

Is Israel on Verge of the Final Conflict?

There is no question that the nation of Israel could be facing an unprecedented attack coming from all sides—Iran from the east, Hezbollah from the north, the Houthis from the south and Hamas (what is left of it) from the west. In fact, by the time you read this column, that attack may have already been launched. But is Israel on the verge of an apocalyptic war as prophesied in the Bible? In my view, the answer is a clear no.

Yes, there are some Bible teachers who believe Ezekiel 38-39, containing the famous Gog and Magog prophecy and following the even more famous prophecy of dry bones coming to life in Ezekiel 37, should be interpreted symbolically rather than literally. In other words, whatever the chapters meant in Ezekiel's day, more than 2,500 years ago, has no bearing on the current Middle Eastern situation. The correct interpretation for today is spiritual only.

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Other Bible teachers scour the Scriptures, looking for prophecies that tie in with today's headlines or help predict tomorrow's.

In my view, both approaches fall short of the mark.

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Those who read these chapters symbolically fail to realize that other prophecies in Ezekiel (and related prophetic books) graphically described the destruction of Jerusalem and the exiling of tens of thousands of Israelites into Babylon, along

with their return from exile, things that literally happened. To claim chapters such as 38-39 are purely spiritual (or symbolic) in meaning is to make an arbitrary interpretive decision without scriptural justification. Why are these chapters spiritual and the others literal?

Those who read every prophecy in the Bible as if it applied to today fail to recognize the ancient contextual meaning of numerous biblical prophecies. They also wrongly assume we are the last generation, something no one can know with certainty at this point in time.

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