

GOG, THE LAND OF MAGOG

Contextual Interpretation
The Lord's Own Interpretation
Comparing Scripture with Scripture

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (Ezek. 38:1, 2).

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:7, 8).

The words “Gog and Magog” are only used together *TWO* places in all Scripture — once in Ezek. 38:2, and once in Rev. 20:8. And both refer to *exactly the same thing, seen in two separate battles, separated by 1,000 years.*

One battle occurs *immediately before the Millennium*, and the other occurs *immediately following the Millennium*. Both battles have to do with *Satanic-led Gentile armies, originating from the nations of the earth*. And both battles have to do with *these armies being led against the Jewish people, beginning at Jerusalem.*

As well, as will be shown, both battles occur when “the whole house of Israel” (all Jews) *has been restored to their land, with their Messiah present, in the nation's midst.*

One battle occurs *immediately before the Jewish people, with their Messiah, occupy the nation's proper position relative to all the Gentile nations of the earth* (at the head of the nations, with the nations being reached by and blessed through Israel). And the other occurs *immediately following the Jewish people, with their Messiah, occupying this position for 1,000 years.*

Both battles have to do with *EXACTLY THE SAME THING* — *final attempts by Satan to destroy the Jewish people, along with their Messiah.*

The first will be led by a man seated on Satan's “throne,” to whom Satan will have given his “power” and “great authority”; and *the second* will be led by Satan himself (Rev. 13:2; 19:19; 20:7-9).

Interpretation — Two Verses

Scripture is to be interpreted *in the light of itself* — contextual and comparing Scripture with Scripture, recognizing the different ways God has structured His Word (1 Cor. 2:9-14; Heb. 1:1).

To begin, note that there is *NOTHING in the New Testament which is not seen after some fashion in the Old Testament*. In that respect, *the Old Testament is COMPLETE in and of itself, apart from the New Testament*. The New Testament can do no more than open up and further explain that which already exists in some form or fashion in the Old Testament, which is exactly what God designed it to do.

If the preceding were not true, the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 2, 14) following the completion of the Old Testament but before a single word of the New Testament had been written would be *incomplete*.

And viewing both Testaments after this fashion, which is the only possible way that they can be properly viewed, the reference to and explanation of “Gog and Magog” in Rev. 20:8 can only be seen as inseparably connected with “Gog, the land of Magog” in Ezek. 38:2. Strictly from a Biblical standpoint, *there can be NO other possible way to view the matter.*

Then, viewing matters in this manner, it could only be said that Rev. 20:8 has been designed to help explain and shed further light on Ezek. 38:2, and vice versa. The two references are parallel, inseparable references.

Thus, “Gog and Magog” in Rev. 20:8 forms an expression *which could ONLY have been derived from and have a connection with ONE Old Testament verse* — Ezek. 38:2. And when Ezek. 38:2 and Rev. 20:8 are viewed together in this respect, *it all becomes relatively simple and quite clear.* Another way to say

this would be, *when Scripture is compared with Scripture, it all becomes relatively simple and quite clear.*

In Rev. 20:8, the expression is used in a synonymous respect, or a parallelism, to the two parts of the statement immediately preceding — “nations [Gog] which are in *the four quarters of the earth* [Magog].” And with the expression used this way in Scripture's own interpretation of the Scripture from which it was derived, strictly from a Biblical standpoint, it would *NOT be possible* to see Ezek. 38:2 refer to *OTHER than the interpretation, to OTHER than the nations of the earth* as well.

The preceding, of course, has to do with *contextual interpretation added to comparing Scripture with Scripture, further explaining Ezek. 38:2 and Rev. 20:8.*

(Note in Ezek. 38, 39 that the name “Gog” is used to reference not only *the nations* but, at times, it is used as a *synonym for the nations' leader* as well [cf. 38:2, 14, 15; 39:1-5, 11].)

Interpretation — The Nations

To describe these nations in Ezek. 38:2-6, five descendants of Japheth are listed — four sons and one grandson (“Magog,” “Meshech,” “Tubal,” “Gomer,” and “Togarmah” [Gomer's son]). Then three countries are mentioned (one Middle East, and two north African), forming a *trilogy* in relation to the descendants of Noah's three sons (evidently referencing *ALL nations, as in v. 2*) — “Persia” (Iran [descendants of Japheth]), “Ethiopia” (descendants of Ham) and “Libya” (descendants of Shem).

Japheth, the eldest of Noah's three sons, was to be “enlarged” (Gen. 9:27). His descendants populated countries in the area north of Israel in the Black, Caspian, and Baltic Sea areas, extending into other surrounding countries (centrally, Europe, Russia, and the surrounding countries).

And a heavy emphasis on the descendants of Japheth in the prophecy would only be natural. They were the ones who would populate a large part of the globe, with armies from a global population in view in Ezekiel's prophecy.

But there is far more to the matter than just the preceding, pointing to armies from the four points of the compass, as seen in the counterpart to Ezek. 38:2, in Rev. 20:8. There are surrounding Scriptures to Ezek. 38:2-6 which shed light on the matter as well.

(Note that when nations are mentioned with respect to the battle seen in Ezek. 38, 39 [often referred to by individuals as “Armageddon,” a battle referenced over and over in Scripture (cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 14:14-20; 16:14-16; 19:17-21)], there is always either one nation or several nations listed, representing ALL NATIONS.

Ezekiel 35 and chapters 38, 39 are parallel sections, with the latter two chapters forming commentary on that previously seen in chapter 35. “Mount Seir” is referenced beginning chapter 35, which was the home of the Edomites [cf. vv. 2, 15; cf. Deut. 2:5]. And, comparing Scripture with Scripture, note in Isa. 34:1ff that “Edom” is used in a parallel text to represent ALL of the Gentile nations [vv. 1-8], which come under God’s judgment “in the day of the Lord’s vengeance,” which has to do with that coming day seen in Ezek. 38, 39.

And the same thing is seen in Ps. 83, where ten named nations seeking to do away with Israel [“ten,” showing completion, as well as Antichrist’s ten-kingdom confederation of nations] represent ALL the Gentile nations in that coming day.)

Interpretation — Context

In the chapter preceding chapters 38, 39 in Ezekiel (ch. 37), one finds the account of the valley of dry bones (vv. 1-10), followed by the Lord’s Own interpretation (vv. 11-14), with the remainder of the chapter taken up with millennial conditions once the Jewish people have been restored to their land (vv. 15-28).

The valley of dry bones, in its entirety, has to do with “the whole house of Israel,” clearly seen in the interpretation. And, since a restoration of “the whole house of Israel” is involved, the matter not only has to do with events following Messiah’s return at the end of the Tribulation but with events following Israel’s national conversion as well (ref. the author’s article, “The Whole House of Israel”).

Scripture ALWAYS places Israel’s restoration, as seen in Ezek. 37 (e.g., Deut. 30:1-3; Matt. 24:29-31), at a time FOLLOWING the nation’s national conversion.

According to both typology on the subject and the order seen in the seven Jewish festivals (Ex. 12:1ff; Lev. 23:1ff), the national conversion of Israel occurs while the Jewish people are STILL scattered among the nations.

In typology, the application of the blood of dead paschal lambs PRECEDED the Israelites’ departure from “Egypt” (a type of the world) under Moses, with a view to an inheritance in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The antitype has to do with the Israelites STILL scattered among the nations (still in Egypt) when they apply the blood (by faith) of the Paschal Lamb which they slew 2,000 years ago. ONLY THEN will they be led out by the One greater than Moses, with a view to an inheritance in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Relative to the seven Jewish festivals showing EXACTLY the same thing in their orderly structure (ref. the author’s article, “The Prophetic Calendar of Israel”), the first festival is the Passover. Again, Israel has slain the Lamb, but they MUST still apply the blood. And this MUST be done FIRST, BEFORE anything else can occur (e.g., their being regathered from the nations, shown in the fifth festival — the feast of trumpets).

A major, two-fold mistake is often made in the interpretation of Ezek. 37, which carries over into chapters 38, 39. Individuals look at an Israeli nation in the land today and attempt to interpret the Lord’s Own interpretation of the valley of dry bones, reading current events into Biblical prophecy. And, because of the inseparable nature of these three chapters, this mistake will negatively affect the interpretation of all three, presenting a completely wrong understanding of practically everything.

A restoration of the Jewish people is mentioned several places in Ezek. 38, 39, a people dwelling safely and at rest (38:8, 11, 12, 14; 39:7ff). And, to properly understand these two chapters, a person

MUST see this restoration as THE SAME RESTORATION carried over from the previous chapter (ch. 37). Actually, to see this restoration any other way, and remain Scriptural, would NOT be possible.

Then, Israel’s Messiah is seen as PRESENT with His people, in the land, when these Gentile armies come against Israel (38:20), which necessitates a time following Christ’s return at the end of the Tribulation.

Then, beyond the preceding, the account itself tells the reader EXACTLY when this battle will occur. It will occur “in that day” (38:14, 19; 39:8, 11) — an expression which MUST be understood contextually, but more often than not refers to events in the Lord’s Day, which CAN’T begin until Man’s Day is over.

Interpretation — Additional Thoughts

Note a comparison of the valley of dry bones in Ezek. 37 and the harlot woman in Rev. 17-19a. Metaphors are used in both instances, the interpretation is given in both instances (Ezek. 37:11-14; Rev. 17:18), and both present two different pictures of EXACTLY the same thing — Israel’s current condition, a condition which will persist and reach its apex during the Tribulation, with restoration occurring following the Tribulation (ref. the author’s book, *Mystery of the Woman*).

REMAIN with the context; you will come out ahead every time!

REMAIN with comparing Scripture with Scripture; you will come out ahead every time!

REMAIN with the Lord’s Own interpretation; DON’T attempt to interpret the interpretation; you will come out ahead every time on the former and end up in a sea of misinterpretation every time on the latter!

And DON’T attempt to interpret Scripture in the light of current events; you will also ONLY end up in a sea of misinterpretation every time!

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