

A SYNTHESIS OF GOG-MAGOG PASSAGES

by

Karl Stelzer

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Title: A SYNTHESIS OF GOG-MAGOG PASSAGES  
Author: Karl A. Stelzer  
Degree: Master of Theology  
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Advisors: Dr. John Whitcomb, George Zemek

The events of Ezekiel 38 and 39, often referred to as the Gog-Magog Invasion, are previously prophesied in Scripture. Ezekiel 38:17 clearly substantiates this. This verse states that God's servants, the prophets of Israel, before Ezekiel, spoke of the activities of Gog and his northern confederacy. To what former prophets of old are referred to by Ezekiel is the question to be answered.

From an exegetical examination of Ezekiel 38 and 39 the central figure is Gog of the land of Magog. Allied with him are several others making up a northern coalition. An overwhelming, swift invasion into the land of Palestine is described as taking place when Israel will be resting in peace and safety. Gog's purpose will be to take spoil and destroy Israel, God's people. God also has a purpose, "that the nations may know me" (38:16). The time of the invasion is yet future and probably during the Tribulation.

Three Old Testament passages appear to be the previous predictions spoken of by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 38:17. Joel 2 speaks of a locust plague from the north. The prophet uses poetically descriptive language depicting the Army of Jehovah coming down upon Israel from the north during the Day of Jehovah. God, Himself, is the leader of the divine army, carrying out His purpose of judgment and chastisement. Isaiah 10 speaks of an attack from the north. God's purpose is to chastise Israel, that she might turn again unto Him. Though to the immediate audiences of Joel and Isaiah, the Assyrian is the primary reference, there is yet a future fulfillment. Daniel 11:40-45 gives details relating to the military movements of the Gog-Magog Invasion. The King of the South and the King of the North move against the Willful King, the Antichrist, in Palestine with great might and swiftness. The Willful King is defeated. The King of the North, Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39, proceeds to move southward conquering. As a result of disturbing news from Palestine, he returns to the "glorious land" with rage. God then steps in and utterly destroys him. The time of the events of these verses is the middle of the Tribulation.

Joel, Isaiah, and Daniel also spoke of the Gog-Magog Invasion. Through progressive revelation God built upon previous revelation, adding more details. God again will demonstrate His power, holiness and sovereign control in the middle of the Tribulation just prior to the time of Jacob's Trouble after which many will know the God of Israel, that He is Lord.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDB: Brown, Francis; Driver, S.R.; and Briggs, C.A., editors. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968.

BSac: Bibliotheca Sacra

ICC: International Critical Commentary

JBL: Journal of Biblical Literature

TDOT: Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament

TWOT: Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

VT: Vetus Testamentum

## INTRODUCTION

### Importance Of The Subject

As the pages of Scripture are read and reread, it is very evident that our God is involved in human history. From His dealings with both His chosen people, Israel, and with the nations throughout time, several things can be learned about our great God. First, with regard to His people, both Israel as well as believers of this age, He is deeply interested in their conduct and relationship to Himself. One of the ways this interest and love is demonstrated is through His disciplining judgments. The writer of Proverbs speaks of this clearly.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Proverbs 3:11-12).<sup>1</sup>

This timeless principle is given clearly by the author of Hebrews also in the New Testament.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for

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<sup>1</sup>There are numerous other passages in Proverbs also which speak of the principle of loving discipline (13:24; 15:5; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17).

a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Hebrews 12:6-11).

It is through His chastening hand of judgment that He brings His children back to Himself.

Secondly, with regard to the nations, and also in relation to His people, God's justice is painted very vividly. Even the nations which were raised up by God Himself to chasten the nation of Israel were held accountable for their doings. Thus when the chastening work was complete, God's judgment fell upon those nations. This also will be the case during the time of the Tribulation which is yet future. During those seven years, especially the last three and one-half years, Israel will be purged and chastened by God through various persecutions in preparation for the coming of their Messiah.

Thirdly, the sovereignty of God is very evident. He is the one who is in control. It should be an encouragement to believers of every age to know that our Savior is the one in control.

Other factors are simply knowing and understanding our great God and His plans and purposes as revealed in Scripture. As in any relationship, the more one gets to know another the sweeter, deeper, and more meaningful that relationship becomes. In a day such as ours a knowledge of His Book can find no substitute, and part of that Book is predictive prophecy.

From the volumes and volumes that have come off the printing presses dealing with the subject of end-time events it is easy to see the vast confusion that exists. One of the specific areas in which there is great confusion is the time of the Tribulation. The end-time characters of that seven-year period are one example of much confusion. It is not the primary purpose of this paper to deal with this subject. Only when the Antichrist and others such as the Great Northern power of the end time are directly involved in the events surrounding the Gog-Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the other related passages will these personalities be dealt with.<sup>1</sup> This study will deal primarily with the events of this invasion, though personalities will be involved, with the end product being a synthesis of the parts as revealed throughout Scripture.

#### Thesis Stated

That which will be demonstrated is that Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 is not the only passage in the Old Testament that refers to an invasion which has come to be referred to as the Gog and Magog Battle or Invasion. It is the position of this writer that elsewhere in the Old Testament prophets the events of this invasion are also mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup>For a good treatment demonstrating that the Assyrian (who is the same as the Northerner of Joel, the King of the North of Daniel and Gog of Magog of Ezekiel) is not to be equated with the Antichrist, see William Richard Foster, "Eschatological Significance of the Assyrian" (Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1956).

These prophets are Joel, Isaiah, and Daniel. Thus a synthesis of the Scriptural material pertaining to this future event will be done. With the comparing of Scripture with Scripture additional information can be added to the material found in Ezekiel. Along with this, that found in Ezekiel can also be explained further. The result is that a fuller understanding of God's working through this particular event which is yet future can be gained.

### The Prophetic Predictive Message:

#### Proclamation And Interpretation

As background for the procedure used to accomplish the study at hand, a statement related to the proclamation and interpretation of the prophets' predictive message is in order. This is not to imply that the prophets' primary function was disclosing predictive futuristic events. On the contrary, the Old Testament prophets' primary function was forthtelling the message of God.

In this connection, it is well to relate the ideas of preaching and prediction. It is true that prophets did predict, and it is important to make this point clear in answer to those scholars who deny genuine prediction on the part of the prophets. For instance, A. B. Davidson writes, "The Prophet is always a man of his own time, and it is always to the people of his own time that he speaks, not to a generation long after nor to us." . . .

On the other hand, people err when they think that the main task of prophets was to predict the future. Sometimes the term prophecy is taken to be synonymous with prediction, so that when one speaks of prophecy he speaks of prediction. This is equally incorrect. Though the prophets did predict at times, as God gave them this kind of information, the greater part of their declarative ministry was in preaching to the people of their own time. They were really much like preachers of today, urging people to live in a manner pleasing to

God. They used prediction in their preaching only on occasion, whenever it was necessary to impart a message God wanted given. . . . The main task of the prophets, then, was reformation. They wanted the people to turn from what they were doing in their sinful practices back to the teachings of the Law.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many do not see the wholeness in the prophet's message. They ignore those parts dealing with past and present, and focus all their attention on the future elements still unrealized. The more distant the elements on the prophet's prophetic horizon, the better. Lo, the prophet might have been talking about jet airplanes and such a prediction would only show how far ahead of his time the prophet was! This type of thinking is ludicrous but tragic, for it discloses confusion piled on confusion concerning the nature of the prophet's message.

Prophecy does have a future aspect. But the prediction of God's doings was given to a particular historical people, to awaken and stir them. They might not grasp all the meaning of the message, but the message--with the disclosure of future things--was given to influence the present action.<sup>2</sup>

It just so happens that part of this forthtelling is foretelling. As in the case with interpretation throughout Scripture, a literal-historical-grammatical understanding of language must be sought.

One should interpret prophetic passages as literally as he does other scripture portions. God did not prophesy for the purpose of hiding His message. He did not intend that only certain Christians, who had some special key of interpretation, should be able to understand it. He set forth truth so that it might be known. This means that prophetic portions are to be studied in the same manner as other passages, employing literal, common-sense principles of interpretation. This does not mean that figures of speech should not be expected

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<sup>1</sup>Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 68-69, 74.

<sup>2</sup>A. Berkeley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 287.

and recognized.<sup>1</sup>

In particular, with reference to understanding correctly predictive passages, three facts need to be emphasized.

#### Fact Of Progression In Revelation

God has unfolded His complete revelation to man in a gradual, progressive manner. With regard to many subjects of predictive prophecy, this unfolding, expanding kind of treatment is seen. Paul Tan in his book The Interpretation of Prophecy illustrates this very well.

Although God reveals Himself and His plan of the ages progressively and everything is not unfolded all at once, this does not mean that revelations anteriorly given have been replaced or contradicted. Progressive revelation is like a landscape that is progressively lit up as the rays of the sun advance over it at dawn. With the advance of the sun's rays, certain portions of the landscape are revealed earlier than others. And just because a given portion of a total landscape is illuminated earlier than another does not mean that a portion of the landscape has been supplanted.<sup>2</sup>

As Mickelsen states, "Prophecy is progressive in the sense that later revelation is based upon earlier revelation."<sup>3</sup> Thus we can be assured of harmony and unity. As Feinberg states, "The spirit of God can be depended upon to give us

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<sup>1</sup>Leon J. Wood, The Bible and Future Events (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Lee Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1974), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 292. Mickelsen gives a good example of this fact on pp. 292-93 and demonstrates that not only is there a progression of facts, later revelation adding elements not given in earlier revelation, but also that even the sum total often is not a complete picture with all details given.

a revelation in orderly fashion from incompleteness to completeness, without fear that the later portion will contradict the former."<sup>1</sup> Leon Wood also speaks of this harmony in his discussion of distinguishing marks between true and false prophets.

A fifth mark is that the message of the true prophet harmonized with the Law of God and with the messages which other true prophets were giving. . . . Certainly, also, a body of information had been building in people's minds from the messages of true prophets. Such information would have served as a criterion of whether or not further messages were true.<sup>2</sup>

This fact of progressive revelation in the predictive prophetic realm is very important to the topic at hand. As will be demonstrated in the pages of this paper, four of the writing prophets of the Old Testament are used by God to give information pertaining to the Gog-Magog events. These prophets are Joel, Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel. Joel simply gives a glimpse of a future invasion from the north that is associated with the events of the Day of the Lord. Isaiah adds more detail. But not until Daniel and Ezekiel, who are both still later chronologically, does the picture of this judgment which God brings upon Israel really begin to take on a clear focus. Putting these pieces together as unfolded by these writers will be one of the tasks of this paper.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Lee Feinberg, Premillennialism or Amillennialism? (Wheaton, Illinois: VanKampen Press, 1954), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>Wood, The Prophets of Israel, p. 111.

Fact Of The Historical Perspective  
Of The Writer And Readers

It must be remembered that Scripture was not given in a vacuum, but rather to real people living in a real world. This reminds us of two principles for proper interpretation of prophecy. First, there is but one meaning being conveyed.

The original readers and hearers of Scripture knew that God's Word had a message for them. The study of this basic, original meaning of Scripture is known as exegesis. One exegesis exists for each passage of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the exegesis of the various passages this one meaning will hopefully be ascertained. Secondly, the perspective of the prophet is limited.

In dealing with the predictive aspect of prophecy, we must remember that when God spoke to and through his servants, he did not give them unlimited vision. Instead they were confined within a divinely limited perspective.<sup>2</sup>

The result is that the language of the prophetic message is the language of his day.

We are using the word 'language' in a very broad sense to cover not only linguistic expressions but also imagery, customs, and descriptive terminology. The language of the prophet is colored by all of his present and past surroundings. He speaks to his people in their language, in their thought patterns. He makes use of the customs which they know. When he refers to transportation, he talks about horses, chariots, camels, small ships, larger grain boats. When he speaks about armaments, he mentions spears, shields, swords, etc. . . . His outlook upon the world of his day is in terms of the nations that pressured his people: Philistia,

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<sup>1</sup>Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 294.

Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, Babylon, etc., all have oracles directed to them. . . . Thus the prophet's message is deeply colored by the times in which he lives and the people to whom he ministers.<sup>1</sup>

With this the case, in interpreting such passages the exegete must seek to determine what the prophet is saying in terms of the weapons of his day. The weapons of war of the prophet's day will then have equivalents in the time of their fulfillment. Likewise, the enemies of God's people, who are instruments of God's discipline upon His people, will vary from generation to generation though they will come from similar geographical areas. "It should be expected therefore that between the pages of Scripture, the customs, habits, language expression, and sceneries of Bible lands and peoples would not remain static."<sup>2</sup> In the case of Joel, Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel this is very evident especially with regard to the references to those involved. Joel speaks of "the northerner," Isaiah, "the Assyrian." In Daniel the "King of the North" is the term used to refer to "Gog of Magog" of Ezekiel 38-39.

There is always the need for a further caution to be mentioned when dealing with predictive prophetic portions of Scripture. We must not go beyond the data we have written in the pages of Scripture. Mickelsen puts it this way: "It is just as dangerous to put more on the map than God put there as it is to remove any of that which he did

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 102.

unfold."<sup>1</sup>

### Fact Of Multiple Reference

Balanced by the historical perspective, much of prophecy contains a multiple reference. Multiple reference describes the phenomenon of a prophecy of Scripture having both a near view and a far view. That is, such prophecies are given for two or more audiences separated by time. The fulfillment of such prophecies relate both to near events as well as to more distant future events.<sup>2</sup> Also important is the fact that there is the restriction to similar events but under different economies or time periods.<sup>3</sup>

By way of clarification, multiple reference is not double sense. Double or multiple sense relates to the words of the prophet while multiple reference relates to typology<sup>4</sup> and fulfillment.<sup>5</sup> The message of the prophet has one sense. That sense was the message God gave to the people of that time through the prophet. Double reference

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<sup>1</sup>Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup>Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup>Foster, "Eschatological Significance of the Assyrian," p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>This writer's understanding of typology can best be explained by the contrasting of typology with allegory. Typology is a method of exegesis focusing upon correspondence in one or more respects that aid in the determination of meaning within the historical framework of revelation. Whereas allegorism seeks secondary and hidden meaning underlying the primary and obvious meaning of Scripture.

<sup>5</sup>Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 181.

does not ignore nor take away from the message to the historic people to which it was given with a near fulfillment, but is related to another event yet future. It is possible and even probable that the prophet had little or no understanding of its later fulfillment. Even though some literal interpreters use the term "double fulfillment" as a synonym, this can be misleading. Prophecy does not have manifold or successive fulfillments down through history. The message is both for the immediate and distant future, not a message being fulfilled repeatedly and successively.<sup>1</sup>

Two illustrations from Scripture at this point may be helpful.

The principle is illustrated in relation to God's promise of a seed to Abraham. In the immediate historical context this promise was fulfilled to Abraham in the birth of Isaac, but this birth did not exhaust the promise of all its meaning, for Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, unmistakably indicates a fulfillment [sic] of the promise to Abraham in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Foster notes that Genesis 12:7 gives the initial promise, and Galatians 3:16 shows that the ultimate fulfillment of the promise is in Christ. A second example, "Moses predicts concerning a prophet who would succeed him (in Deuteronomy 18) and, although Joshua fulfilled the prediction, Acts 3:22-23 applies it to the person of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup>

In application of the fact of double or multiple

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>Foster, "Eschatological Significance of the Assyrian," p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 178.

reference in the interpretation of predictive portions of God's Word, only areas of similarity and correspondence are relevant. The exegete should not twist or distort details to fit his interpretive purposes. The historical nations may also be used in a typical sense so that when the prophet proclaims a message concerning an historical nation, it will have an immediate effect upon the people to whom the prophet is speaking directly, but may also have a distant fulfillment in the latter days of Israel's history.<sup>1</sup>

This does not detract from the historical perspective of the prophet nor the near fulfillment of the message. If anything, double reference strengthens the message which was given to the initial audience. It becomes illustrative for the later audience. To the one finding himself between fulfillments or even at the time of the later fulfillment, he can look back at history and see God's faithfulness to His Word and realize that likewise in the future or at the present time a similar event will show the faithfulness and unchangeableness of God.

#### Procedure Of Study

The procedure of study will first center around an exegetical look at Ezekiel 38-39. This is the central passage if for no other reason than its length, which includes much detail, and the fact that here Gog and Magog are

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, "Eschatological Significance of the Assyrian," p. 9.

mentioned. From this exegetical examination a basic grid of data can be established to which other passages can be compared.

Having established the basic framework of information, the other key passages then will be examined exegetically. These will appear in chronological order. First, Joel, in particular, portions of chapter 2, will be considered. Then, Isaiah, with particular attention given to chapter 10, will be observed. Finally, Daniel 11:40-45 will be examined.

After an extraction of all the informative data, such as the participants involved, purpose, sequence of events, time, etc., a comparative analysis will be undertaken resulting in a synthesis of these related passages.

## CHAPTER I

### EXEGETICAL STUDY OF EZEKIEL 38-39

Ezekiel 38-39 is the key passage relating to the event revealed in Scripture that is known as the Battle or Invasion of Gog-Magog. It is here that the terms Gog and Magog are used in relation to this prophetic event. An exegetical examination of these two chapters will provide a grid or framework to which comparison of other passages examined can be made.

#### Identity Of The Participants Involved

There are pages upon pages written containing various authors' attempts to identify the personalities and political entities of these chapters with contemporary individuals and nations.<sup>1</sup> This should be avoided. With

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<sup>1</sup>It appears that almost all contemporary writers who deal with these chapters at some time succumb to the temptation to do this. Following are several examples: Clarence E. Mason, Jr., "Gog and Magog, Who and When?," Prophecy and the Seventies, ed. Charles Lee Feinberg (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), pp. 221-32; J. Dwight Pentecost, Prophecy for Today (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), not in the text of the chapter itself, but he entitles chapter 10, "The Rise and Demise of Russia," p. 122; Charles Lee Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), "Russia is a power that must be reckoned with . . .," p. 224; Leon J. Wood, The Bible and Future Events (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 121-23; John F. Walvoord, The Nations in Prophecy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 103ff;

regard to the identification of these nations and groups of people it must be remembered that Ezekiel (as all biblical writers) is writing within an historical context. He is referring to particular geographical land areas and people to be sure, but they are those existing either prior to or in his day. He is referring to those nations around him with which he and his readers are familiar. As will be seen later, he also describes war in the light of weapons used in his day. It is the exegete's job to determine the identity of those to whom the writer is referring. It is true that in the time of fulfillment there will be corresponding nations and people that fit the economic-political set-up of that day, but until that time of fulfillment one must guard against the inviting tendency of putting present-day political entities and personalities into the Scripture record.

#### Gog: The Central Figure

Gog is the central figure in the passage under consideration. In Ezekiel 38:2, גִּיג <sup>1</sup> is said to be of the

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John L. Benson, The Showdown That Will Rock the World (Denver: Accent-B/P Publications, Inc., 1977), pp. 66ff; Herman A. Hoyt, The End Times (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 152. Regarding cautions needed in this area as well as a proper assessment of approach to the identity of the participants in Ezekiel 38 and 39 see: Donald Fowler, "Ezekiel 38-39: A Plea for Caution," Spire 9 (Fall, 1981), pp. 6-7.

<sup>1</sup>Francis Brown; S.R. Driver; and C.A. Briggs, ed., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 155, mentions an Assyrian named Gagu, who was chief of a mountain tribe north of Assyria; C.F. Keil, Ezekiel, vol. 2, trans. by James Martin,

land of Magog (מַגּוּג). The identity of מַגּוּג<sup>1</sup> has many variations, but all point to a people or a leader of a people north of the area of Assyria. This fits with the further description given by Ezekiel which follows and will be dealt with in more detail shortly. Of the four identities which allow for an historical pre-exilic understanding of Ezekiel's prophecy, none possess significant support to warrant any hard and fast identification for Gog. But it can be said that Gog is probably a personage, whether described by title or by name.<sup>2</sup>

Ezekiel 38:17 is also very significant. Jehovah

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in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint, 1973), p. 159, states that Ezekiel has probably arbitrarily formed the name Gog from the name of the country, Magog.

<sup>1</sup>TDOT, s.v. "מַגּוּג," by Benedikt Otzen, 2:421. In this article there is a good summary of the various interpretations that have been held: 1) An older interpretation, found as early as Josephus and held by Wellhausen, says Gog represents the Scythians; 2) Gog is the Lydian king Gyges (Akk. Gûgu) who dates ca. 670 B.C. and consequently the land of Magog would then be Lydia. Delitzsch is among those who hold this; 3) Gog has reference to the dynasty of Gagi in the territory north of Assyria, which is mentioned in a text of Ashurbanipal; 4) Gog refers to a territory called Gaga mentioned in an Amarna letter and was located north of Syria, possibly around Carchemish. Albright is among those who hold to this understanding. Two other understandings which cannot be correct because of the post-exilic date involved are: 5) Gog as an officer in the army of the younger Cyrus (ca. 400 B.C.); and 6) that Gog (derived from Gaga) was used as a pseudonym for Alexander the Great; W.F. Albright, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology, Section 3. Gog and Magog," JBL 43 (1924): 378-85. Albright states there are only three viable identities which he lists, preferring a man of Gaga.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Alexander, Ezekiel (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 121.

asks an important question regarding the identity of Gog, with the expected answer being an affirmative one. The question is, "Are you (Gog, v. 16) not he whom I have spoken of in old times by the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days?" The answer is, "Of course, you are." Keil explains the thrust of the question well.

The announcement of the way in which the Lord will sanctify Himself upon Gog (ver. 16) commences with the statement in ver. 17, that Gog is he of whom God has already spoken by the earlier prophets. This assertion is clothed in the form of a question:  $\text{אָרְטוּ אִי אַתָּה}$ , not  $\text{אֵלֶיךָ אֲנִי}$ , which is the interrogative form used for an emphatic assurance; whereas  $\text{אֵלֶיךָ אֲנִי}$  does not set down the point in question as indisputably certain, but suggests the inquiry for the purpose of giving a definite answer. The affirmative reply to the question asked is contained in the last clause of the verse: "to bring thee upon them;" so that  $\text{אַתָּה אִי אַתָּה}$  really means, thou art truly he.<sup>1</sup>

This verse has been variously interpreted. Some state that Ezekiel intended no definite series of events because of the use of general terms. This understands Gog and his confederates as mere representatives of all the enemies of the nation Israel. It is a mere portrayal of the endless conflict between good and evil, the Kingdom of God and the powers of darkness.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation does not consider the vast details given by Ezekiel, both geographically and otherwise, of any significance. This understanding looks past these details to mere generalities, the conflict between good and evil. This is not the nature nor intent of

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Ezekiel, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 225.

this passage.

Others state that since that which is prophesied is yet future, the reference is to Ezekiel's own prophecy of these events.<sup>1</sup> This does not agree with what Ezekiel 38:17 clearly states. First, verse seventeen speaks of God's servants (שְׂרָפָיִם) the prophets (נְבִיאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) of Israel. Both of these nouns are plural and thus taken naturally refer to more than one. Secondly, the time setting is clearly given. It is in the days formerly (בְּיָמֵי קִדְמוֹתָא). Used in the temporal sense it refers to "days formerly" or days before the time at hand.<sup>2</sup> Thus Ezekiel is ruled out as being included in the reference. The time referred to is before that time when he is writing.

God does assert here through the pen of Ezekiel that the invasion of Gog was mentioned through His prophets (more than one) in former days. The difficulty lies in the fact that the student of the Word cannot point to a definite utterance of earlier prophets predicting specifically the activities of Gog and his northern confederacy.<sup>3</sup> This does not negate the fact of what God has indeed asserted. The assertion is that previous prophets have spoken of this one called here Gog, though they may not have actually mentioned the name Gog in their prophecies. Again Keil helps in this

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 869.

<sup>3</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 225.

understanding.

The statement, that Gog is he of whom God had already spoken by the earlier prophets, does not mean that those prophets had actually mentioned Gog, but simply that Gog was the enemy of whose rising up against the people of God the prophets of the former time had prophesied, as well as of his destruction by a wrathful judgment of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

To what former prophets of old are referred here by Ezekiel is a major thrust of this thesis. The message of God through Ezekiel to Israel concerning this invasion is not entirely new to Israel. Beforehand earlier prophets had given utterance of such events. Ezekiel is only building upon a prophetic foundation already laid.

As to the identity of  $\text{גִּיּוֹן}$ , it is directly related to one's understanding of  $\text{מִצְרַיִם}$ . With regard to the term  $\text{גִּיּוֹן}$  itself, it may be an artificial form ("land of Gog")<sup>2</sup> or be a "Hebraizing" of the Akkadian  $\text{mātGog}$  equivalent to  $\text{mātGaga}$  in a letter from Amarna.<sup>3</sup> Still others believe the name of the land came first and that the name Gog was

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Ezekiel, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Walther Eichrodt, Ezekiel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 518. In a note Eichrodt makes mention that Magog could possibly mean 'land of Gog'; TDOT, s.v. "גִּיּוֹן," by Benedikt Otzen, 2:421; Franz Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, vol. 1, trans. Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888; reprint ed., Minneapolis: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), p. 311. Franz Delitzsch mentions that the prefix ma could mean country as set forth by Mordtmann. (But Delitzsch is skeptical.)

<sup>3</sup>TDOT, s.v. "גִּיּוֹן," by Benedikt Otzen, 2:421; Albright, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology, Section 3. Gog and Magog," pp. 383-84. Albright also speaks of this but sees difficulty in that Gog is not an Assyrian word at all, and māt (Assyrian for "country") is not Hebrew at all.

derived from it.<sup>1</sup>

One other source of identity comes from the Bible itself. This is the table of nations in Genesis chapter 10 which is helpful in identifying several of the people involved in the Ezekiel passage. Genesis 10:2 lists Magog as one of Japheth's sons. Magog<sup>2</sup> is a Hebrew common noun for the nation of northern Asia, which was called Saka by the Persians and Scythians by the Greeks.<sup>3</sup> Davis locates Magog, as well as Tubal and Meshech, in the vicinity of the Black Sea in eastern Anatolia.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that both in Genesis 10 and in Ezekiel Magog has some connotation with others related to Japheth. They are all people who live north of Israel and are of non-semitic origin.<sup>5</sup>

The person,  $\text{רֹשׁ}$ , is further described as  $\text{רֹשׁ מֶשֶׁךְ וְטֹבַל}$ , the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal (38:2,3; 39:1). Some hold that  $\text{רֹשׁ}$  is to be understood here as a proper name "Rosh" making it a geographical location Rosh. Though Gesenius lists as the primary meaning, "head" "prince," he also lists Rosh as a proper name.

Rosh proper noun of a northern nation mentioned along with Tubal and Meshech Ez 38:2,3 39:1 Prob i.e.: the

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<sup>1</sup>TDOT, s.v. "  $\text{רֹשׁ}$  ," by Benedikt Otzen, 2:421-22.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 156, refers to a mountainous region between Cappadocia and Media.

<sup>3</sup>Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup>John J. Davis, Paradise to Prison (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 138.

<sup>5</sup>TWOT, s.v. "  $\text{רֹשׁ}$  ," by Elmer B. Smick, 1:153.

Russians, who are described by the Byzantine writers of the tenth century, under the name of Ρῶς, as inhabiting the northern parts of Taurus; and also by Ibn Foszlan, an Arabian writer of the same period, under the name روس, *Rūs* as dwelling upon the river Wolga.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that it is the Byzantine writers of the tenth century that make this identification. This is too late to be evidence for such identification. Keil also regards the appellation rendering as not probable,<sup>2</sup> and like Feinberg<sup>3</sup> accepts רֹשׁ as a proper name.<sup>4</sup>

From the examination of lexical data it is preferable to regard רֹשׁ as either appellative, "chief prince," or appositional, "the chief, the prince."<sup>5</sup> The normal use of רֹשׁ has the idea of head, chief indicating the idea of rulership.<sup>6</sup> This is the very thought of the passage. Gog

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<sup>1</sup>William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, 3rd ed., trans. Edward Robinson (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849), p. 955.

<sup>2</sup>Keil, Ezekiel, pp. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 220.

<sup>4</sup>It must be stated, though, that both Keil and Feinberg regard equating Rosh with Russia as speculation and incorrect.

<sup>5</sup>Albright, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology, Section 3. Gog and Magog," p. 380. Albright sees the solution connected with transposition that has taken place in the text. He says the proper word order should read when translated "Gog, prince of the land of Magog, chief of Meshech and Tubal," or "Prince Gog, chief of Meshech and Tubal."

<sup>6</sup>Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ed., Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, vol. 2 (Leiden, Holland: E.J. Brill, 1951), pp. 865-66, demonstrates that רֹשׁ is used as head of the body, heads of families and is also used of God as head pointing to rulership.; BDB, pp. 910-11, sets forth the primary idea of head and chief.;

is the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, with  $\text{לְשִׁבְטֵי}$  indicating rulership, a term<sup>1</sup> very similar to  $\text{שָׂרֵי}$ .

The land which this leader is from, Magog, is also further described by Ezekiel in 38:15 and 39:1 (Hebrew Bible). The phrase,  $\text{מִן־הַצִּפוֹן הַרְחֵק}$ , has been translated "from the extreme north." The idea expressed here not only gives the direction which is north, but the qualifier  $\text{הַרְחֵק}$  is more specific. Of the nations mentioned in the context of Ezekiel 38 and 39, Gog of Magog is on the remote north or "border sections" of those countries. This is the land bridge area between the Black and Caspian Seas.

One does not need nor should regard the intent as the further part north involving the upper territories of Russia,<sup>2</sup> though some lexical works appear to push the intent of the word's use beyond that just stated.<sup>3</sup> The idea of remoteness is demonstrated by other usages as relating to the rest of the whole. Examples of such are: Judges 19:1,18, remotest part or backside of the mountain; 1 Samuel 24:4, innermost part of the cave; Amos 6:10, innermost

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J.R. Bartlet, "The Use of the Word  $\text{שָׂרֵי}$  as a Title in the Old Testament," VT 19 (January, 1969), pp. 1-10.

<sup>1</sup>Koehler and Baumgartner, ed., Lexicon, vol. 2, pp. 637-38; BDB, p. 672.

<sup>2</sup>Fowler, "Ezekiel 38-39: A Plea for Caution," p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>BDB, p. 861, remote parts of the north as in Isaiah 14:13. Also BDB, p. 438,  $\text{רְחֵקֵי הַצִּפוֹן}$  means with  $\text{רְחֵקֵי}$  remote parts of the north and is used with  $\text{רְחֵקֵי הָאָרֶץ}$  with the same idea (i.e. "the remote parts of the earth") as in Jeremiah 6:22; 25:32; 31:8 and 50:41.

part of house; Jonah 1:5, innermost part of the ship.<sup>1</sup> The whole idea which is involved in Ezekiel is those nations mentioned which surround Israel; and of those nations, Gog of Magog is from the uttermost northern border.

Gog of Magog is apparently the leader of a non-semitic nation or group of peoples north of Israel and the surrounding nations in the area between the Black and Caspian Seas. He is also closely connected to both Meshech and Tubal in some form of leadership capacity as chief prince.

#### Gog's Allies

Allied with Gog of Magog are Meshech (מֶשֶׁחַ) and Tubal (טֻבַּל) (Ezekiel 38:2,3 and 39:1 [Hebrew Bible]). These two are also mentioned in Ezekiel chapter 37 and are apparently close neighbors of Magog.<sup>2</sup> The location of Meshech and Tubal is in Anatolia, with most identifying Meshech with the kingdom of Lydia or Eastern Phrygia and Tubal with the Assyrian Tobal in the Cappadocian area.<sup>3</sup> Like Magog, Meshech and Tubal are listed as sons of Japheth

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<sup>1</sup>For other similar usages see: Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ed., Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, vol. 1 (Leiden, Holland: E.J. Brill, 1951), p. 405; Gesenius, Lexicon, p. 427. It is also interesting that the Aramaic cognate is used in Dan 2:32 meaning upper part of the thigh. Koehler and Baumgartner, ed., Lexicon, vol. 2, p. 1083.

<sup>2</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 220; Keil, Ezekiel, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup>Fowler, "Ezekiel 38-39: A Plea for Caution," p. 7; Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 220.

in Genesis 10:2 with the above identifications.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding down to verses 5 and 6 of chapter 38, one finds the rest of Gog's allies listed. They are  $\text{D}\bar{\text{G}}\bar{\text{E}}$ , Paras or Persia east of Palestine;<sup>2</sup>  $\text{U}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{C}}$ , Cush or Ethiopia;<sup>3</sup> and  $\text{U}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{B}}$ , Put or Lybia,<sup>4</sup> the last two being south of Palestine.

There are two other allies listed. One is  $\text{G}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{G}}$ , Gomer, which is also mentioned as a descendant of Japheth in Genesis 10:2. It is agreed that in Ezekiel's day Gomer was identified with the Cimmerians living in central Anatolia.<sup>5</sup> According to Homer they lived north of the Black Sea on the fringes of the world known to the Greeks and later moved southward.<sup>6</sup> The other is  $\text{T}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{G}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{R}}\bar{\text{M}}\bar{\text{A}}$ , Togarmah, mentioned in Genesis 10:3 as one of Gomer's sons. Most

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<sup>1</sup>Davis, Paradise to Prison, pp. 138-39; Charles F. Pfeiffer, ed., Baker's Bible Atlas, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{D}\bar{\text{G}}\bar{\text{E}}$ ," by Victor P. Hamilton, 2:735-36.

<sup>3</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{U}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{C}}$ ," by John N. Oswalt, 1:435, possibly includes Egypt; Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, p. 315; Pfeiffer, ed., Baker's Bible Atlas, pp. 40-41.  $\text{U}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{C}}$  is also mentioned in Gen. 10:6 as one of the sons of Ham locating in the area south of Egypt. Davis, Paradise to Prison, p. 140. Davis mentions that the Cushites settled both in the area of Ethiopia and the Sudan area.

<sup>4</sup>Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, pp. 316-17; Pfeiffer, ed., Baker's Bible Atlas, p. 40. Put is also mentioned in Gen 10:6 and located in modern day Lybia west of the Nile delta.

<sup>5</sup>Davis, Paradise to Prison, p. 138; Fowler, "Ezekiel 38-39: A Plea for Caution," p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{G}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{G}}$ ," by James E. Smith, 1:168, also places the Cimmerians north of the Black Sea area; Pfeiffer, ed., Baker's Bible Atlas, p. 37.

place them in the eastern part of Anatolia near Armenia.<sup>1</sup>  
 "These are all summoned by Gog, and gathered together for  
 an attack upon the people of God."<sup>2</sup>

### Description Of The Invasion

The invasion is described as a storm cloud which will cover the land (38:9). Ezekiel is here using picturesque language for the overwhelming attack that will take place. The idea is that of a cloud which covers, but also the term "cloud" serves as a figurative representation of severe calamity.<sup>3</sup> The word used here by Ezekiel is  $\text{נֶחֱלֶמֶת}$ , a devastating storm.<sup>4</sup> It is also used in Job 30:3 in a desert scene, surely the epitome of desolation. Also, it is used to describe the intensity of a storm, playing havoc with anything in its path, such as Proverbs 1:27 and here in Ezekiel 38:9.<sup>5</sup> The land will be covered and smothered by the vast multitude of Gog's invading forces, just as a cloud blankets the land below<sup>6</sup> bringing destruction everywhere it has gone as an intense storm passes over the land.

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<sup>1</sup>Davis, Paradise to Prison, p. 139; Fowler, "Ezekiel 38-39: A Plea for Caution," p. 7; Pfeiffer, ed., Baker's Bible Atlas, p. 38; Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>Keil, Ezekiel, pp. 160-61.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>BDB, pp. 980-81, 996.

<sup>5</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{נֶחֱלֶמֶת}$ ," by Victor P. Hamilton, 2:908.

<sup>6</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 222.

It is also clear that the armies will be well-equipped. Verses 4 through 6 clearly point out that the invading force will indeed be prepared for battle. The numerous army is described as being equipped with both small and large shields (  $\text{קָרָן} \text{ וְ} \text{קָרָן} \text{ }$  ),<sup>1</sup> all having swords and helmets. There are also numerous horses and horsemen (  $\text{מִסִּיכָה} \text{ וְ} \text{מִסִּיכָה} \text{ }$  ), indicating that the invading army included war-chariots,<sup>2</sup> a very feared weapon of war in Ezekiel's day. Yadin's book on ancient warfare<sup>3</sup> is very helpful in understanding the awesomeness of the army which Ezekiel predicts will come upon the people of Israel. The army would be extremely mobile and swift in its attack.<sup>4</sup> The troops would be well-equipped both offensively, giving the invading force great firepower,<sup>5</sup> and defensively, being well protected personally in battle.<sup>6</sup> God through Ezekiel portrays a fearsome, fully equipped invading force.

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<sup>1</sup>TWOT, s.v. "  $\text{קָרָן}$  ," 2:771; TWOT, s.v. "  $\text{קָרָן}$  ," by James E. Smith, 1:168-69. Two different types of shields are referred to here;  $\text{קָרָן}$  refers to a smaller, more common type of round shield carried by light infantry and officers, whereas  $\text{קָרָן}$  is the larger rectangular shield which covered the whole front of the body.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. "  $\text{מִסִּיכָה}$  ," by R.D. Patterson, 2:620; TWOT s.v. "  $\text{מִסִּיכָה}$  ," 2:740; BDB, pp. 692, 832.

<sup>3</sup>Yigael Yadin, The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands, trans. by M. Pearlman (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5, 297-302.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-10, 293-96.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-15.

Added to this picture is the fact that the invasion will be against an unsuspecting people, the people of God. Cities will be unwalled (38:11), because Israel will be dwelling in their land at this time in safety (38:11), presumably because of the covenant signed with the Revived Roman Empire (Dan 9:27).<sup>1</sup>

The description of the invasion itself is very short with few details. Ezekiel is simply communicating the fact of a great invasion that will come by a power of the north. His stress is upon the fact of an invasion with the attending purposes being of primary importance.

#### Purpose Of The Invasion

The purpose of the invasion of the great northern power with his allies is from two distinct perspectives. One is the human perspective, Gog's purpose. The other is the divine perspective, God's purpose. This will be the order in which these will now be examined.

#### Gog's Purpose

Gog's purpose for the invasion is twofold. First, it is to take spoil (38:12). The expressions used are

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<sup>1</sup>Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 255-63; John F. Walvoord, Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 228-37; John F. Walvoord, "The Prophecy of The Ten-Nation Confederacy," BSac 124 (April-June, 1967), pp. 99-105. The prince of the people that shall come (Dan 9:26), the leader of the people of Rome, part of the Ten-Nation Confederacy, will make a covenant with the people of God. The result: Israel will have security, though, as it turns out, a false security, for

$\text{לָקַח}$   $\text{לָקַח$ , to plunder taking spoil,<sup>1</sup> and  $\text{לָקַח$ , to spoil taking prey.<sup>2</sup> The synonymous parallelism pinpoints one purpose as that of taking Israel's wealth. Gog will see a prosperous and an apparently vulnerable Israel and will move down to invade and plunder. Military raids were sometimes ill-disguised plundering expeditions, an example being the ill-fated Amalekite raid against Ziklag in 1 Samuel 30.<sup>3</sup> Such is the case recorded in Ezekiel.

Israel is described as having cattle and goods, dwelling in the land. From the protests of the surrounding trading centers (Ezekiel 38:13) the wealth of Israel at this point must be great.

The purpose of obtaining wealth through plunder is possibly related to the fact that these events will occur during the Tribulation, as will be determined later. This will be a time of God's judgment as clearly seen in the book of Revelation. Revelation chapters 6, 8 and 9 speak of great judgments being poured out on the world. Revelation 6:5-6 states that food will be scarce and therefore very expensive. There will thus be famine, and one-fourth

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they are trusting not in God but in man. Key Scriptures which explain the nature of the power of the end times which is a revived Romanism Empire, a Confederacy of many nations are: Daniel 2, particularly vv. 31-35, 40-45; Daniel 7, particularly vv. 7-8, 19-24 with Revelation 13 and 17.

<sup>1</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{לָקַח}$ ," by Herman J. Austel, 2:930.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, pp. 102-03; TWOT, s.v. " $\text{לָקַח}$ ," by John N. Oswalt, 1:99.

<sup>3</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{לָקַח}$ ," by Herman J. Austel, 2:930.

of the earth's population will die as a result (Rev 6:7-8). Revelation 8:7 speaks of one-third of the earth's trees and vegetation being burned up. Just a look at these two examples begins to explain the situation that will exist.

Added to this, the context in which Ezekiel 38 and 39 lies might shed more light on the wealth that Israel will possess at this time. Chapters 38-39 are part of a unit of messages given by Ezekiel in chapters 34-39. Chapter 34 gives the statement of the covenant of peace the Messiah will make with Israel, speaking of the Kingdom to be established. Chapters 35-39 explain how this will be accomplished. The various stages of restoration are given. Foreign possessors will be removed from the land. Again Israel will begin to have their land as promised to Abraham. Next the people will be regathered. The nation will be politically revived and reunited (35-37). Israel as a nation will dwell in their land, and God will deal also with invaders (38-39). All of this will be for the preparation of Israel to accept their Messiah who comes to usher in the Kingdom.

Israel is God's people. It could be that during this time of world-wide judgment that God will have His protective hand upon her. The repeated phrase "dwell safely" may even indicate this, though primarily it refers to the political realm. The Old Testament does contain a parallel happening in the book of Exodus. While Egypt was smitten, the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived was spared. If this will again be the case during the Tribulation, then

indeed Israel's wealth will be very desirable.

There is also a second purpose given. Gog with her allies will launch a violent attack to destroy Israel, God's people. Keil explains:

vv. 10-16  $\text{בְּשׁוּבָה}$ , to bring back, is to be explained from the fact that the heathen had already at an earlier period turned their hand against the towns of Israel, and plundered their possessions and goods.  $\text{בְּשׁוּבָה בְּבָרְבָה}$  in this connection are desolate places which are inhabited again, and therefore have been rebuilt (cf. ch. xii. 20, xxvi. 19).<sup>1</sup>

The pages of history reveal continual hatred of Israel and numerous attempts to annihilate her. This will be another one of those attempts.

#### God's Purposes

God again is going to acquaint the world with Himself. He is going to display His power and sovereignty. He is still the God of the universe, and Israel is His people, and it is His land. Feinberg's comment here is appropriate:

Do not fail to notice 'my people' in verses 14 and 16, and 'my land' in verse 16. The godless nations have had little idea how involved God is in all that concerns His people and His land. This has been true throughout their national existence but will be made all the more evident when God finally decides to intervene decisively into the affairs of men in the consummation of the prophetic program for the earth.<sup>2</sup>

God's purpose is summed up in 38:16, "that the nations may know me." The word used is  $\text{יָדָע}$  and is repeated

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Ezekiel, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, p. 224.

in 38:23. The idea is that the nations may know or recognize God who has made Himself known (Niph'al of v. 23).<sup>1</sup> The plagues of Egypt were sent so that both Israel and Egypt might know that Jehovah is God. Even earlier in Ezekiel 6:7, God said that He will destroy and restore Israel so that proper recognition to the fact that he is God will be realized.<sup>2</sup> Through the judgment brought upon Gog, which will be before the eyes of the nations, God will be sanctified, causing Himself to be hallowed.<sup>3</sup>

God's judgment upon Gog is devastating. The judgment is mentioned in 38:18-23 and further expanded in chapter 39. The armies of Gog will be upon the mountains of Israel (39:2). God, having rendered the armies of Gog unable to fight (39:3), then directly destroys Israel's enemy.

The Lord Himself will undertake the destruction of Israel's enemies, choosing to use no secondary agent, for this is to be a final and irrecoverable judgment. The order will be, first, earthquake, then anarchy, pestilence and natural disasters. God's violent shaking of the earth will affect every area of nature, both animate and inanimate.<sup>4</sup>

Following the total ruin of the armies of this Northern Ruler, God proceeds to judge the land of Magog also. It will be destroyed with fire (39:6).<sup>5</sup> Again God's

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<sup>1</sup>BDB, pp. 393-95.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. "גִּי," by Jack P. Lewis, 1:366.

<sup>3</sup>BDB, pp. 871-73.

<sup>4</sup>Feinberg, Ezekiel, pp. 225-26.

<sup>5</sup>This is reminiscent of Genesis 18 and 19 and the completeness of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Likewise the land of Magog will be totally destroyed.

purpose is given, that the nations shall know that He is God, the Holy One of Israel (39:7).

#### Time Of The Invasion

Ralph Alexander, in his book on Ezekiel, gives in a very clear manner the basic views with regard to the time of the events of Ezekiel 38-39 within the futuristic understanding of this prophecy. This will serve as the basis for this section of the paper. The purpose here is to show the various major views with major arguments and not to critique each one. Following this, the viewpoint of the present author will be given in considerable detail. There are four basic views.

First, some see the events of Gog and Magog occurring before the Tribulation. Their major argument is that the concept of "dwell securely" is only explicable if the insecurity of the Tribulation has not yet begun.<sup>1</sup>

A second view with reference to the time problem is that the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 transpire in the middle of the Tribulation. Proponents of this position equate Gog's invasion with the invasion by the king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45.<sup>2</sup> Details in support of this view will be given following the stating of the other two views.

A third view places the time of these events at the end of the Tribulation. Gog's armies are seen as included

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander, Ezekiel, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

among those gathered against Christ in Zechariah 12 and 14:1-4.<sup>1</sup> There is also a slight variation within this view. Some identify Gog with the king of the north in Daniel 11:40, while others disassociate Gog from the Battle of Armageddon, saying that Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe a final battle at the end of the Tribulation prior to the judgment of Matthew 25 and the Millennium.<sup>2</sup>

A fourth solution is that these events occur after the Millennium. The primary argument of this position is the reference to Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8.<sup>3</sup> Added to this, the phrase "dwell safely" is said to be used by Ezekiel to refer to millennial security.<sup>4</sup>

In the text of Ezekiel 38 and 39 there are many time indicators which enable the exegete to determine the time of events. First are the numerous phrases such as "after many days," מֵאַחַר יָמִים מְרֻבִּים (38:8) and "in the latter years," מֵאַחַר הַיָּמִים הַלְּאֵחֶיךָ (38:8,16). To Ezekiel one thing is very clear. These events are still future. Ezekiel is writing prophecy, foretelling the future, and not writing history. Though these phrases have many meanings and usages,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The author of this paper regards the reference to Gog and Magog in Rev 20:8 in a literary figurative manner. "Gog and Magog" are used as symbolic names for the world-wide enemies of Christ. A modern equivalent would be our saying that someone has met his "Waterloo."

<sup>4</sup>Alexander, Ezekiel, p. 127.

it is not the purpose of this paper to deal with this in detail. One is the reference to the period of time including the end of the age of Gentile rule (Dan 2:28; 10:14). Therefore, this does allow for the event to occur before the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. It must be remembered that such time indicators are very broad and are usually, if not always, non-technical in nature. For Ezekiel, the time was yet future. The time span involved, from our perspective, begins with the Cross and can include all of time and eternity thereafter. Within this broad time slot, it is used of the culminating events prior to Christ's second coming. This all points to the possibility that these events can indeed occur in the Tribulation and specifically in the middle of that future period without violating the meaning or usage of such phrases.

Secondly, Israel will be in her land again after a long period of dispersion and captivity. This is evident by several statements. Israel shall "come into the land," having been "gathered out of many people" (38:8). The invasion will be "upon the people that are gathered out of the nations" (38:12). These people are identified as God's people Israel, "my people of Israel" (38:14 and 16).

Thirdly, and closely related to the previous fact, Israel is restored to her land. They are in the land that God had promised to Abraham. In the context of Ezekiel's series of night messages, which includes chapter 37, the prophecy of the Gog and Magog events is immediately

preceded by chapter 37 which tells of the future regathering of Israel. It is a time not only after a period of dispersion from the land, but also after a time of restoration to the land.

Fourthly, Israel is dwelling in safety. This too is very clearly emphasized. "And they (referring to Israel) shall dwell safely, all of them" (38:8). The invasion will be against those "that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (38:11). God's own evaluation of Israel's situation at the time of the invasion, as He charges Ezekiel the prophet to proclaim, is "in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely" (38:14).

Finally, in relation to the above, though Israel has been regathered from dispersion and is restored to the land, dwelling in it safely, these events occur before the salvation of the house of Israel. This salvation occurs sometime after the judgment of God upon Gog and Magog (39:22-29). Along with this is again the context of Ezekiel's messages. Chapters 40-48 speak of the millennial temple and blessing, the Kingdom period in which Israel as a nation is truly secure.

The security of Ezekiel 38, however, is a false security resulting from peace provided by Israel's covenant with the Ten-Nation Confederacy. That there is a state of relative peace is clear from the destruction in Ezekiel 38. That that peace Israel was enjoying was a false security is

clearly evident from the invasion that nearly destroyed their land and nation. Therefore, the peace and security spoken of in chapter 38 must be economic and political and not spiritual. Their trust was in man, not God. The thrust of the whole chapter is on Israel's material gains (with Gog coming down for material gain, v. 12). Such phrases as "dwelling without walls" and "having neither bars nor gates" (v. 11) stress political peace rather than spiritual peace and security with God. God's purpose for Israel related to these events also points toward the conclusion that this peace is a false security because God is not its source. Ezekiel 39:22, for example, states that the purpose is "so the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward."

As so often in Israel's history, even in times of prosperity, she did not have that vital spiritual relationship with her God.<sup>1</sup> Security in Ezekiel 38, yes; but a false security because it rested in man. God steps in on the stage of Israel's life and again demonstrates that only in Himself can His people, Israel, rest in peace. Therefore, the peace and security of Ezekiel 38 must be economic and political only. If this is not the case, God's purpose for

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<sup>1</sup>  $\sqrt{1}$  is used in Ezekiel 39:22. Often  $\sqrt{1}$  is used for intimate personal relationships. It was the common euphemism for sexual intercourse (Gen 4:1; 19:8; etc.), also knowledge of God derived from outstanding historical events in which God has evidenced and revealed Himself (and such is the case in Ezekiel 38 and 39). This knowledge is paralleled with fear of the Lord pointing to a true proper spiritual relationship.

the invasion stated in such verses as 39:22 would be meaningless.

The question that needs to be asked is, when will Israel be 1) regathered from dispersion, 2) dwelling in their land restored as a nation, 3) dwelling in some state of security and peace (to the point of having their guard down), yet all of these three before the salvation and promised blessings of God are a reality for the corporate nation of Israel? The time indicated by these facts is the tribulation period, Daniel's Seventieth Week, the time of Jacob's Trouble. Revelation 12 speaks of Israel being under heavy persecution for 1260 days, or three and one-half years, the last half of the Seventieth Week of Daniel.

Revelation chapter 12 describes first a war on earth (vv. 1-6), then a war in heaven (vv. 7-12) and finally a war back on earth (vv. 13-17). At the outset the reader is introduced to two signs (ῥῆματα), objects with special meaning. The first sign is a woman. The description of the woman, in particular her relation to the child (v. 2), identifies her. The child is Christ. The man child (υἱόν, a son) was to rule over all nations with a rod of iron. This description is used of Christ in Psalm 2:9 and in Revelation 2:27 and 19:15. The woman is the one who bore Christ. She would have to be either Mary or Israel. That this woman is Israel is clear by the fact that the woman is persecuted for 1260 days (v. 6) by the second sign, the dragon of verse 3. The background of the persecution is the dragon's defeat in the

war in heaven resulting in his being expelled (vv. 7-12). The dragon's persecution of the woman, Israel, again is picked up in verses 13-17, the last 1260 days of the Tribulation, or the last half of Daniel's Seventieth Week, the time of Jacob's Trouble.

Therefore the invasion cannot take place in the second half of the Tribulation. Israel will be persecuted severely, but at the time of the invasion she is described as "dwelling in safety." Therefore, the time must be somewhere in the first half of the Tribulation. As previously mentioned, Daniel 9:27 speaks of a covenant which is established between many of Israel and the Ten-Nation Confederacy, often referred to as the Revived Roman Empire. It is under this covenant of protection that Israel will be able to rest securely in peace. Therefore, the invasion of this northern power referred to as Gog of Magog must take place during the first three and one-half year period of the Tribulation. Further, it can probably be pinpointed to take place in the middle of the Tribulation, the events of Gog of Magog being the turning point of political events of that time.

#### Summary

From the above study certain facts can be drawn out to form a grid or framework to which other related passages containing similar information can be compared. These facts are as follows: 1) The central figure in the invasion is a leader of an army from Magog named Gog. The invader has a well-equipped army from the extreme north as seen from

Ezekiel's designation. 2) According to Ezekiel 38:17 this central figure, Gog, has been spoken of previously by former prophets of Israel, though not specifically identified by name in the manner Ezekiel does. 3) This central figure aligns himself with several other nations for the attack. 4) His purpose is twofold: to take spoil, and to destroy Israel. 5) God is the one who brings Gog down upon Israel to punish her. 6) Gog oversteps God's limits, in particular in his purpose to completely destroy Israel, and God utterly destroys both his army and land. 7) God's purpose is to make Himself known to the nations (including Israel) by His judgment upon Israel's enemy. 8) The invasion occurs sometime during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation when Israel is politically dwelling in safety because of the covenant agreement spoken of in Daniel 9:27. This data will serve as a point of comparison for the other related passages which will be examined in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### EXEGETICAL STUDY OF OTHER KEY "GOG-MAGOG" PASSAGES

This chapter will involve an exegetical study of passages from three other prophets. These are Joel, particularly chapter 2; Isaiah, particularly chapter 10; and Daniel, particularly 11:40-45. These will appear in chronological order because each one adds more detail overall that is relevant to the study at hand.

#### Joel 2

Joel gives but a glimpse of this event concerning which later prophets give more information. This is probably due, in part, to the fact that Joel was one of the earliest of the writing prophets<sup>1</sup> which God used for revealing this aspect of His program, namely, the chastisement of His people Israel for their disobedience at the Day of the Lord. Joel does not date his ministry, as some of the other prophets do, and evidence must be gained from internal factors of his book. The result is a date around the time of King

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Lee Feinberg, Joel, Amos and Obadiah (New York: American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc., 1948), p. 9.

Joash of Judah which is 835-796 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

The writer of this paper takes the locust plague of chapter one, which is described with a great deal of detail, as an actual locust plague that had devastated the land. There is no hint in the text to understand it otherwise.<sup>2</sup> It is with this as the historical occasion that God had Joel speak of yet a future judgment which will be even more devastating. The prophecy of this future judgment is contained in chapter 2 and is tied in with the Day of the Lord. Having introduced the Day of Jehovah in 1:15, Joel now develops that concept, using the actual locust plague, the historical situation of chapter 1, to point to a yet future time of judgment upon Israel. Many interpreters see only the historic locust plague in Joel 2 and lose the prophet's intent which is made clear in 2:11. Some go so far as to switch the order of chapters 1 and 2, putting the account of the coming of the locusts before the account of their destruction, both supposedly being accounts of one event but different phases.<sup>3</sup> The two chapters are parallel in challenge<sup>4</sup>, that is, the challenge of the prophet to Israel

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, The Prophets of Israel, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Feinberg, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah, p. 10. This is also Feinberg's opinion.

<sup>3</sup>Julius A. Bewer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Obadiah and Joel, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Leslie C. Allen, The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 64.

to repent. But both are to be regarded as complete in themselves and independent of each other.

After the summons to the people in verse 1, the Army of Jehovah of the Day of Jehovah is poetically described. As mentioned previously, the Day of Jehovah introduced in 1:15 is mentioned again in 2:1. It is also mentioned in 2:11, setting a framework or boundary for Joel's description which lies between these references.

Before actually looking at pertinent parts of this description a word will be said concerning the overall thrust or picture. God in these verses is pictured as the leader of His divine army, carrying out His judgment and chastisement. The military motif picked up from 1:6 permeates chapter 2 verses 2-10 and is finally explained in verse 11.<sup>1</sup> Some helpful comments made concerning verses 2-11 of Joel 2 are: "The locusts were envisaged as the army of Jehovah, executing His word, indicating quite clearly that every judgment was by His command and that it was figurative of that greater judgment yet to come."<sup>2</sup> "He (Joel) invests the plague with an aura of divine hostility."<sup>3</sup> "For they (locusts) represent him and come as emissaries of his wrath."<sup>4</sup> As will be seen following, God is pictured as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Fredk A. Tatford, A Prophet of Judgment Day (Sussex: Prophetic Witness Publishing House, 1974), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

going before His army in verse 3. Throughout his prophecy Joel alternates the theme of God's wrath and the locust army.<sup>1</sup> The result is a vivid and picturesque portion of literature which is interwoven so perfectly throughout that most commentators have been able to see nothing more than natural locusts in the passage.<sup>2</sup>

Jehovah's army is first described in verse 2 as  $\text{גָּבִרִים} \text{ וְיָמִים}$ , a people great and strong. At the very outset Joel gives a hint that he is referring to something beyond the locusts. Joel has exchanged  $\text{בָּנֵי אֲדָמָה}$ , people, for  $\text{גֹּבֵרִים}$ , nation, of 1:6 and both are used of foreign and idolatrous nations elsewhere in Scripture (Num 21:29; 1 Chr 16:20; and Jer 48:42).<sup>3</sup> The two descriptive words  $\text{גָּבִרִים}$  and  $\text{בָּנֵי אֲדָמָה}$  describe this army. The first,  $\text{גָּבִרִים}$ , is the common Hebrew adjective meaning "much" or "many" used with the collective noun signifying "numerous."<sup>4</sup> The peoples of the army were great in number, numerous. Secondly, they were also described as  $\text{בָּנֵי אֲדָמָה}$ , meaning mighty and powerful, having possible cognates in Ugaritic and Phoenician meaning "mighty" or "mighty deeds."<sup>5</sup> The peoples of the army were also

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ebenezer Henderson, The Twelve Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprint, 1980), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. See also pp. 95-96, note on 1:6.

<sup>4</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{גָּבִרִים}$ ," by William White, 2:826-27; BDB, pp. 912-13.

<sup>5</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{בָּנֵי אֲדָמָה}$ ," by Ronald B. Allen, 2:690; BDB, p. 783.

mighty and strong.

Moving to verse 3, the phrase "fire devoureth before them . . ." is to be understood as God accompanying His army at the head.

. . . but this burning heat is heightened here into devouring flames of fire, which accompany the appearing of God as He comes to judgment at the head of His army, after the analogy of the fiery phenomena connected with the previous manifestations of God, both in Egypt, where a terrible hail fell upon the land before the plague of locusts, accompanied by thunder and balls of fire (Ex. ix. 23, 24), and also at Sinai, upon which the Lord came down amidst thunder and lightning, and spoke to the people out of the fire (Ex. xix. 16-18; Deut. iv. 11, 12).<sup>1</sup>

Allen says, "Joel's daring application of the language of theophany interprets them as a manifestation of the destructive wrath of God."<sup>2</sup> It is God who is pictured going before His army of chastisement.

The remainder of verse 3 pictures total destruction (like Ex 10:15). The land, which previously resembled the garden of paradise of Genesis 2:8, was changed into a desolate wilderness.<sup>3</sup> It is apparent from the description of the land of Israel as the garden of Eden that there was at least to some degree prosperity and blessing being enjoyed in the land even though Israel was not in a right relationship to her God Who now was about to punish her. Allen

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Friedrich Keil, Minor Prophets, trans. James Martin, in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint, 1973), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 191.

makes the comment that  $\text{נִצְּלָה}$ , the word Joel uses for escape, is one that is often associated with survivors from the hazards of war as in 2 Samuel 15:14 and 2 Chronicles 20:24.<sup>1</sup> But its primary use is a reference to the remnant of God's people. And those who have escaped do not owe their survival to simply fortunate circumstances or luck, but rather their survival is only of God's mercy.<sup>2</sup> From this the emphasis by the prophet is not on an army or war but rather God's sovereign control in the pictured time of judgment. Nothing will escape Jehovah's army. Escape is only when God extends His mercy to them. It should be remembered that Joel's message had the purpose of challenging God's people to repent (2:12ff).

Coming to verses 4-5 and 7-9, Joel now builds up a frightening picture of military invincibility.<sup>3</sup> Jehovah's army appears as "horses" and "horsemen" with the "sound of chariots." Chariots were the most feared part of the enemy's army of Joel's day. The countless army also marched in as if it were regular battalions.<sup>4</sup> Keil translated the end of verse 6 this way: "like a strong people equipped for conflict."<sup>5</sup> In verses 7-9 the picture continues. The army's

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<sup>1</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{נִצְּלָה}$ ," 2:724-25.

<sup>3</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 192.

seeming invincibility is described as they move with unbroken ranks. Nothing could turn them back nor arrest their progress.<sup>1</sup>

The comparison of the army of locusts to a well-equipped army is carried out still further in these verses.<sup>2</sup> The language is of the assault of an army.

They run like heroes--namely, to the assault: ׀ל referring to an attack, as in Job xv. 26 and Ps. xviii. 30, "as their nimbleness has already been noticed in ver. 4" (Hitzig). Their climbing the walls also points to an assault.<sup>3</sup>

The army proceeds with discipline and determination. No one breaks ranks. No one is out of place. No one can stop their advance (vv. 7b-8). They reach their target and overrun the city (v. 9).

Sandwiched in the middle of this description are Joel's remarks concerning the response of the people in verse 6. Again there is a hint that the prophet is going beyond the plane of commonplace, a mere locust plague, by the use of the plural peoples.<sup>4</sup> By the reference ׀לֹאֵי, peoples, Joel is not simply referring to the people or tribes of Israel but to nations generally, and thus the prophet is no doubt depicting something more here than the devastation

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<sup>1</sup>Tatford, A Prophet of Judgment Day, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 71.

caused by the locusts of his day.<sup>1</sup> At this point Allen states that Joel is using the language of theophany.

As in v. 3, Joel seems again to be using the language of theophany:

Write in terror before him, all the earth. (Ps. 96:9)<sup>40</sup>

This warning heralds the coming of the universal Judge. In Ps. 99:1 the reaction to Yahweh's manifestation of his kingly might is that "peoples tremble," while in Ex. 15:14 the response to his victorious championing of Israel is that "peoples . . . tremble and writhing seizes the inhabitants of Philistia."<sup>41</sup> The widespread range of the reaction in these texts reflects the terrible and sublime power of Yahweh over the nations of Palestine and of the world.<sup>42</sup> All cower in panic before him; such is his overwhelming grandeur that no less an effect is adequate. Joel transfers such a response from the context of Yahweh's appearing to that of his instruments through whom he reveals his will.<sup>43</sup> Their vehement visitation he implicitly traces back to the empowering impulse of God. His heightened, loaded language serves to reflect the awe-inspiring role of the locusts as Yahweh's plenipotentiaries. They come not in their own name, for behind them stands the might and majesty of God.<sup>2</sup>

Joel brings his message to a climax in verses 10 and 11 by explaining the meaning of this terrible invasion upon God's people Israel. Verses 11 and 20 are the keys to a proper interpretation of Joel 2.

Hitherto he (Joel) has been mixing factual description with metaphorical comment, but now he drops the role of observer of the locusts' movements and concentrates on their religious significance. . . . Simple reflections upon the army-like character of the locust masses are turned into somber hints of the divine warfare against sin which marked Israel's Day of Judgment. . . . Joel seeks to rip away the veil of normal perception and reveal a new dimension of divine power at work in the locusts.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 73 and 76.

God thunders<sup>1</sup> before his army. The locusts are called the  $\zeta' \Pi$  <sup>2</sup>, the army of Jehovah. Also in the next phrase the word  $\cdot \Pi \Pi \Pi \Pi \Pi$ , rendered "camp" in many versions, can also be translated "army," because often it is used with the understanding as referring to the soldiers of the encampment.<sup>3</sup> This, along with the description of this army as  $\Pi \Pi \Pi \zeta$ , cannot be taken in any other sense than that which occurs in verse 3. It thus refers to "the great people and strong," viz. the army of locusts, like  $\Pi \Pi \Pi \Pi$ .<sup>4</sup> This parallels the thought introduced in 1:6 and then mentioned in 2:2 and developed in 2:3-10. Joel has thus given the interpretive key to his readers at this point.

Moving down to verse 20 of Joel 2, the second key to proper understanding is given. The material between verses 11 and 20 contains the reason or purpose for the prophecy of future desolation. Joel warns the people of Israel in verses 1-11 which is the basis for the exhortation to them to repent (vv. 12-19). Joel says if they repent

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<sup>1</sup>Henderson, Minor Prophets, pp. 106-07. This is to be regarded as merely referring to the voice of the Lord; thunder and not a command; Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 195. But it must be remembered that Joel is not merely describing a storm which came when the plague reached its height and put an end to the plague of locusts.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 298.

<sup>3</sup>BDB, pp. 333-34; William Richard Foster, "An Exegetical Examination of the Prophecy of Joel" (Th.M. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1954), p. 94; TWOT, s.v. " $\Pi \Pi \Pi$ ," by Victor P. Hamilton, 1:299-300.

<sup>4</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 195.

God will deliver them by driving<sup>1</sup> out the army. This "army of locusts" of 2:2-11 is now labeled 'רַבְּעִים אֲרָבִים , the Northern-er. Many have concluded from this alone that the reference cannot be to locusts at all because locusts invade Palestine from the south or southeast, and here it is stated they came from the north.<sup>2</sup> There must be caution here that the interpreter of Scripture does not make hasty surface conclusions.

It has been urged against its having any reference to the locusts, that they visit Palestine from the south, and not from the north; but this objection can scarcely be regarded as valid, since, though they do not usually come from that quarter, yet they may be carried by a south wind across Arabia Deserta, and then, when to the north of Palestine, be driven south, or south-west into that country. That, however, which determines the question, is the addition of the patronymic ' to רַבְּעִים אֲרָבִים , indicating that the North was not merely the quarter whence the subject of discourse came, but that its native country lay to the north of Palestine: just as 'רַבְּעִים אֲרָבִים , the Temanite, means the Southern, or him who dwells to the right of Palestine, 'רַבְּעִים אֲרָבִים , a native Egyptian.<sup>3</sup>

Joel is referring to a Northern army which will be used of God to carry out His judgment upon Israel. To Joel's audience this referred to the Assyrians, the rising northern power of his day.<sup>4</sup> Yet, there is also a further reference and that is to the time of the Day of Jehovah, the

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, "Joel," p. 116. Foster points out that the Hiphil is used showing it is God who will cause the destruction of the army.

<sup>2</sup>Allen, Joel, p. 88; E.B. Pusey, The Minor Prophets, vol. 1, in Notes on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 187; Tatford, A Prophet of Judgment Day, pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup>Henderson, Minor Prophets, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup>Tatford, A Prophet of Judgment Day, p. 47; Henderson, Minor Prophets, pp. 103-04; Foster, "Joel," p. 83.

future invasion by the great northern armies of Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39.<sup>1</sup>

One additional point needs to be observed before concluding this section. Joel gives the cause or reason for God's destruction of the army. It is because ('ַו) they have done a "great thing" (וַיִּשְׁׁוּׁוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת גָּדוֹל), literally meaning "he hath magnified to do" with the idea of magnifying or considering oneself as great.<sup>2</sup> These concluding words convey the idea of moral agency, and with no propriety can be interpreted of the locusts.<sup>3</sup> The idea to do great things is used with the subordinate idea of haughtiness, so that it not only means that one has done a mighty thing, accomplished a mighty devastation, but also has bragged or been proud of one's strength.<sup>4</sup> Keil goes on and states that the locusts are to be viewed here, and it is not incorrect to impute to irrational creatures punishment for presupposed accountability.<sup>5</sup> But what Keil fails to see is that there is a difference between accountability and restitution for a violent act done by a beast (examples given in Gen 9:5; Ex 21:28-32), and punishment for the sin of arrogance and pride as is the case in Joel 2:20. Sin cannot be and is not

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<sup>1</sup>Tatford, A Prophet of Judgment Day, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. "לַעֲשׂוֹת," by Elmer B. Smick, 1:151; BDB, pp. 152-3.

<sup>3</sup>Henderson, Minor Prophets, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

anywhere in Scripture imputed to a beast. Beasts have no moral capacity at all. Therefore, with reference to Joel 2:20 in which moral accountability is the point of intent, this cannot refer to the locusts of the previous section of the chapter. Pusey makes this point:

He is speaking then of man who was God's instrument in chastening His people; since of irrational, irresponsible creatures, a term which involves moral fault, would not have been used, nor would a moral fault have been set down as the ground why God destroyed them. . . . They were part of its fulfillment, and of the great law of God which it declares, that instruments, which He employs, and who exceed or accomplish for their own ends, the office which He assigns them, He casts away and destroys.<sup>1</sup>

From this look at Joel 2 several concluding statements can be made. The time is identified as occurring in the Day of Jehovah (1:15; 2:2; 2:11). There are glimpses of a great army, one which is large, well-equipped and awesome to those who witness it in action (2:2-10). Apparently Israel will be experiencing great blessing in the land as described by the phrase "the land is as the garden of Eden" (2:3), even though her relationship with the Lord is not right as a nation before the invasion. God is the one portrayed as directing the invasion (2:3,11) for the purpose of chastening Israel to bring her back to Himself (2:12ff. and 2:27). The direction from which Jehovah's army comes is the north (2:20). Finally, God will come to Israel's hour of need and completely destroy the invader who is called "the northerner" (2:18ff). The reason is because of

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<sup>1</sup>Pusey, Minor Prophets, p. 189.

haughtiness and pride, and going beyond God's intent (2:20).

### Isaiah 10

Isaiah's ministry was a little later chronologically than Joel's. God through Isaiah reveals more information as to the future invasion by a northern power. Isaiah dates his ministry in the reign of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa 1:1). Isaiah probably lived even following the reign of Hezekiah because he refers to the death of the Assyrian emperor, Sennacherib, in 37:38, and this did not occur until 681 B.C., five years after Hezekiah's death in 686 B.C. 2 Chronicles 32:32 also states that Isaiah wrote a history of Hezekiah. This means Isaiah lived a few years into the reign of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah.<sup>1</sup>

The prophecy of Isaiah 10 speaks of an invasion of the Assyrians against the people of Israel. Israel's security was shattered by threats and boasts from Sennacherib, king of Assyria. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of Isaiah 10 is also recorded by Isaiah in chapters 36-37. This history is also recorded in 2 Kings 18 and 19. During Hezekiah's reign Sennacherib's armies pushed south to the very gates of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> As a result of Hezekiah's

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, The Prophets of Israel, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup>It is not the intent of this paper to unravel all of the historical intricacies and problems which are related to Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine. For further study two works are suggested for background and possible solutions that have been offered. Leo L. Honor,

pleading with the Lord (Isa 37:20; 2 Kgs 19:1ff), God assured him that the Assyrians would not enter Jerusalem (Isa 37:33). God said He would defend the city (Isa 37:35). History as recorded in Scripture indicates that the armies of Assyria were devastated by a supernatural catastrophe (Isa 37:36; 2 Kgs 19:35-37).

As one looks to secular history all that one can find written about such a seige on Jerusalem is the Prism of Sennacherib which says nothing of a defeat.<sup>1</sup> Whitcomb in his book dealing with 2 Kings makes this comment.

However, those who are skilled at "reading between the lines" of Assyrian historical records find convincing evidence of a great Assyrian military debacle in Palestine at this time. In his famous Prism Inscription (see Fig. 19), Sennacherib states: "Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen it, had deserted him, did send me, later to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Now the fact that Sennacherib said nothing about conquering Jerusalem is tantamount to admitting a total defeat, for otherwise he would have gloated over the conquest in great detail. Furthermore, it was thirteen years before the Assyrians appeared in Palestine again.<sup>2</sup>

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Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926); and a briefer and more recent treatment, Siegfried H. Horn, "Did Sennacherib Campaign Once or Twice Against Hezekiah?," Andrews University Seminary Studies 4 (January, 1966).

<sup>1</sup>James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 287-88.

<sup>2</sup>John C. Whitcomb, Jr., Solomon to the Exile (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1971), p. 123.

Related to this, Horn in a footnote refers to a statement of Weber regarding historical reliability of Assyrian records.

"All official historical literature of the Assyrians culminates in the excessive praise of the king, and has as its only aim the transmission of this praise to posterity. It is clear that under these circumstances the credibility of royal inscriptions is subject to suspicion. Not one royal inscription admits a failure in clear words; instead we know of cases in which an obvious defeat has been converted into a brilliant victory by the accommodating historiographer. In most cases, however, it was common practice to pass in silence over any enterprises of which the king had little reason to boast. Even where the king was successful, one must not fail to deduct much from the enthusiastic battle reports, and one should not forget to remain critical toward unexpected transitions or sudden breaks in the narrative where the reader hoped to hear much more."<sup>1</sup>

The prophecy of Isaiah 10 was fulfilled through the events of Sennacherib's Assyrian army as recorded in Isaiah 37 and 2 Kings 19. But yet there is a second reference to a yet future northern power used by God to chastise and bring His people back to Himself. This does in no way take away from the message, impact of that message, and its fulfillment in Isaiah's time. But, rather, it is clear from the examination of Isaiah 10 that God's message given through Isaiah to Israel living at that time goes beyond the historical setting. A yet future audience and time, namely those in the time of the end, the day of Jehovah, are also involved.

An example of this very principle is found a few

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<sup>1</sup>Weber cited by: Horn, "Did Sennacherib Campaign Once or Twice Against Hezekiah?," p. 13.

chapters earlier in that familiar verse, Isaiah 7:14. The immediate sign, the son to be born to the woman, was to Ahaz, the king of Israel at that time. Yet, probably even unaware to Isaiah, God was speaking of a future son to be born of a woman named Mary (Matt 1:23). This does not take away from the present message and intended impact upon the initial audience to which a prophecy is given nor its near fulfillment but simply recognizes the fact of double reference.

In the tenth chapter of Isaiah there is even a hint of a further reference in the end times related to these predicted events.

"For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth" (Is. 10:22-23). This statement is likewise re-inforced by two further statements from the same context--"when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem"; "the indignation against thee shall be accomplished" (Is. 10:12, 25). These verses occur in a chapter in which the historical Assyrian invasion is described by Isaiah, but it is very certain that the essential meaning of the verses quoted passes into the realm of the eschatological. This phenomenon has already been shown to be perfectly natural in the interpretation of the prophetic scriptures, and may be explained in that the historical Assyrian nation is typical of the eschatological nation which stands in the same relationship to Israel. The definite proof for these observations is found in that "the apostle Paul in Rom. 9:27 applies vv. 22, 23 to the yet future time, when Israel, passing through the great tribulation, will be reduced in number to a mere remnant." It must, therefore, be apparent that the verse points not merely to the immediate fulfilment [sic], but to the culminating judgment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, "Eschatological Significance of the Assyrian," pp. 51-2.

It is clear that Assyria is "the rod" or instrument of God's judgment upon Israel in 10:5-6. God sends Assyria against an irreligious nation, Israel and Judah.<sup>1</sup> The nation of Israel is called  $\text{עֲלִילָה}$ , polluted and profane, and is used in the sense of godless in Jeremiah 23:11.<sup>2</sup> God was going to bring judgment upon Israel for their turning away from Him.

Assyria's purpose for invading Israel is also given by Isaiah: first to take spoil and prey (10:6)--common words used of invasions meaning to take booty; secondly, to go beyond God's intent to tread down (v. 6).  $\text{מָדָד}$  is used, meaning to trample down,<sup>3</sup> but the Assyrian comes to destroy,  $\text{גָּדַשׁוּׁלָהּ}$ , and to cut off,  $\text{נִכְרְתָהּ}$  (v. 7). The first term,  $\text{גָּדַשׁוּׁלָהּ}$ , means to destroy completely, exterminate or annihilate.<sup>4</sup> The second term which is added in parallelism to the first is  $\text{נִכְרְתָהּ}$ , to cut off or cut down with the idea to destroy the life of something, elimination.<sup>5</sup> This intent of the army to completely destroy Israel to the point of annihilation is also shown as contrary to God's intent

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<sup>1</sup>Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 360.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, pp. 337-38.

<sup>3</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{מָדָד}$ ," by William White, 2:850; BDB, p. 942.

<sup>4</sup>BDB, p. 1029; TWOT, s.v. " $\text{גָּדַשׁוּׁלָהּ}$ ," by Herman J. Austel, 2:935.

<sup>5</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{נִכְרְתָהּ}$ ," by Elmer B. Smick, 1:456-57; BDB, pp. 503-04.

by the beginning of verse seven. God's intent was that of punishment (v. 6) for the purpose of bringing Israel to repentance, but Assyria's reaction was different in verse 7. Verses 6 and 7 form a contrast between God's action and intent and Assyria's reaction and intent. The emphasis "yet he" brings out this contrast. The "not so" also shows that the Assyrian does not regard that he is a mere tool as he ought to think, for he is indeed in the hand of God an unconscious instrument.<sup>1</sup> This is again stated in verses 12-14. Because of Assyria's boastful pride, God will punish her.

From Isaiah 37 and 2 Kings 19, the historical fulfillment, we find that the Assyrian army is well-equipped and very numerous. At the time of the invasion this northern aggressor comes down upon the villages of the land with little resistance until he comes to Jerusalem (10:28-32). At this point God intervenes and destroys the armies on the mountains of Israel (10:24-27).

These are the areas of similarity and correspondence to the other "Gog-Magog" passages. It is in these points that the prophecy of the Assyrian looks to yet a future time, a time in which God again will chasten His people through a northern army. Though the prophecy given by Isaiah to his generation saw a near fulfillment, Assyria also typifies the end time power used of God during the

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<sup>1</sup>Young, Isaiah, 1:360.

last days. At that time Jews who know the Old Testament Scripture will realize both from predictive Scriptures and from history that God is bringing them to Himself, as in the past, through the means of the chastening hand of ungodly nations.

Daniel 11:40-45

When the Book of Daniel was written, Israel was in exile. Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporaries though their situations in life were quite different. Daniel's ministry is also dated for us in his writing. In 605 B.C. he and three of his friends, who were among many, were taken captive to Babylon (Dan 1:6). In Daniel 10:1, Daniel says that his fourth vision came to him in the third year of Cyrus' reign. Thus, Daniel was still alive and ministering in 536 B.C.<sup>1</sup> Daniel was not a prophet in the sense of occupation as was Ezekiel. But he was used by God to write the prophetic book bearing his name which contains the remarkable predictions God gave him.<sup>2</sup>

The passage to be examined in Daniel's book is chapter 11 with particular attention given to verses 40-45. Within these verses is the rather detailed description of a military campaign.

Daniel 11:36-45 speaks of one unit--the rule of the Antichrist--but contains two parts. First, verses 36-39

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, The Prophets of Israel, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

give information regarding the general policies and practices of the final ruler, and verses 40-45 give information regarding a specific confrontation he has which related to the Jews. The time of the events of Daniel 11:40-45 is given as "the time of the end" (יְדֵי אֲחֵרִית). With regard to the reference here and in 11:35, the time is the Tribulation period when Antichrist rules.<sup>1</sup>

There are two major views of Daniel 11:40-45 which regard this portion of Daniel as predictive prophecy from Daniel's viewpoint. The second view, as will be demonstrated later, has two distinct understandings.<sup>2</sup>

The first predictive prophetic viewpoint of Daniel 11:40-45 is that this passage is a prophecy of Antiochus' death. James Montgomery in his commentary on Daniel in the ICC series supports this view, though he modifies it. He states:

This present writer agrees with the great majority of recent commentators . . . who find in the passage an accurate forecast of Antiochus' death--in regarding the passage as a prophecy of the king's catastrophic end. But it cannot, with those conservative theologians, be taken in any way as an exact prophecy of the actual events of his ruin. . . . Our book must have been composed well before the tyrant's death. On the other hand the essence of the prophecy was strangely

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, Daniel, pp. 303-04, 308.

<sup>2</sup>The writer of this paper is aware that many liberals regard Daniel 11:40-45 as merely relating historical facts of Antiochus' death, placing the writing of Daniel very late. Those holding this view will not be seriously considered. Only the various predictive prophetic understandings will be given any attention here.

justified by Antiochus' miserable death.<sup>1</sup>

This viewpoint, whether with or without midification, from our vantage point regards Daniel 11:40-45 as already fulfilled. Predictive, yes, from Daniel's viewpoint, but already fulfilled by Antiochus' death.

The second viewpoint to be considered sees Daniel 11:40-45 as yet to be fulfilled, though a few see a partial fulfillment in Antiochus' death. Therefore, this view is eschatological in nature. As previously mentioned there are two distinct understandings within this viewpoint. The divergence is in the identity of the kings involved.

The first view regards Daniel 11:40-45 as predicting Antichrist's final destruction and defeat. Those holding this view see the willful king (Antichrist) successful in verse 40, and he is the one who then goes south conquering and then returns to Palestine and is finally utterly destroyed. Those holding this view are numerous.<sup>2</sup> For these, it

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), pp. 465-66.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Duncan Culver, The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1980), pp. 176-184; Walter K. Price, In the Final Days (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), pp. 164-78; Walvoord, Daniel, pp. 277-80; Wood, Daniel, pp. 304-14; Donald K. Campbell, Daniel: Decoder of Dreams (Wheaton: SP Publications, Inc., 1977), pp. 131-35; C.F. Keil, Daniel, trans. by M.G. Easton, in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint, 1973), pp. 469-474; Philip R. Newell, Daniel, The Man Greatly Beloved and His Prophecies (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), pp. 178-80; H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Daniel (N.p.: The Wartburg Press, 1949; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), pp. 510-525; Jerome's Commentary on Daniel, trans.

is prophecy concerning the future, focusing on the "willful king," his career and events leading to his end.

The second view regards Daniel 11:40-45 as predicting the final destruction and defeat of one other than Antichrist, namely the King of the North. Those setting forth this understanding are Charles Feinberg<sup>1</sup> and Frederick Tatford.<sup>2</sup> This view sees the King of the North as successful in verse 40 and then the King of the North moves southward conquering. Then hearing disturbing news he returns to Palestine where he is utterly destroyed. The end result is that the northern power is eliminated as a serious threat in the struggle for power during the end times and Antichrist then is able to rise to prominence on the world political scene.

The key to a proper understanding of verses 40-45 is the identity of the participants in verse 40, the King of the South, the King of the North, and the three pronouns ("him," "him," and "he" in the English), the syntax of which will be explained shortly. The King of the South refers to a political power south of Palestine during the period of the Tribulation. The King of the North refers to a

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by Gleason L. Archer, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), pp. 139-144.

<sup>1</sup>Charles Lee Feinberg, Daniel, the Man and His Visions (Chappaqua, New York: Christian Herald Books, 1981), pp. 176-77.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick A. Tatford, The Climax of the Ages: Studies in the Prophecy of Daniel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953), pp. 209-15.

political power north of Palestine during the same period.

Who does this King of the South push at? Who does this King of the North come against? The answer to both of these questions is the same. The first two pronouns find their antecedent in the personage discussed in the previous context, verses 36-39. This individual has come to be known as the Willful King, the Antichrist.

The first pronominal suffix ("him), which is the object of the King of the South's activity, must refer back to an individual previously mentioned. Going back to the nearest possible antecedent, one must conclude that that individual is the Willful King of verses 36-39. He alone is the subject of the previous verses. There is no other candidate for the first pronoun, "him," of verse 40 to refer to.

The second pronominal suffix ("him") also must refer to the Willful King. The nearest antecedent of the second "him" is the first pronominal suffix "him." Therefore, both of the first two pronouns are one and the same person. The natural use and understanding of language points to the fact that both suffixes in  $\text{h}^{\text{c}}\text{y}$  and in  $\text{h}^{\text{c}}\text{y}$  are references back to the King previously spoken of in verses 36-39, that person being the Willful King or Antichrist.

The third pronoun ("he") in verse 40 refers to the King of the North who is said to enter into the countries and overflow and pass over. In the rest of the narrative the central figure is the King of the North. He is the

aggressor. Antichrist, Israel and other countries listed in these verses are the victims of his mighty army.

At the time of this event, apparently both the King of the South and the King of the North move against the Antichrist. It is interesting that the King of the South is merely mentioned, but the King of the North's weapons are listed. The list is that of a well-equipped army of the day. This, along with the fact that the King of the North becomes the central figure throughout to the end of the passage,<sup>1</sup> suggests he is the key figure in the invasion with the forces of the King of the South being mere allies following orders of the northern power.

The attack of the King of the North is swift and devastating. In verse 41 he moves into the glorious land, <sup>בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים</sup>, that is Palestine, the land of the people of God.<sup>2</sup> During this initial thrust into the Palestine area from the north, other nations fall prey, many possibly joining as allies as often was the case in conquest. There were three that did escape--Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These three are all to the southeast of Palestine.

Then the King of the North stretches out against the countries to the south. The word Daniel used for countries, <sup>בְּאֶרֶץ</sup>, is the same word used in verse 40 for lands--

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<sup>1</sup>The King of the North is the closest antecedent to "he shall enter into the countries . . . ."

<sup>2</sup>Daniel uses the same phrase to refer to the land of Israel in v. 16 and 8:9.

all signifying various countries. Not content with Palestine, the King of the North proceeds southwest<sup>1</sup> conquering Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. The language here expresses his seizing them and taking possession of them.<sup>2</sup>

At this time disturbing news comes from the northeast (probably from the Palestine area itself which is directly northeast) which causes him to return to Palestine (v. 44). The identity and nature of these troublesome rumors is difficult, and Daniel gives no help. Here Revelation 13 adds details to Daniel's account of this military campaign.

The beast of Revelation 13:1 which rises out of the sea is that end-time power often labeled the Revived Roman Empire, the Ten-Nation Confederacy of which the Antichrist is a part and then later secures sole rulership. The dragon of verse 2 is the power behind this blasphemous empire. He is Satan, the dragon of chapter 12, who has been expelled from heaven midway through the Tribulation and now is making war on Israel, the woman of chapter 12. This persecution is for the duration of the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years (12:6, 14), the last half of the Tribulation.

One of the seven heads or leaders in this

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, Daniel, p. 312. This is probably why Edom, Moab, and Ammon escape invasion. The direction that the King of the North took in his expansion was not in their direction. (Though Wood sees the Antichrist as the one on the move.)

<sup>2</sup>Keil, Daniel, p. 472.

confederacy, the Antichrist, is slain (13:3). The wording ἔσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, literally "fatally wounded unto death," is the wording used of Christ in Revelation 5:6. As Christ actually died so this ruler will actually die.<sup>1</sup> This fatal wound (ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου) is healed, and all the world wonders (Rev 13:3). The following verses indicate that he again becomes powerful, by the nature of the questions in verse 4. In fact, a short time after, his power and rule expand, being driven and empowered by the dragon himself.

Going back to Daniel, it can be determined now how this fits into Daniel 11:40-45. The land of Palestine is invaded by the King of the North and his ally, the King of the South. The one whom they confront is Antichrist, the Willful King, who is in Palestine at that time, upholding the covenant of peace and protection with Israel (Dan 9:27). The King of the North gains total victory, apparently even slaying Antichrist himself. The battle having been won in Palestine, the King of the North proceeds southwest to North Africa expanding his rule. While he is in the North Africa area, troublesome rumors come from the northeast, from Palestine. Antichrist has just been resuscitated by Satan himself, his armies having previously been defeated. The King of the North hears of this threat and returns to Palestine to utterly destroy and annihilate both Antichrist and his

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<sup>1</sup>This also ties together with Revelation 17:11.

army as well as Israel (Dan 11:44). The two words used are  $\text{רָדְפוּהֶן}$  and  $\text{מַרְגִּמֶהֶן}$ . The first  $\text{רָדְפוּהֶן}$  is a term already studied in Isaiah 10, which means to destroy completely.<sup>1</sup> The second word has the same idea.  $\text{מַרְגִּמֶהֶן}$  means to mutilate or exterminate.<sup>2</sup> The King of the North clearly believes he can completely defeat those causing the rumors. This is a good argument against the view that the rumors from the east speak of the overwhelming hordes of 200,000,000 soldiers from the Far East (cf. Rev 9:16 and 16:12).<sup>3</sup>

Having come back up to Palestine, the King of the North sets up camp between the seas and the glorious holy hill ( $\text{שְׂרֵטְתֵי הַיָּם}$ ). The holy hill of delight in Palestine is without a doubt a reference to the mountain on which stood the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> With regard to the identity of  $\text{יָםִים}$ , seas, most see this referring to both the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, the plural being considered an actual plural.<sup>5</sup> It is possible, however, to regard  $\text{יָםִים}$  as an intensive or poetic plural referring to the Mediterranean Sea only:

. . . without doubt the mountain on which stood the temple of Jerusalem, . . . According to this,  $\text{יָםִים}$  cannot

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<sup>1</sup>BDB, p. 1029; TWOT, s.v. " $\text{רָדַף}$ ," by Herman J. Austel, 2:935.

<sup>2</sup>TWOT, s.v. " $\text{מַרְגִּמָּה}$ ," by Thomas E. McComiskey, 1:325.

<sup>3</sup>Wood, Daniel, p. 313.

<sup>4</sup>Keil, Daniel, p. 473.

<sup>5</sup>Wood, Daniel, pp. 313-14; Walvoord, Daniel, p. 280; Leupold, Exposition of Daniel, p. 524.

designate the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, as Kliefoth supposes, but it is only the poetic plur. of fullness, as a sign of the great Mediterranean Sea.<sup>1</sup>

Either understanding is possible. Both fit the details of the context.

The stage is set for battle between the King of the North on the one hand and Antichrist and Israel on the other. But the passage in Daniel comes to an abrupt conclusion. Daniel pronounces that the King of the North is totally ruined,  $\text{וְיִשְׁרָף־וְיִשְׂרָאֵל}$ . No one comes to his aid.

Again the context in which these verses occur is very important. There is no chapter break between verse 45 of chapter 11 and verse 1 of chapter 12. The thought continues. Daniel continues by saying "and at that time" ( $\text{וְעַתָּה}$ ), the waw being understood here as conjunctive. At this time, in reference back to the previous verses, Michael stands up and great persecution begins upon Israel, but those who are spiritually saved Israelites at that time are delivered (12:1).

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Daniel, pp. 473-74.

## CHAPTER III

### SYNTHESIS OF THE "GOG-MAGOG" PASSAGES

In this chapter the various passages looked at previously will be synthesized. On the assumption that all four of the previous passages speak of the Gog-Magog event set forth in Ezekiel 38 and 39, though in varying degree and detail, this synthesis will be accomplished. Of major input will be Daniel 11:40-45 and Ezekiel 38 and 39 because these two passages give the most detail.

First, all four writers, Joel, Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel, refer to the main participant, an enemy of God's people from the north, in a manner most familiar to their particular audience. Joel refers to this end-time invader simply as "the northerner," Joel 2:20. The term used by Isaiah to refer to this northern power is "Assyria."<sup>1</sup> Daniel uses the terminology "the King of the North," (Dan 11:40), and, of course, Ezekiel uses "Gog of Magog."

In each passage God was demonstrated to be the one in absolute control. His purposes were to chastise Israel using the power of the north. The end goal was to bring Israel to repentance and renewed fellowship with her God.

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<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that Assyria will have to be revived in the Tribulation, but that Assyria is used typically to refer to this end-time power.

God's intent was overstepped by the "rod of his wrath," but pride, boasting and haughtiness brought severe judgment. In each passage the nation God used to complete His purposes was held to be responsible for their own moral actions.

In the case of Daniel's and Ezekiel's accounts which contain the most detail directly related to the military campaign itself, it is clear that two distinct emphases and perspectives are involved. This explains the difference in context. Ezekiel 38 and 39 has a divine perspective. The main person is God and His judgments. Ezekiel, though giving information about the army and purposes involved, simply states that the invasion takes place. On the contrary, Daniel 11:40-45 contains the human perspective. For Daniel and his particular audience, the main subject of his message is the Antichrist and the relation of his policies and activities to Israel. Therefore, there is considerable detail concerning the conflict and the maneuvers themselves. Both deal with the same event but from different viewpoints. They both end with the same results. Gog, the King of the North, is utterly destroyed by God.

Following is a list of the sequence of events demonstrating how these various passages fit together. The majority of the material is from Daniel and Ezekiel as already stated, but a few other passages will be included to fill in the necessary gaps to make the picture complete.

At the time of the Gog-Magog invasion Israel is prospering and dwelling safely in her land.

Joel 2:3 "the land is as the garden of Eden."

Isaiah 10:6 "to take spoil" implies at least some wealth

10:13 "robbed their treasures"

Ezekiel 38:8, 11 "they (Israel) dwell safely"

38:12 "to take spoil . . . (from the people) which have gotten cattle and goods"

This peace is a result of the covenant signed by many of Israel with the Ten-Nation Confederacy of the end time.

Daniel 9:27 "he (the prince that shall come of v. 26, the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many (of Israel) for one week."

A coalition against the Ten-Nation Confederacy and Israel is set up of which the northern power Gog is the leader.

Ezekiel 38:1-6 Those involved in this coalition are Gog of Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer and Togarmah.

Daniel 11:40 "King of the South" and the "King of the North"

They plan to attack Palestine with the purpose of taking spoil and destroying Israel.

Ezekiel 38:7-13

Details of the initial overwhelming invasion.

Daniel 11:40 King of the North from the north and King of the South from the south attack Palestine. If the attack was intended to be secret, it was not. The Willful King, Antichrist ("him" of 11:40), was in Palestine upholding the covenant of protection with God's people.

Israel and the forces of Antichrist are defeated.

Daniel 11:41 "He (King of the North) entered also into the glorious land (Israel), many overthrown"

Revelation 13:3a Antichrist slain

With Palestine defeated, the northern power expands southward taking Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia.

Daniel 11:42-43 "He (King of the North) shall stretch forth his hand also upon . . . Egypt . . . and the Libyans and the Ethiopians."

While in North Africa, the King of the North hears reports of trouble out of the northeast, Palestine.

Daniel 11:44a "tidings from the east and north"

Revelation 13:3b Antichrist resuscitated; has re-gathered forces possibly getting other reinforcements.

The King of the North then returns to Palestine to utterly destroy and annihilate Israel and the force of Antichrist there.

Daniel 11:44b "he (King of the North) shall go with great fury to destroy."

Having returned to Palestine, the King of the North sets up camp around Jerusalem on the mountains of Israel preparing for battle.

Daniel 11:45a "he shall plant the tents between the seas in the glorious holy mountain"

Ezekiel 39:2 "upon the mountains of Israel"

God supernaturally destroys the King of the North, Gog.

Joel 2:20 "I (God) will remove far off from you the northern army."

Isaiah 10:20-34

Daniel 11:45b "he shall come to his end, none shall help"

Ezekiel 38:17-23

God destroys Gog and his land  
39:3ff Magog (39:6).

The Day of Jacob's Trouble, the Great Tribulation (last 3½ years of the Tribulation) is ushered in.

Daniel 12:1 "And at that time . . . there shall be a time of trouble."

Daniel 9:27b "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." The northern power is destroyed. Antichrist breaks the covenant, sets himself up as God, sitting in the temple saying he is God (2 Thess 2:4).

Revelation 12 Satan being barred from heaven persecutes the woman (Israel) 1260 days (v. 6) or a "time, times and a half a time" ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  years) (v. 14) through the seven-headed ten-horned beast (v. 3 cf. Rev 13:1).

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

From this study several conclusions can be drawn. First and most obvious is that the Scriptures examined in this paper all speak of the same prophetic event. The Gog-Magog invasion is not restrictively spoken of by Ezekiel alone (cf. Ezek 38:17) but it is part of Joel's, Isaiah's, and Daniel's prophetic messages. Finally, a chapter containing a synthesis of these passages demonstrates several important points.

First, the time of this invasion is the middle of the Tribulation just prior to the time of Jacob's Trouble, the Great Tribulation. Secondly, these passages give a good demonstration of the principle of progressive revelation. Through the progressive process of revelation God builds upon previous revelation, giving more details successively. The passing of time and additional words spoken by His prophets fill out the details of various events of God's program. The diligent student of God's Word needs to compare Scripture with Scripture. It has often been said, and is ever so true, that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible.

Thirdly, much about God's character can be learned.

He is indeed a just and holy God. He is a God in absolute control. His program and plans will not be frustrated by unbelieving men and nations. It is this almighty God who will utterly destroy His enemy on the mountains around Jerusalem Who is also our Savior. And our salvation is secure in His hands.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand (John 10:28-29).

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