

Gog from Magog: *A Study in Prophetic Chronology*

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The approximate time of the invasion of Israel's land by Gog from Magog (Ezek. 38:2) remains a debatable question among pre-tribulational theologians.

Three options are available. First, some place an invasion at the very beginning of the 70th week (i.e., the coming seven-year tribulation, which follows the rapture of the church; cf. Dan. 9:27). A second possibility would be just before the middle of that week. Finally, some place it at the end of the week.

For several reasons, the second option, namely an invasion just before the middle of the 70th week, seems to involve the fewest problems.

The first and third options face the very difficult problem of having Gog entering the Holy Land ("the midst of the land" [Ezek. 38:12]) when its inhabitants "dwell safely" (Ezek. 38:8, 11, 14) in "unwalled villages" (v. 11).

The third option is immediately eliminated because at the end of the great tribulation period the Jews will have been driven out of the land (Matt. 24:15-22; Rev. 12:13-17).

The same problem faces the first option. How can Israel experience any security in her land until she enters into a firm covenant with "another horn, a little one" (Dan. 7:8) – the Antichrist (cf. Dan. 9:27 and John 5:43)?

To solve this problem, it has been suggested that Gog (assumed by this writer to be Russia) will have been destroyed several years before the 70th week actually begins to allow time (after the rapture of the church) for Israel to live securely. But Israel's

conversion as a nation is connected with Gog's supernatural destruction (Ezek. 39:7, 22-29), and this cannot occur before the Antichrist appears.

Furthermore, how can entire years elapse between the rapture of the church and the beginning of the 70th week? With no true Christians left on the earth, and no God-honoring churches, how will people be won to the Lord and taught? The Biblical answer is that people will be saved (as before Pentecost) only through Israel, and Israel cannot win people to the Lord until the appearance of the two witnesses in Jerusalem, who "will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6; cf. Matt. 17:11). But their prophetic ministry cannot begin before the 70th week, for "they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (Rev. 11:3), namely, the first half of the week. It is difficult for this writer to picture months and years after the rapture with no witness for God in the entire world, and no true believer.

A major objection to a mid-70th week invasion by Gog is that it will take "seven months" to bury Gog's army (Ezek. 39:12) and "seven years" to burn all his weapons scattered across the land (vv. 9, 10). How can Israelites do this when they are fleeing for their lives from the beast, the Antichrist, during the final half of the week?

I would suggest that this activity of massive cleansing takes place immediately after the second coming of Christ, just after the additional devastation in the holy land called Armageddon. By then, the bodies of Gog's soldiers are nothing but bones (v. 15).

The beast will certainly have neither the leisure nor even the desire to cleanse the land during his tumultuous reign of 1,260 days, smitten as he will be by the Lord's catastrophic judgments of the trumpets and the vials (cf. Rev. 8-18). We can well imagine that he will claim that he himself destroyed Gog and his armies, confirmed by his prophet's ability in "that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Rev. 13:13), thus rendering the beast's rule of the world completely irresistible ("Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" [Rev. 13:4]). As he inaugurates his global dominion under Satan and with the false prophet, he may lead

people to the places of Gog's destruction, and may even attempt to fulfill the awesome prophecy of Isa. 66:23, 24 – “‘All flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the LORD. ‘And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me.’”

The final cleansing of the Holy Land (cf. Zech 2:12) of the remains of Gog's armies and weapons from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, just south of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45; cf. Joel 2:20), and the remains of Antichrist's armies from Edom to the northern valley of Megiddo (Rev. 16:16; cf. Isa. 63:1-6), 42 months later, will be a major project under the LORD for Israelites and carnivorous beasts (Ezek. 39:17-20; Rev. 19:17, 18, 21) during the first seven years of His millennial kingdom.

First, however, will be the 30-day cleansing of the temple from the abominations of the beast and the false prophet (cf. Dan. 12:11; compare the 30-day cleansing of the temple by Hezekiah [2 Chron. 30:2-4] and by Judas Maccabeas [1 Macc. 4:36 ff.]).

Then will follow the cleansing of the earth of all unbelievers (i.e., the sheep and goat judgment of national leaders who were not killed at Armageddon [Matt. 25:31-46]; the final purging of Israel [Ezek. 20:38]; and the removal of every remaining unsaved person [Matt. 24:36-44]).

This will involve an additional 45 days, or 75 days from the second coming, and thus 1,335 days from the setting up of “the ‘abomination of desolation’” (Matt. 24:15). That is why anyone “who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days” will be called “blessed” (Dan. 12:12).

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