

Is This Hamas War One of the Three Prophesied for the End Times?

In Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Revelation 6 we are told that before Jesus Christ appears a second time there will be

- significant wars,
- devastating famines,
- rampant pestilence, and
- merciless deaths.

The future eschatological events of the last days appear to include at least three major wars, which are different and distinct from anything the world has witnessed previously. Each war gets progressively intense, massive and destructive, killing more people and destroying entire nations.

The Future Middle East War(s)

These incredible future wars are described in various passages by Old Testament prophets, but the context and sequences of these battles are somewhat vague and confusing at times. The following viewpoints and sequences I have surmised from my personal studies. Please ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment and clarity as you read.

What seems to be the first of three prophesied end-time wars forces tiny Israel to defend itself from the collection of Islamic-Arab nations immediately surrounding it in the Middle East.

The Cousins War

The descriptions indicate the involved nations of this early

conflict are descendants of either Esau – twin brother of Jacob, one of Israel’s patriarchs – or Ishmael, the patriarch Isaac’s half brother. These “cousin” nations or people groups that immediately border Israel have historic hatred for the children of Israel going back thousands of years (Ezek. 35:5-6; Ps. 83:1-18).

The modern names for these nations are ubiquitous in the international news today and include Jordan, Syria and Egypt, along with Lebanon, Iraq, and perhaps a small part of Saudi Arabia, given the context of their ancient names. Ancient Syria and Assyria controlled the “fertile crescent” area from Mesopotamia to northern Israel, while ancient Egypt controlled the fertile Nile River region and the Negev desert area, southwest of the Dead Sea.

Abrahamic Palestinians?

It seems likely the “Arab Palestinians” endemic to the region in recent centuries are actually descendants of Ishmael, Abraham’s son by the Egyptian maidservant Hagar, who was born centuries before Moses and the Israelites ever came to the area after being miraculously delivered from cruel slavery in Egypt.

Ishmael’s descendants are believed to have originally migrated from the eastern side of the Red Sea to areas of the Arabian Peninsula, where they became the ancestors of many Arab tribes and nations. You can read the interwoven accounts of the families of Ishmael and Isaac in Genesis 25:12-30:43.

Some of these Arabian children of Abraham eventually migrated to the geographic crossroads between Africa and Asia, which had been ancient Israel. This region had been renamed Palestine by the Roman administrators during their season of dominance over the area, to erase the name of Israel from the minds of the remnant of Jews who remained there.

A Two-State Solution?

Following World War I, the British were given a mandate by the new League of Nations to govern key sections of the region of the Middle East (previously part of the Ottoman Empire). They were to control the perpetual hostility between the Islamic Arabs and the returning Jewish settlers and refugees from the European Holocaust.

The British actually conceived the original "two-state solution." They first divided the mandated Palestinian region by establishing a new Arab nation, Transjordan, across the eastern banks of the Jordan River and beyond. They then intended for the Jews to develop a new nation on the western side of the Jordan, which had been the main area of their historic homeland from the time of Joshua. However, the perpetual hostilities between the two nationalistic entities and resentful ethnicities have kept them at a nearly constant state of tension that could erupt at any time.

And that has happened again! On Oct. 7, an extensive surprise attack by the Hamas terrorists from the Gaza Strip against Israelis on a special Sabbath day left 1,400 Jews dead (including 27 Americans) and over 3,000 wounded. Israel's justified, defensive response has left a similar number of Palestinians dead, as well. The agony in Israel has been fueled by reports of major atrocities where the Hamas terrorists from Gaza even murdered and beheaded babies in a Jewish kibbutz.

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This effort to destroy God's covenant nation may destabilize the whole region, as Hamas' leadership is now calling on "countries close to the borders ... join us !" Hamas spokesperson Khaled Meshaal, who lives far from the fray, in Qatar, says it is a religious obligation for Muslims to join the fight against Israel. He specifically contends that the governments of Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon have a duty to

support the Palestinians as the “defenders of Al-Aqsa,” the historic mosque on the grounds of the revered Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem’s Old City.

It seems this major 9/11-like tragedy for Israel and the innocent Palestinian citizens of Gaza could continue on to become the – as of yet – unfulfilled prophecy of a major end-time war with Israel’s “cousins.”

Specific Old Testament prophecies found in Ezekiel 35 and Isaiah 34 identify the geography of three ancient entities and enemies of Israel: Ammon, Moab and Edom. The first two were found east of the Jordan River, and Edom was southeast of the Dead Sea. Ezekiel uses an alternate name for Moab, Mount Seir, when quoting God as warning that He would “make you most desolate; I shall lay your cities waste ... I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited.” (See Ezekiel 35:1-15, NKJV.)

Jordan and Egypt

Interestingly, both Jordan and Egypt have signed peace treaties with modern Israel, and Syria is a weakened ally of Russia, Iraq and Iran. Syria has a Mediterranean seaport that Russia wants for the terminus for an oil pipeline. However, history has shown treaties are often made to be broken!

The U.S. has just ominously sent two of our latest aircraft carriers to the eastern Mediterranean to be a deterrent to other nations interfering with Israel and Hamas in this current crisis.

The Day of the Lord

The Jewish prophet Isaiah warned of the “day of the Lord” (Isa. 13:6-7, 9), a fearful period of time when God will judge the world with His indignation for rejecting Him and His covenant people, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These border nations will reap what they have sown over the

centuries against God's chosen people.

"I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible [or tyrants]" (Isa. 13:11, NKJV).

The prophet Obadiah also ties the border nations of this first war to the coming "day of the Lord." A terrible conflict will erupt between the "house of Jacob," the Jews, and the "house of Esau," possibly the Palestinian Arabs. Obadiah chapter 1, verses 18-19, indicates that in that future day the Palestinians will be totally driven from the land promised to the house of Jacob. Israel will finally possess the plain of the Philistines (Gaza), Ephraim (an alternate name for Israel), and Samaria (the West Bank), along with Gilead (the East Bank of the Jordan River, currently part of the modern nation of Jordan).

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Syria and Lebanon

Isaiah 17 speaks of Israel and her longtime worst enemy, Syria. This ancient nemesis borders Israel at its Golan Heights, above Galilee, to the northeast. It also continues to fight Israel through its control and support of Lebanon, with its proxy terrorist organization Hezbollah, which is currently firing anti-tank rockets into northern Israel. Three Israeli soldiers were killed. Iranian leaders congratulated Hezbollah.

According to Isaiah 17:1, Syria's capital city, Damascus, will one day be totally decimated during one of these end-time conflicts. It "will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap" (NKJV). Although Syria was invaded by Assyria in 732 B.C. and by later world empires, Damascus still exists, and this prophecy awaits an ominous future fulfillment, as

does the word against Lebanon (Isa. 29:17).

These nations are destroyed “in the latter days” as they attempt to invade the covenant land of Israel – not before. God’s judgment has waited since these ancient times, but their prophesied future destruction is certain.

A Worrisome Warning

However, we also learn from ancient prophecies that “in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean” (Isa. 17:4, KJV). God’s covenant nation Israel is weakened or “becomes thin,” indicating a loss of population and/or military power. I believe this vulnerability at that time may lead them to the deceitfulness of a regional power to provide protection for national Israel.

The prophet Daniel relates in chapter 9, verses 26-27, that Israel will make a “covenant” or treaty with a political leader of the region “for one week” (a “week” of seven years). In the middle of that week, this prince (or Antichrist) will break the protection agreement and demand the blood sacrifices, which will be allowed for Israel in those days in a rebuilt temple on Mount Zion, must cease. He will then set up his image in the Jewish temple and require worship of himself. Jesus called this the “‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matt. 24:15, NKJV; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

It appears that from that midweek point in the seven-year agreement, prophecies will begin to rapidly converge in what Jesus called “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor shall ever be” (Matt. 24:21, NKJV).

Sometime during this end-time season, it seems Israel will face future attacks by other nations in at least two more terrible wars and, again, God will use Israel as a trap and

Jerusalem will be the bait for the unrighteous nations.

Rumored Wars Yet to Come

Jesus said, *"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come"* (Mark 13:7, NIV).

The remaining "rumored wars" are not only battles between tiny Israel and its surrounding "cousins" – nations or people groups descending from Ishmael (Abraham's son with Hagar; Gen. 16:2-12; 21:8-21) or Esau (the patriarch Jacob's older brother and "the father of the Edomites"; Gen. 36), as we reviewed in our previous study. Added "rumored wars" include two major regional conflicts Scripture indicates Israel will yet face.

The Palestinian terrorist group Hamas is mainly of the Sunni sect of Islam, while Hezbollah, in Lebanon and Syria, is a Shiite group. That means they are both Islamic terrorist groups who share a common religious and ethnic hatred of God's people, the Jews (descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel):

"For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;

And those who hate You have lifted up their head.

They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,

And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.

They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,

That the name of Israel may be remembered no more'" (Ps. 83:2-4, NKJV).

Wars With the Neighbors

The scope and intensity of the current Hamas/Hezbollah/Israel war may yet fulfill the prophecy of the total destruction of

Damascus, the ancient and current capital of Syria. Isaiah 17:1 (NKJV) says "Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap."

However, this future, rumored war in Scripture concerns Israel and its Islamic neighbors on all sides. But again, the timing is uncertain. As a matter of fact, there is even debate over whether this war will occur before or after the second coming of Jesus Christ and His millennial reign. Comparing the details of Ezekiel 38 and 39 to Revelation 20:7-10 reveals they are distinct events and both under God's sovereign control.

Gog of Magog

In Ezekiel 38:1-16 God singles out a leader named "Gog, of the land of Magog." He is said to be "the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." Other nations are also named: Persia, Ethiopia and Put. They join with Gomer and Beth-Togarmah "of the north quarters" and the many peoples who seem to be allied with them.

As to who Gog is and where Magog is located, as well as the other nations mentioned, some have tried to apply modern leaders and regional names as answers to those questions. Some have sought to identify "Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" as regions of modern Russia, since it is "far north" of Israel. Others have seen them to be geographical settings within modern Turkey. Its capital, Ankara, is in fact due north of Jerusalem when viewed on a globe rather than a flat map.

In Ezekiel 38:1-6 we are told how Gog and his allies attack Israel. In verse 16, God tells Gog, "... you shall come up against My people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the latter days that I will bring you against My land so that the nations may know Me when I shall be sanctified in you, O Gog, before their eyes" (MEV). That righteous goal of the nations knowing "that I am the Lord" is

repeated multiple times in the two prophetic chapters, 38 and 39.

Know the Players

The characters of this “Gog of Magog” story are yet to be clearly discerned and described. It is not surprising how each historical period has personalities and events that may seem to reveal just a little bit more of this phenomenal, prophetic period, as well as cause some of us to add our own human speculations.

Reviewing the “Table of Nations” in Genesis 10, we find many of these names we see in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Until 1935, modern-day Iran was known as Persia. Ethiopia has always been connected with areas south and east of Egypt. Ancient Libya was inhabited by the descendants of Noah’s grandson Put and thought to extend across North Africa, west of Egypt. Some say modern Germany was ancient Gomer and Turkey was ancient Beth-Togarmah – each one northwest of Israel, possibly indicated as the “distant north” in 38:6. Most of these listed allies of Gog are presently Islamic-majority nations.

Where Does It All End?

In the end, God’s sovereign anger, jealousy and wrath shall be shown in judgment on Gog and those who are aligned in their hatred of Israel. He will destroy them all with a great earthquake, “pestilence and blood,” and “overflowing rain and hailstones, fire and brimstone.” (See Ezekiel 38:18-23.) The allied armies of Gog will fall upon the open fields and mountains of Israel, and “ravenous birds of every sort,” along with the beasts of the field, will be allowed to devour them (39:1-8).

The dead bodies and bones of Gog and his allies will be searched out for seven months and collected in a mass grave in a large valley to the east of the [Dead?] sea [in modern-day Jordan?] to “cleanse the land.” Israel will also collect and

burn the armaments and weapons of war for seven years (39:9-10).

The closer we get to these events, the clearer we will understand the seasons and be able to apply these scriptures. (See Daniel 12:4, 9.) The real-world reality of these prophesied end-time events is more plausible with each passing plague, climate calamity or “misfired missile.”

What Can We Do?

As Israel responds to the worst terrorist attack in its modern history and deadly, daily provocations by other terrorist groups, J. Lee Grady (founder of The Mordecai Project) reminds us that Palestinian Christians also need our love and prayers: “When Jesus lived in Israel 2,000 years ago, He didn’t support the religious racism of His day. He healed a Roman centurion’s servant, ministered to a Canaanite woman’s daughter, talked to a Samaritan woman and ventured into Gentile territory. He showed the Jews that God’s love is much wider than our narrow political boundaries.”

Let us actively “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:6) and intercede for our fellow Jesus-followers in that Holy Land. The Hebrew word for “peace” [*shalom*] is a comprehensive word that includes welfare, health, prosperity and happiness, not just the absence of strife. Scripture calls for God’s people to “seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34:14, NKJV).

Let us align ourselves with God’s highest will and holy ways in these last days, as He aligns peoples and nations for His future time of reward or recompense!

Armageddon Alert

“Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?” is the opening line from a classic radio series from the 1930s, “The Shadow.” The cryptic question still haunts us today as we watch the terrible human tragedies unfolding daily in Israel

and the Middle East.

Why would someone start a war? Why would one group of human beings strategically plan – at length – to kill and steal other human beings? Civilians! Women! Elderly! Babies!! These horrendous deaths and deeds were not “collateral damage” in war, but “collaborative damage” by design!

Israeli intelligence has reportedly found, on some of the dead terrorists in the kibbutzim that were attacked in southern Israel on Oct. 7, instructions that summarized their “shock and awe” mission: kill Jews of all ages; capture as many hostages as possible and remove them to the Gaza Strip for ransom purposes.

Many of the dead terrorists apparently carried drugs that could help them fight hard and long. A drug-induced psychotic experience could ramp up their hatred of Jews and enhance their commitment to Hamas’ evil creed to destroy the nation of Israel. In addition to the possible effects of drugs in the horrors of Hamas, demon spirits could draw evil men to do evil things, as they will do in the ultimate, future war, revealed in Revelation 16:12-14.

Armageddon Arrangements

The Jewish prophet Daniel explained how at the time of the end, the king of the South and the king of the North will show rebellion toward the Antichrist in the Middle East (Dan. 11:40). Based at that time in “the Glorious Land” of Israel (11:41), the Antichrist will move to reassert his authority over the king of the South and defeat powers in Egypt, and then Libya and Ethiopia. Then, as the Antichrist prepares to move his forces toward the king of the North, he will hear troubling rumors of armies on the march from the east and north toward Israel (11:42-45).

John the Revelator explains demon spirits will “go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to

the battle of the great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14, MEV).

The infamous site is about 70 miles north of Jerusalem and historically an ancient fortress area (at Mount Megiddo), controlling major trade routes from the north and east via the King’s Highway. The area is actually a large plain where several major battles have historically occurred.

Armies Gather at Armageddon

This time, it is not a battle between tiny Israel and its “cousin” nations around its borders, nor between Israel and 10 specific Islamic nations in the larger region, as were the first two wars we have reviewed. Instead, it is a military campaign where God Himself directly intervenes and destroys the largest army in human history (Zech. 14:2-3).

It is really a misnomer to refer to this major conflagration as the Battle of Armageddon. Rather, this notorious place is the deployment point for military campaigns in the “mountains of Israel.” It is an attempt by Satan to destroy God’s holy people, in God’s Holy Land, and to control His Holy City, Jerusalem.

Invaders From the East

In this “mother of all battles,” a vast group of armies will arrive from Asia, along with other nations of the world (many of them currently Islamic) who may join the others as a final Islamic jihad to exterminate the Jews. John the Revelator explained that “demons performing miraculous signs” will motivate these “kings from the east” who arrive at the inland Jezreel Valley, southeast of modern Haifa, with an “army of horsemen” numbered at 200 million:

“And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The army of horsemen numbered two hundred million. I

heard their number" (Rev. 9:15-16, MEV).

It is perhaps significant to note that while Islam is a minority religion today in massive countries like China and India, together they host over one-third of the world's population (estimated as 2.7 billion). The Bible says that demonically motivated armies from other nations of the world than just Muslim-majority states will join together to march into the Middle East for this final battle. We just read they will kill a third of mankind in the process of this journey!

"The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the East ... to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty ... They gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon" (Rev. 16:12, 14, 16, NKJV).

All Hail, King Jesus!

This massive coalition is about to destroy Israel and Jerusalem, when ...

God directly intervenes through the dramatic return of King Jesus, as He comes with power, glory and the armies of heaven! John described it this way in Revelation 1:7 (NIV): *"'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him'; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen."*

When Jesus descends from heaven with His defending armies (Rev. 19:11-16), there will be an enormous earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:3-5), and the radiating "brightness of His glory" will totally annihilate the invading armies like a neutron bomb. The prophet Zechariah describes the dramatic destruction:

" ... the LORD will strike all the peoples who go to battle against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot as they stand on their

feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths” (Zech. 14:12, MEV).

This nuclear-like plague or pestilence will likewise affect the animals that are in the camps of the invading armies and will cause confusion among the multi-language armies. They will actually begin fighting each other (Zech. 14:13-15). Is this reference to animals in the military encampment spoken euphemistically, or accurately, reflecting less-than-modern weaponry and resources at that future time? We don't know.

All Things Made New for All Eternity

The apostle John's Revelation concludes in chapters 21 and 22, where the reader is informed about a new heaven and earth along with a holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. The magnificence of its beauty and glory is almost beyond description (21:9-27). There, in its splendor, we will live and worship as the bride of Christ forever and ever! Amen!

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