally, He promises that He will no longer hide His face from them, but will **pour out His Spirit upon the house of Israel** (29). Pouring out his Spirit sets us up nicely for the return of the Holy Spirit in the Temple in the ensuing chapters.

Gog and Revelation (Revelation 19-20)

As you can see, we have much here that is simply **inexplicable on a purely human level** of just-another-war idea, even if it were something like Russia or a confederation of the European Union or something going against Israel. These chapters are deeply supernatural in flavor and point us all by themselves to the archenemy of our faith—Satan himself launching a decisive final campaign against the people of God—all at the instigation of God himself. Gog, for its part, is **closely related to Satan** (Leviathan, from the north¹⁸). He could be **a lesser angelic prince** of that region,

¹⁸ Technically: yarkêê šāpôn (Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2) the very same place that Baal is from, linking him directly to Satan in several verses in Ezekiel. See Kline, 261.

someone like Typhon-Seth.¹⁹ He very well could be the **Antichrist** figure of the NT and many have made that connection, which was already in development amongst the Jews prior to Christ.²⁰ Whoever he will be, he has had many typological successors from Amalek to Haman to Antiochus and he inspires demons and humans to go against Israel for one Final Battle in the last days.

In all of this, it is important to understand that we actually have **inspired NT commentary** on Gog, so we need to turn to Revelation for a few moments. The most obvious place to go is **Revelation 20:7-10**. It reads,

And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the

¹⁹ **Heiser**, *Reversing Hermon*, 175-78. Heiser does not say Gog is Typhon, but that Typhon serves as a remarkable parallel to Gog.

²⁰ **Meredith G. Kline**, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 259-70; **Geert Wouter Lorein**, *The Antichrist Theme in the Intertestamental Period*, vol. 44., *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 234-235.

lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Here is what you need to notice. First, look at how it connects Satan directly to this battle. It is Satan who comes out to deceive the nations—Gog and Magog—at the four corners of the earth. The two become a hendiadys (lit. “one by means of two”) or symbolic title of two complex ideas being revealed as one. It is a shorthand expression for the universal, end-time coalition of hostile nations and supernatural forces that Satan deceives and “gathers” for battle.²¹

Second, notice how it happens *after the millennium* where Satan was bound. So this isn’t taking place before the millennium on any kind of honest reading. Curiously, all

²¹ Heiser has a fascinating connection with Gog and Typhon. He argues that Gog functions as a supernatural chaos figure akin to the Greek monster Typhon—a giant-like opponent of the gods tied to Mount Zaphon and the Titans—who embodies the rebellious powers of the cosmic north, a reading strengthened by the presence of Dedan in [Ezekiel 38:13](#), who is identified in Ugaritic tradition with Ditanu/Didanu and explicitly paralleled with the Rephaim as the head of the assembly of deified royal ancestors (KTU 1.161), thereby further linking Gog’s coalition to the Rephaim-Titan complex from which the Greek Titans derive their name, and reinforced by [Revelation 20:7–10](#), where Gog and Magog appear alongside Satan in the final eschatological rebellion. See [Michael S. Heiser](#), *Reversing Hermon: Enoch, The Watchers & the Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ* (Crane, MO: Defender Pub., 2017), 175-78. On the Didanu-Titan connection see [Amar Annus](#), “[Are There Greek ‘Rephaim’? On the Etymology of Greek Meropes and Titans.](#)” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31 (1999): 13–30. On the Dedan as Rephaim and as Didanu see [K. Spronk](#), “Dedan,” *DDD*, edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, 2nd extensively revised edition (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 232–33.

millennial views have room for a kind of “little season” of Satan just prior to the new heavens and new earth being ushered in by Jesus’ coming in glory. I strongly think Christians should do a better job of admitting our *unity* on this point.

Third, there is a very interesting change of language from the “**hordes**” and “**hosts**” of Ezekiel to the “**sands of the sea**” in John. This is a deliberate shift that evokes the covenant promise God gave to the Patriarchs. God told Abraham after changing his name so that he would be the father of many nations, not just one saying, “**I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore**” (**Gen 22:17**). Jacob remembered that promise and called upon God to remember his word, “**But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea’**” (**Gen 32:12**).

By using this specific phrase, John suggests that Satan is not merely gathering a military force, but is **attempting to create his own people**. Like a dark parody of the covenant, he is trying to manufacture a vast, innumerable offspring that looks like the fulfillment of God’s promise. What he actually produces, however, is not a true nation or community, but a grotesque, stitched-together abomination —

something that has the outward shape of a people, spiritually and morally deformed, easily deceived, yet is fundamentally unnatural and monstrous—an army of **Frankenstein’s monsters**. This counterfeit “seed” then gives Satan a twisted justification for attacking the true saints, as though he were defending his own illegitimate offspring against rivals. This in turn gives Satan the self-justification—because he is now playing God, that he can go after the saints.

“The saints” takes us to the final thing I want to think about. Who are they? While it would take an entire sermon series to do that justice, in Revelation, **the saints are Christians** (**Rev 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7**; etc.). This is a book written to Christians, and I believe John is telling us that the ultimate expression of this war is that it is against Christ’s church, which is why after it is all over that the fullest expression of the church now comes like a bride adorned for her husband in the next chapter. God has protected her through every unnatural attack in the book, all the way to the end. In type and shadow, with Esther and the Maccabees that preceded this, it was actually the biological people more properly speaking. But this gives way to the one people of God in the NT, Jesus’ *ekklesia* where there is neither Jew nor Gentile—The Israel of God (**Gal 6:16**).

One of the more fascinating ways of [understanding this](#) is to realize that Revelation 20 is itself a recapitulation of Revelation 12. It is the same story being told sometimes using identical language, but from a different perspective. That's the cyclical nature of this apocalyptic book which is both chiastic and repetitive. The whole "[gathering](#)" idea is one of the keys you can use here, as the same word appears at the end of the last four cycle of the book—all of which describe a war using the same images and language (see [14:18-19; 16:16; 19:17, 19; 20:8](#)). Armageddon that I mentioned earlier even means "[the mount of assembly](#)" or gathering.

The recapitulation is seen more profoundly in the Gog story when you realize that John doesn't only talk about this battle in Ch. 20, but also [chapter 19](#), in what is supposedly [prior to the millennium](#). In my reading, however, it simply ends the cycle that Ch. 20 starts over at the binding of Satan and ends at his release. In other words, it is talking about the same thing. On a purely chronological reading of Revelation, this leads to some very difficult problems, because that chapter ends with a ghoulish feast that is eaten by the birds which comes straight out of Ezekiel 39, in fact the same part that several read as being the second of two Gog battles.

Instead of that, I believe what John is doing fundamentally undermines a chronological reading of the book here. For in telling us that the Gog battle is in ch. 19 *and* 20, both before and *after* the millennium, it simply points in another way to the fact that **both describe the same event**.

To me, the most significant pastoral part of that is how Ch. 19 itself has **two feasts**. First, there is the wedding feast of the lamb, celebrating Christ's victory over Satan at the cross. The second is the ghoulish feast of the birds, celebrating Christ's final victory over Satan. But the reality is, they are the same feast from two perspectives—one the First coming, the other the Second. Just as we now feast by faith on Christ's body and blood — the very act that legally defeated the Dragon — so we will one day feast on the visible defeat of every power that opposes Him.

At the end of it all, whatever you take on eschatology is, everyone should be able to agree on one thing. **Jesus Christ is the one who achieves the final victory**. In fact, as the Word of God who came to Ezekiel, he is the one who instigated this rebellion. And why? Precisely so that he could show his great power and glory and give that glory to his Father for protecting his people up to the very end. Beloved, if this is the kind of Savior we have, then how can we act in this

world as if God is not in control of present events—especially if those events happen to coincide with this very battle, which no one will finally even know for sure until after the fact? Far from thinking the world is out of control and that there is no hope, the Gog-Magog story tells you that it is **fully in God’s control**, all because God sent his Son to take care of this final foe.

Some of you look at the City of London, the modern empires of finance and technology, and wonder if the servants of Gogmagog are winning. Remember: God is the One who puts the hook in their jaws. They are not sovereign. They are not even original. They are bit players in a drama whose ending was written before the foundation of the world. It may be OK in a satanic world to have Gog and Magog be paraded through your precious city or carved into stone in your Guildhall. But not for me. It is difficult to conceive of something more blasphemous and in-your-face antichrist. Give me instead the One who has already defeated the dragon and all his hordes at the cross, and who will one day cast them into the lake of fire forever where they will never again tempt or hurt God’s people. As one song says and as I think Ezekiel himself knowing the Word of God personally would also say, “*Give me Jesus.*”

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