

The War of Gog vs. Magog: Cleansing the Land

Note: This is the third of a three-part series. Click here for part one and here for part two.

In Ezekiel 39:1-3 (NKJV), the Lord God of Israel declares directly to the leader of the invading masses, "I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," and then He says "I will turn you back, drive you on, and take you up the north parts and bring you against the mountains of Israel ... you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you."

This large, invading force, the totality of their defeat and the vast cemetery for the invaders, will become a great testimony to the glory of Israel's God (v. 13). This huge burial place will become known as the Valley of Hamon Gog (*the hordes of Gog*) and is noted in verse 11 as being "east of the sea."

It is unclear if this is the Mediterranean Sea or the Dead Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan River. If it is the latter, Jordan may join the invading armies and suffer their consequences and then be used to host this huge burial place of Israel's enemies. If so, Israel itself could "cleanse the land" and remain free of ritual and practical defilement (vv. 11-13).

In reading Ezekiel 39:9, we may calmly note that Israeli citizens burn the discarded weapons and military equipment of the invaders as firewood for seven years but then we suddenly realize that they are *burning* weapons! Is this to be taken literally? Are these modern weapons of war really made of wood? Or, is this Ezekiel's existential effort to try to explain what is happening?

Pastor Jack Hayford's footnote commentary for this chapter in

the *Spirit-Filled Life Bible* identifies three ways interpreters have explained this invasion and drastic turn of events. He says some interpret this as No. 1, an end-times battle fought with ancient weapons, which are then literally burned; No. 2, using ancient imagery to describe a future battle, which would use modern weaponry of the times; or No. 3, symbolically portraying the dynamics of spiritual warfare.

Whatever your viewpoint, Ezekiel 39 explains that following the dramatic conclusion to this failed invasion of tiny Israel and the seven-month-burial process of the invaders there will be a seven-year “clean-up” operation (vv. 11-16), where Israel will “cleanse the land” by burning the weapons which fell from the hands of the vast allied armies (v. 9).

This presents some perplexing, practical factors: Since we are not told of any actual destruction in Israel’s cities or infrastructure, why would they be forced to burn weapons or cut wood, in the first place? Their modern electrical grids are powered by consumable fuels or replaceable energy now. Is it possible these modern means were destroyed during the invasion and/or natural disasters, perhaps with a massively disruptive Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP)?

Used as a weapon, an EMP has the ability to wipe out electronic devices including communications, navigation and power systems, thereby crippling the country’s ability to defend itself from a land invasion that would follow.

It is rumored that Russia’s military has experimented with a “laminated densified wood” product called Lingostone. Used as a substitute for steel, it can be engineered into various products, including light-arms manufacturing. Whether or not the engineered product could be burned for fuel has not been reported.

With the devastation of the invading armies in Israel will come a new sense of awe and knowledge of the glory of the God

of Israel. He will gain “renown” as He is glorified among the Jews and Gentiles “from that day forward” (v. 22).

Multiple times in these two chapters of Ezekiel 38-39 God repeats His desire to make His name known among the nations (38:16, 23; 39:6,7). It is not as though He has need of affirmation or recognition from us, rather it is we who need to give Him praise and adoration for His faithful love and merciful care for each of us!

Our God is the “same, yesterday, today and forever” (). No matter what trials and tragedies we may face, He is sovereign over all! Through fearful epidemics, challenging endeavors and unpredictable end-times. He has promised, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5b).

May He always be glorified and His name increasingly magnified in each of us! “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (see Rev. 22:20). Amen! {eoa}

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