

I. The Questions

- A. Who are Gog and his confederates?
- B. When do they invade Palestine?

II. Gog Ezek 38:2

- A. Usage. 9x Ezek 28-29; 1 Chron 5:4; Rev. 20:8
- B. Etymological evidence
 1. Official title (like President). Comes possibly from a root "to be high."
2//Name arbitrarily formed by Ezekiel
 2. Albright connects it with a Sumerian word for darkness (Gug).
 3. Denotes a mountainous district north of Melitene on the confines of Armenia and Cappadocia (Gaga) (E. Turkey)
 4. Connected with Gagu, ruler of land of Saki, district N. of Assyria.

C. LXX use

1. Occurs in Numb 24:7; Deut. 3:1,13; 4:47; Amos 7:1. In each case name is used for the usual title for the king.
2. Numb 24:7. Gog translates Agag, an enemy of God's people. Perhaps shows that by time of writing of LXX Gog was general name for enemy of God's people (250 BC). However, support for Gog is found in Samaritan Pent., Old Latin, Theodotion. In this case Gog would mean official title.

Concl: Prob no historical connections in Ezek's mind. Just a name (and possibly title) for some future enemy of God's people. Person, not a land.

III.

Magog (38:2)

A. Identification.

1. Josephus: "but who are by the Greeks called Scythians."
2. Unger broadens term to include northern barbarian hordes. Albright too. Thus Japhetic people of Gen 10 who settled in Caucasus region between Caspian and Black Seas and from there spread east and west to form the great Indo-Germanic people. Ency Americana says people inhabiting present area from Rumania to Afghanistan and including whole central section of modern Russia.

- B. Relation to Russia. In Ezek's day Magog was inhabited by Scythians, but his prophecy concerned their posterity in many years to come; i.e., central section of modern Russia. This is the only place Russia is in the prophecy. ?Greeks included in this name all countries of north.

IV. Rosh

ASV

A. Is term a proper name (prince of Rosh, NASB) or adjective (chief prince, AV, RSV).

1. proper name. In LXX. Heb words "chief" and "prince" never connected elsewhere in Script. Arg from silence. Rosh identified with people called hoi Ros who dwelt on shores of Black Sea, in general area of Meshech and Tubal.
2. Adjective. Same kind of phrase in 2 Kg 25:18 which means chief priest, and not priest of Rosh.

B. Can it be identified with Russia?

1. Support: etymologically there is a connection between Rosh and Byzantine-Arabic Ros or Rus which is supposed to be a derivation of modern word Russia. Inhabited same general area as that of Meshech and Tubal between Black and Caspian seas.
2. Objections. No historical evidence for any nation called Rosh until 6-9th C. A.D., yet Meshech and Tubal referred to from 1100B.C. Ros of Byzantine-Arabic lit not used until 9th C A.D. of a people in Caucasus region. Russians not sure of derivation of their name. Some say didn't exist until 9th C. A.D. but others say goes back to 3rd B.C.

Concl: Rosh means chief as in A.V. but such people did not exist in Ezek's time.

V. Meshech and Tubal

- A. Some say people who lived east of Greece in what is modern Turkey. Skinner, Gen
- B. Others say Moscow and Tobolsk in Russia. Only evidence is similar sound, not

VI. Gomer, v

Cappadocia in Ezek's day=northcentral and north west Turkey. Some say Germ pushed there. Togarmah is son of Gomer and also (Armenia) Turkey. Persian from east, Cush (Arabia, not present African Ethiopia). Put-Lybia in N. Africa.

VII. Some facts about the invasion

1. The alliance, 28:1-6.
2. unwallled villages, 11. *v 7 guard or leader a commander*
3. spoil, 12 (riches of Dead Sea)
4. Sheba, Dedan =Arab people. Tarshish=Spain (or Sardinia). Not allies of Is, just questionin
5. dwell safely, 14
6. from north, 15. on horses
7. previously prophesied, 17. No specific prop (unless Gog=Assyrian of Isa 10:5-16), but general prophecies of God's judgments. Numb 24:17-24; Dan 2:44-45.
8. God fights, 39:1 and leads thee on (v. 1, rather than leave but 1/6th).
9. Defeated on mts of Is by fire from God, 4,6.
10. Buried east of Jordan and Dead Sea, 11. 7 months. Valley gets new name.
11. 17-20 same scene as Rev. 19. Same time?

VIII. Time of battle

- A. End of ch age (Cooper). Is safely in land, but 38:8 says for Is' s latter days.
- B. End of trib. Ezek diff from all descriptions of Armageddon.
- C. Beg of M. ACG. Dwell safely, but Satan bound.
- D. End of M. Based on Gog in Rev. 20:8 but diff--all nations vs from north
- E. Midd of trib. Dwell safely under covenant with AntiX=false safety.
Rev. 13:7 says beast has world-wide power, so north must be destroyed.
JDP puts this before breaking of cov. *or world = Roman*

Possibly at end of trib bec of 17-20 = Rev 19. Safety would be imagined safety under foreed protection of AntiX. Egypt and Russia launch simultaneous attack (Dan. 11). God destroys Russia (85%). AntiX destroys Egypt and Lybia joins with him (Dan 11). 16% of North not killed regroup and along with kngs of East trouble AntiX. Returns and sign (Matt 24) unites east and AntiX (and what's left of North) against X.

Chapter ?
THE CAMPAIGN OF ARMAGEDDON
What Is Armageddon?

The very word evokes different images in peoples' minds. When nuclear weapons were first discovered, many military and political leaders announced that Armageddon was at hand. This meant that the end of the world was near because of the terrible destructive power of those weapons. Whenever a war breaks out somewhere in the world we are warned that if it cannot be contained or stopped it might lead to Armageddon. Many understand Armageddon as having "no specific geographical reference in the designation and take it to be a symbol of the final overthrow of evil by God."¹ But Armageddon, however conceived, conveys something to be greatly feared and, hopefully, something that will never happen in our lifetime.²

Nevertheless, Armageddon will happen some day, and it will not be a battle between certain nations on this earth nor a general conflict between good and evil, but the decisive battle between our Lord Jesus Christ with His heavenly armies and armies of this earth.

The Campaign of Armageddon

John describes Armageddon as the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14). Instead of translating *polemos* as "battle," some translations use the word "war." "Battle" focuses on a single engagement while "war" includes several battles, a campaign. Probably both emphases are valid, for there will be several battles encompassing more than the local area of Megiddo that precede the final and climactic battle at Megiddo. The concept of a single battle is found in Revelation 12:7 (Satan and Michael and their respective angels; see also Luke 14:31), while the idea of a campaign or war is in Revelation 12:17 where Satan will mount a sustained campaign against Israel.

The Various Battles in the War of Armageddon

Though not all agree as to the time of the battle of Gog and Magog prophesied in Ezekiel 38-39, I incline to the view that it will take place after the middle of the tribulation, in the last half of that seven year period. At the midpoint of the Tribulation Antichrist will break his treaty with the Jewish people which, among other features, will guarantee protection for their worship in a temple in Jerusalem during the first part of the Tribulation, and will place himself in the temple demanding to be worshiped (Daniel 9:27; Matthew

¹ *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), p. 1944 (note on Rev. 16:14).

² While writing this in the summer of 1998, I saw an ad for a movie called "Armageddon." The blurb describes it by saying that the lead actors "drill a hole in an asteroid while it's zooming toward Earth and plant a nuclear device to blow it off course."

24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). The battle of Gog and Magog will involve Antichrist pitted against a coalition of nations from the north of Israel. Egypt, the King of the South, will also join the attack against Israel in a kind of pincer movement which will require Antichrist either to divide his forces and take on both attackers at the same time or to try to defeat the weaker enemy first. He apparently will decide to do the latter and turn his attention first to defeating Egypt. He will conquer Egypt and apparently at the same time subdue Libya and northern Sudan which are part of the northern coalition (Daniel 11:42-43; Ezekiel 38:5)). But while in Egypt, Antichrist will be troubled by threats from the east and north (verse 44). So he will apparently turn his attention to the coalition from the north of Israel which by this time will have entered Israel. If this northern coalition is the King of the North of Daniel 11:40 (which is likely), then those nations may start moving toward Israel shortly after the midpoint of the Tribulation but not arrive in the land in full force until months later because of the greater distances and more difficult terrain involved than the King of the South will have to cross in order to attack Israel.

The countries of that northern coalition are listed in Ezekiel 38:2-6. They include the territory of Magog which will be ruled by Gog and was identified by Josephus as the land of the Scythians, the region north and northeast of the Black Sea and east of the Caspian Sea. Today these are the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States including Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan and perhaps also some of the smaller states of the Commonwealth. Meshech and Tubal includes the area of modern Turkey. Persia is modern Iran; Ethiopia, northern Sudan; Put, Libya; Gomer, probably the eastern part of Turkey and Ukraine; Beth-togarmah, the part of Turkey near the Syrian border. Many, but not all of these nations now have a large Muslim population.

When Antichrist returns from Egypt into Israel he finds no living opposing army. God will destroy that northern army by sending "pestilence and . . . blood . . . an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezekiel 38:22). As a result this mighty army "shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you, and all your troops, and the peoples that are with you; I will give you unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. . . And I will send a fire on Magog. . . I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel. . . and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude" (Ezekiel 39:4-5, 11).

With Egypt subdued and Gog, Magog, and their allies destroyed by God, the only enemy remaining for the Antichrist (who is the western leader of the revived Roman empire countries) comes from the east. This coalition of the "kings of the east" (Revelation 16:12) will discover to their great surprise that the Euphrates river, which they must cross in order to enter the Holy Land,

will have been dried up, making it easy to cross. The Euphrates river is the longest river of western Asia originating in the mountains of Armenia in modern Turkey and emptying into the Persian Gulf 1780 miles downstream. It is at its lowest in September but rises eight feet by May with the melting of winter snows.

Are the kings of the east the same as the 200,000,000 hoard that kill a third of mankind in the sixth trumpet judgment (Rev. 9:13-21)? They will be released by four angels who until that time are bound in the river Euphrates. Some interpreters equate the two groups; other do not. The time between the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl will be short, which may support identifying them as the same group. On the other hand the kings of the east seem to be completely human, while the 200,000,000 are more likely either demons or demon-possessed humans. This may indicate that they are not the same group.

The final military battle will be mainly between West (under Antichrist) and East (under the kings of the east) and will engulf the entire Holy Land. It will also involve other nations that have not been destroyed (e.g. nearby African ones?) because the three demons will incite the kings of the whole world to join the war (verse 14). Satan knows the Bible, so he knows that Christ's second coming is near and that He will return to the earth, the same place from which He ascended. So Satan, the prince of this world, will make one last and unsuccessful attempt to thwart God's plan to glorify His Son and establish Him as the rightful ruler of this world.

The Defeat and Destruction of the World's Armies

The Scriptures seem to indicate three foci of the destruction of the armies of the world at the second coming of Christ. One relates to Jerusalem, another to Megiddo in the north of Israel, and the third to Edom to the south and east of Israel (in present-day Jordan).

Jerusalem. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city . . . And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave [be split] in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Him" (Zechariah 14:2-5).

According to this passage, at the end of the Tribulation the armies opposing the Lord will attempt to capture Jerusalem with house-to-house fighting and will be successful temporarily. But the Lord will empower the inhabitants of Jerusalem to fight like the mighty King David (Zechariah 12:8).

Too, He will send a plague “wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth” (Zechariah 14:12). And the Lord will come and stand on the mount of Olives from which He ascended (Acts 1:11-12). The mount of Olives will split, providing a valley through which survivors may flee, and He “will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zechariah 12:8-9). At His second coming Israel will recognize Jesus as her Messiah, acknowledging with deep contrition that He was the One whom their forefathers pierced (12:10). The land will be healed and changed, and the Lord will be king over all the earth (14:9-10).

Jerusalem will be a center of tremendous fighting just before and at the second coming of Christ.

Megiddo. As we have noted, God will send an angel to pour out His wrath by drying up the eastern boundary of the Holy Land, the river Euphrates, to facilitate the crossing of the kings of the east. Satan, the Antichrist, and his false prophet will send three demons to convince world leaders to send their troops to Megiddo. To authenticate their message, these demons will be able to work miracles which will convince the nations to mobilize for the battle of Armageddon. God is involved, Satan is involved, Antichrist is involved, and doubtless governmental bodies will be involved by ratifying the actions of their leaders--all are involved to bring the climactic battle at Megiddo.

The outcome of the conflict at Megiddo is certain--Christ and His heavenly armies will win and win decisively.

Will the conflict that centers in Jerusalem precede or follow that which centers in Megiddo? It is hard to tell. If Megiddo follows Jerusalem, perhaps it will be because having been routed from Jerusalem, the armies retreat north to Megiddo to regroup, bivouac, and prepare for what they assume will be the next attack on them. Then the coming of Christ will utterly destroy those armies. So extensive will be the slaughter that an angel will call the birds to eat the flesh from the corpses of those who have been killed (Revelation 19:17-18). Then Antichrist, his false prophet, and his followers, those who received his mark and worshiped him, will be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone forever.

If the conflict in Jerusalem follows that at Megiddo, it would mean that some troops would be in Jerusalem fighting at the same time as others are gathered at Megiddo. In other words warfare would be happening at Jerusalem and Megiddo. If the war in Jerusalem follows that in Megiddo, then our Lord apparently will first destroy those armies gathered at Megiddo (though not necessarily setting foot on the earth), and then He will move to Jerusalem,

stand on the mount of Olives, and put down the conflict there.

By either scenario, the entire land will be engulfed in wars which will only be stopped by the victorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Edom. Isaiah foresaw this center of conflict as recorded in Isaiah 63:1-6. The Lord is portrayed as coming from Edom (a nation which often opposed Israel and was therefore under God's wrath, Malachi 1:4) and from Bozrah in Edom which is about 20 miles southeast of the southern tip of the Dead Sea. There He will tread the winepress of His wrath and destroy His enemies (see also Rev. 14:17-20).

Rather than thinking of these centers, Jerusalem, Megiddo, and Edom in some sort of sequence with regard to battles, we should perhaps think of them as giving us the total picture of the nearly simultaneous battles of the war of the great day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:14). In other words the war will encompass the whole land from Megiddo in the north, Jerusalem in the center, and Edom in the southeast. That distance is about 140 miles. The clue that this might be the best way to view the war and these three centers is found in Revelation 14:20 which describes a river of blood 180 miles long and up to four and one-half feet deep. That would include the area from Megiddo to Edom with some miles to spare on both ends.

The Identification of Armageddon

To identify Armageddon with Megiddo is the most probable and usual interpretation. However, throughout history the site has been debated. The oldest identification was put forth by Hippolytus (died around A.D.236) who understood it to be the valley of Jehoshaphat, mentioned in Joel 3:2 as the place of judgment of the nations.

It has also been connected with the area west of the Euphrates river across which the kings of the east will come. However, it is argued that since the Tell of Megiddo was probably only 70 feet high in John's day, it is not tall enough to designate it as a mountain (the meaning of Har in Harmageddon). In response, it is pointed out that Megiddo is near the Carmel range of mountains which justifies the use of the word "mount."

Another complicating factor is the fact that the spelling of Megiddo is different from Harmagedon. The Greek of Revelation 16:16 (Harmagedon) has only one d while some manuscripts spell Megiddo with two (including the Septuagint). The final n on Armageddon but not on Megiddo also presents a problem.³

On the other hand, the valley of Megiddo has been an important center as well as the site of various battles throughout history. About 1482 B.C. Thutmose III, one of the greatest Egyptian conquerors, launched a successful campaign to subdue his vassals in Palestine among whom was the king of

³ Eb. Nestle, "Har-magedon," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, James Hastings, editor (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1910), 1: 304-5.

Megiddo. In the days of Deborah and Barak (1195-1155 B.C.) a battle against the Canaanites under Jabin took place at Taanach "by the waters of Megiddo" (Judges 5:19). Solomon made Megiddo one of locations for his standing army. After his anointing as king of Israel in 841 B.C. Jehu went to Jezreel and killed Jehoram, the reigning king of Israel. Ahaziah, king of Judah, fled from Jehu to Megiddo where he died (2 Kings 9:27). King Josiah trying to intercept Pharaoh-necho at Megiddo in 609 B.C. was killed at Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29). However, none of these events can compare with the climactic battle at the second coming of Christ, and there is no compelling reason not to locate it at Megiddo at the head of the Jezreel (or Esdraelon) valley.

Why Will Armageddon Be Necessary?

Living as we are in the day of God's longsuffering, patience and grace, it is sometimes difficult for believers to even think that God might act otherwise. And when you add the many displays of His grace during hundreds of years past, it tends to become even more difficult. Even with the judgments with which He afflicted Israel, and judgments that the world has seen since the first coming of Christ, these beside the terrible judgments of the Tribulation, the wars of that time, and especially the slaughter that leads to Armageddon.

Why will God do this? For one reason He must protect His people Israel. He made promises to them beginning with Abraham some of which have not been fulfilled. If the Gentiles who will hate them in the Tribulation would be able to exterminate them (Matthew 24:9), or if Satan who will vent his fierce anger against Israel in the Tribulation would be able to succeed in wiping Israel out (Revelation 12:13-17) then there would be no Jewish people left to fulfill the yet unfulfilled promises of God to them. The land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates was promised to Abraham's physical descendants (Genesis 15:18-21). That has never been literally fulfilled. One of the promises made to King David could not be fulfilled if Israel were not protected and preserved ("I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they dwell in a place of their own, and move no more," (2 Sam. 7:10). Or "Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (Joel 3:20). Or another-- "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel . . . and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says the Lord thy God" (Amos 3:14-15). Or another-- "You also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Or another-- "This generation [the Jewish race] shall not pass, till all these things [the judgments of the Tribulation described in the preceding verses] be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34). If God does not prevent the Jewish people from being annihilated during the Tribulation (or any other time) then these promises either have to be left unfulfilled or fulfilled by Gentiles or the church which totally contradict the words of these texts

which clearly and specifically say that Israel will fulfill them. But He will protect Israel, and many who survive the Tribulation will turn to Him in repentance and salvation (Zechariah 12:10).

For another reason, the Almighty must punish the wickedness of the nations of the world and put down all rebellion against Him, the living and true God. Since Adam and Eve first sinned much of mankind has exhibited an unbroken record of rebellion against God. This in spite of all the evidences He has given in the world around us, in His dealings with Israel in the Old Testament, and most vividly in the coming of Jesus Christ, and the worldwide proclamation of the good news that anyone who believes can be reconciled to God and possess eternal life. But people have rejected His advances and turned to their own wicked ways. In the Tribulation wickedness and rebellion will be unmasked to reveal the hardness of the human heart (Revelation 9:20-21; 16:9, 11). God's patience has been for the purpose of giving people time to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9). But that will come to an end at His second coming. At Armageddon He will "smite the nations and He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15). At Armageddon He will "destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:9). And at Armageddon He will tread down the people in [His] anger, and make them drunk in [His] fury, and [He] will bring down their strength to the earth" (Isaiah 63:6).

Enemies subdued, Israel exalted, the earth renovated, the King of kings and Lord of lords reigning in absolute righteousness, and--grace upon grace--we believers reigning with Him--all will usher in the glorious millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.