

Chapter 12 Israel

Introduction. The Bible prophesies of a great battle against Israel in the Last Days. The battle is led by a “Gog,” the commander of an Alliance of nations from the “remote north” as well as from nations of the Middle East, Asia Minor, and Africa. In this battle, Gog and his army are defeated, and the nations of the world are made aware that there is none other God than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and, Israel is made aware that the Christ whom they rejected 2000 years ago is the Messiah of the world!

This chapter will interpret the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 - 39. Specifically, who is “Gog,” and who are the nations included in his military alliance? How is God revealed in Gog’s destruction? How does Israel come to receive Jesus as Messiah and Lord? This chapter will discuss the motivation for Gog’s attack on Israel and the significance of the motivation in identifying the member nations of Gog’s Alliance. Finally, it will outline a series of world events that will take place in order for the prophecy as revealed to the prophet Ezekiel to be fulfilled.

Here are the introductory verses of the prophecy:

^{NAS} Ezekiel 38:2 *"Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. . . . 21 "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord God. . . . 39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal; . . . 11 "On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. . . . 39:7 "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. 8 "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord God. "That is the day of which I have spoken.*

Who is Gog? The name “Gog” first appears in 1 Chronicles 5:4:

^{NAS} 1 Chronicles 5:4 *"The sons of Joel were Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5 Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away into exile; he was leader of the Reubenites."*

The text tells us that Gog was one of the “sons of Joel.” Joel was a descendant of Reuben. Reuben was the first born son of Jacob, patriarch of the Jewish nation, and father of the twelve sons who made up the twelve tribes of Israel. The significance of the first born son was that the largest portion of the family’s inheritance was left to the first born son. Reubin forfeited his first born share by virtue of a sexual sin committed against his father when he slept with his father’s concubine (Gen 35:22, 49:3-4). Consequently, it was not through Reuben’s heirs that Jesus was born, but through the line of Judah, fourth son of Jacob. No other information about “Gog” is given to us, either historically or biblically; and, no connection is ever made between Gog of 1

Chronicles and Gog of Ezekiel 38/39. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any significance should be placed on the use of the name “Gog” in 1 Chronicles 5 and “Gog” of Ezekiel 38 and 39. The two texts are referring to two different individuals who just happen to have the same name. If this were not the case, the text would have given us information to compare the two and make a conclusion based on common factors.

The only other time “Gog” appears in scripture (outside of Ezekiel 38 and 39) is in Revelation 20:8. The text provides:

Revelation 20:7 “And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.”

As will be discussed below, in Revelation 20:8 “Gog and Magog” symbolize nations of the world at enmity with God. However, in Ezekiel, “Gog” does not refer to a nation but a specific individual. Notice the many references in Ezekiel that use a personal pronoun or similar phrase when referring to “Gog” :

Ezekiel 38:2 "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. 4 "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; . . . 7 "Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. . . . 10 'Thus says the Lord God, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, 11 and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, 12 to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.' . . . 15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army;

There are other references in Ezekiel 38 and 39 that similarly describe “Gog” as an individual. All are sufficient to conclude that the text is referring to a specific individual, not a nation (as in Revelation 20). Further, the text tells us that Gog’s role is that of “prince” of the “land of Magog,” another indication that Gog is an individual.

Gog as human being or “Antichrist.” A popular view regarding Gog of Ezekiel 38 is that he is actually the Antichrist, a single individual prophesied by the Bible to appear in the Last Days. If he is the Antichrist, then he must be the “false prophet” of the New Testament that we have previously identified as Islam’s coming al-Mahdi. He will come to deceive and dominate the world and to lead the world in a forced conversion to a false religion, Islam (Daniel 7:24-25,

Revelation 13:7, 11). This interpreter does not interpret Gog as Antichrist for the following primary reasons.

1. The Antichrist (as “false prophet”) will be able to perform the supernatural but Gog will not. We discussed this in an earlier chapter. Here are a few of the passages that describe the Antichrist’s ability to perform the supernatural:

Revelation 13:11 “Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men..”

2 Thessalonians 2:9 “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”

The text of Ezekiel 38 and 39 makes no mention of Gog being able to perform the supernatural. It makes no mention of Gog fulfilling any of the “Antichrist” characteristics previously discussed from Revelation 17 (the scarlet beast as “8th head” and “one of the 7,” who “was,” “is not” and “is about to come up from the abyss” (Revelation 17:8-11).

The text makes no mention of Gog “exalting himself as God,” another antichrist characteristic (2 Thessalonians 2:4-5). Ezekiel 38 and 39 only characterize Gog as the commander of a military. There is no indication of his ability to deceive his followers through the performance of miraculous feats (or the false deity, he represents). Gog does not hold himself out as “god” as the Antichrist will do.

2. The Antichrist will force the world to worship the “first beast.” (Revelation 13:4, 8-10). We have discussed the role of the Antichrist and compared it to the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals and glorifies Christ (John 16:14) and acts as the third person of the trinity to indwell followers of Jesus Christ. The Antichrist “points” the world to the “beast from the sea,” the first beast of Revelation 13. The Antichrist, the second beast of Revelation 13, forces submission to the first beast, who we have interpreted to be Allah. Allah will be worshiped by the world; and he will use his followers to dominate and overcome the world (Revelation 13:7-8). Satan will experience worship, indirectly, through the world’s worship of Allah (Revelation 13:2, 4). Here is the passage that describes the Antichrist’s role of directing the world to Allah, the first beast (the Antichrist is the “beast coming up out of the earth”):

Revelation 13:11 “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.”

The first beast is the beast from the sea. He is Allah. The second beast is the beast from the earth (13:11). He will be Islam’s al-Mahdi, the coming Antichrist. Ezekiel 38 and 39 is absent of any mention of Gog forcing the worship of a false deity. As will be discussed more fully

below, Gog's focus is not religious in nature, but rather, for material or political gain, i.e., to secure "spoil." The text states:

Ezekiel 38:10 'Thus says the Lord God, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, . . . 12 to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.'

Gog does not fulfill this aspect of antichrist prophecy. He does not force the world to worship a false deity.

3. Gog fails as Antichrist by what he does not do. We discussed the meaning of "Antichrist" in an earlier chapter. We concluded that 1 John 2:18, 22-23, 4:2-3 provide "identifiers" for Antichrist much like "fingerprints" left by a criminal at a crime scene. The Antichrist identifiers previously noted were:

1. The Antichrist (and the "spirit of antichrist") will deny Jesus as the crucified, risen "Messiah" (1 John 2:22), and savior of the world;
2. The Antichrist (and the "spirit of antichrist") will deny Jesus as Divine, that is, the literal, only begotten, Son of God conceived by the "seed" of God (1 John 2:22-23);
3. The Antichrist (and the "spirit of antichrist") will deny Jesus' humanity (1 John 4:2-3).

Ezekiel 38/39 (as well as Revelation 20:7-8) is absent of any mention of Gog committing one of these "Christ-denials." Therefore, Gog cannot be "identified" as the Antichrist because he does not commit a "Christ-denial."

4. Gog's leadership of the military Alliance is absent of any mention of a religious motivation for the attack against Israel. As stated, Gog's "evil purpose" (Ezekiel 38:10) is all about securing financial gain (Ezekiel 38:12). He does not advance against Israel for the purpose of regaining the "holy land" (Ezekiel 5:5, 38:12). He has no interest in the Temple Mount or its sanctuaries. Gog's battle is not launched against Israel because of who Israel is in relation to God, nor because of the spiritual significance that Jerusalem holds to Christians, Jews, or Muslims. Gog does not attempt to reclaim the Temple Mount or its sanctuaries because of its faith significance. Gog's battle is absent of any spiritual motivation. This is very significant. If Gog were the Antichrist, his activities would be specifically directed against the saints or against the beloved city because of who they are in relationship to God; and against the beloved city because of what it means to the followers of the world's three greatest religions.

In prior chapters, we reviewed one scripture after another, each of which included a description of a "holy war," waged by an unidentified agent of satan. Consider these prior references:

Revelation 12:17 "So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

Daniel 7:24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will

arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.'

Revelation 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Ezekiel 38 or 39 is absent of any mention of a religious motivation for Gog's war against Israel. If Gog were the Antichrist, a religious motivation would be present.

5. Gog dies and is buried. The Antichrist is not. We move now to an important prophecy in Revelation. The prophecy describes the coming judgment of the Antichrist (the "false prophet") along with satan and the "beast."

Revelation 19:20 " And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. . . . 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. . . . 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Now, compare Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog's judgment:

Ezekiel 39:4 "You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you;. . . 6 "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the Lord." . . . 11 "On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. 12 "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land."

Notice, Gog *dies* along with his army. He is buried in the land of Israel along with his troops. Conversely, neither satan nor his Antichrist ever dies! They are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire, along with the first beast, where they are tormented forever and ever (Rev 19:20, 20:10). These three were previously discussed and labeled as the "trinity of evil." The three members of this group do not die because they are spiritual beings, not human beings. They "incarnate" human beings, but they are not human beings. We have identified the "beast" as Allah; the false prophet" as Islam's coming al-Mahdi (who is also the Antichrist); and satan as the demonic prince of the world to which these two submit. If there were a fourth demonic being, he would be judged in the same manner as the trinity of evil is judged. There is none.

Conclusion. Gog is a human being. He cannot be the Antichrist because he fails to meet the

definition of Antichrist on multiple accounts.

The identity of the nations of Gog's Alliance. Entire books have been written on Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the identity of the nations in Gog's Alliance. It is not the purpose of this writing to summarize all of the possible views on the identity of the members of Gog's Alliance. Interested readers have many other sources available should this be their intent. One resource this writer has found most helpful is that of Douglas Berner, *"The Silence is Broken, God Hooks Ezekiel's Gog & Magog."* This work is recommended for a good survey of the different views that have been offered for Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Here is the text that includes the nations in Gog's Alliance. Notice that there are three separate groupings or "divisions" in Gog's Alliance, and possibly a fourth:

Ezekiel 38:1 *"And the word of the Lord came to me saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him . . . ; 5 Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops— many peoples with you. . . . 13 "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?"*

The nations or groups comprising Gog's Alliance can be grouped into these four divisions:

1. *Those nations from the "land of Magog"* (38:2-3; 39:1), led by Gog, its "prince" (38:3, 39:1):
 - Rosh (interprets "Rosh" as proper noun as discussed below), Meshech, and Tubal (38:2-3; 39:1)
2. *Other nations specifically named in Gog's Alliance:*
 - Persia (38:5);
 - Ethiopia (38:5)
 - Put (38:5);
 - Gomer (38:6);
 - Beth-togarmah (38:6);
3. *"Many peoples with you"* (38:6).
4. *Possible additional allies in Gog's Alliance:*
 - Sheba (38:13);
 - Dedan (38:13);
 - Merchants of Tarshish with its "young lions" (or villages) (38:13).

Of this list, those that have been identified with near consensus by Bible scholars include:

- Persia - interpreted as modern day Iran;¹
- Ethiopia (Cush) - interpreted as modern day Ethiopia (Africa), including Sudan to its north;²
- Put - interpreted as modern day Libya (Africa);³ alternatively, some have interpreted as Somali and Yemen;⁴ and some have interpreted as Asia Minor (Turkey);⁵

- Gomer - interpreted as modern day Turkey;⁶
- Beth-togarmah - interpreted as modern day Armenia and parts of eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran.⁷
- Sheba - interpreted as modern day Yemen (Arabian Peninsula);⁸
- Dedan - interpreted as southeastern Arabia; or, perhaps, a neighboring country to Sheba in Arabia on the Persian Gulf; Sheba and Dedan were brothers through Raamah (Gen 10:7), and his father, Cush.⁹

Five of the nations mentioned in Gog's Alliance find their ancestry through one of Noah's three sons, Japheth. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) has this to say about the sons of Japheth:

"The immediate descendants of Japheth were seven in number, and are represented by the nations designated Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesech, and Tiras; or, roughly, the Armenians, Lydians, Medes, Greeks, Tibarenians, and Moschians, the last, Tiras, remaining still obscure. The sons of Gomer (Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah) were all settled in the West Asian tract; while the sons of Javan (Elisah, Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim or Rodanim) occupied the Mediterranean coast and the adjacent islands."¹⁰

We will now identify those nations in Gog's Alliance where consensus is lacking as well as discuss Gomer and Beth-togarmah, two important allies in Gog's Alliance.

The Land of Magog - Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. The text tells us that "Gog" is from the "land of Magog" (38:2). Unfortunately, we are immediately thrown into a quandary about Gog's identity. The translation of a Hebrew word in the 2nd verse is the subject of disagreement among Bible scholars. The word is "rosh," the literal meaning of which is "chief" or "head."¹¹ In Ezekiel's context, "rosh" can be interpreted in one of two ways:

- 1st - as an adjective that describes the type of prince that Gog is: that is, a "*chief*" prince.
- 2nd - as a proper noun, that is, the name of a particular place (initial letter capitalized).

The New International Version (along with the Revised Standard Version and the English Standard Bible) interprets "rosh" using the first approach, i.e., "rosh" is an adjective modifying "prince." The NIV translates in this fashion,

Ezekiel 38:2 ^(NIV) "*Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him.*"

The New American Standard Version (NAS) (along with the New King James Version) translates "Rosh" using the 2nd approach, i.e., as a proper name. The NAS translates in this fashion,

Ezekiel 38:2 ^(NAS) "*Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.*"

These are the two primary interpretations of "rosh." There are very qualified language scholars on either side of this interpretive issue; and, there is an absence of consensus among language scholars as to which approach is best. *So how can we possibly interpret the passage if modern*

language scholars cannot agree?

We will start down a pathway using one of our two options and see if each subsequent interpretation of other verses in Ezekiel 38/39 confirm our previous choices. In the end, our objective will be that all of our interpretations are confirmed by one another.

The Divine Purpose of Gog's Defeat in the battle of Ezekiel 38 and 39. The purpose of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is found in these verses:

Ezekiel 38:16 "and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me . . . 23 "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the Lord." . . . 39:7 "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord,. . . 21 "And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. 22 "And the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God from that day onward. . . 27 "When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. 28 "Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. 29 "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord God.

Notice the divine purpose of Ezekiel's battle:

1. God is the initiator of the battle (38:16), not Gog;
2. God is revealed to the nations through Gog's defeat (38:23; 39:7);
3. God's name is no longer profaned among the nations after the battle (39:7);
4. The house of Israel will know that God is their God after the battle (39:22, 27-28); and, God will hide his face from Israel no longer for His Spirit will be poured out upon Israel (39:29);
5. The nations will know that God is the God of Israel after the battle. (39:27-28).

How is this divine purpose to be accomplished? It will only take place if the victory over Gog and his Alliance is so great that it is a miracle in and of itself! This "miracle" will direct the observers to God, the only one able to perform the miraculous. The miracle will reveal the hand of God much like God has signed his name to a letter or left his "mark" on a piece of paper.

In the first century AD, when the Angel Gabriel appeared to the woman, Mary, he brought word that she would become pregnant and bear a child, Jesus, the Son of God. The Angel's words are relevant to our interpretation of Ezekiel 38 and 39:

Luke 1:34 "Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; may it be done to me

according to your word." And the angel departed from her."

It was in the "impossible" that God revealed Himself to Mary. Immediately after the Angel's word to Mary, she departed to see her aged relative, Elizabeth (who was barren), whom the Angel prophesied was already pregnant. Upon arrival at Elizabeth's home, Mary became a witness to this miracle as the child in Elizabeth's womb moves at the sound of her voice (Luke 1:46-54). Further, Mary was a virgin. She had not known a man. Yet, she was soon to give birth to a child. *Impossible!* When the impossible occurred, God, who had foretold the event, was revealed as the initiator and author of the entire event.

The same thing is happening in Ezekiel 38 and 39. *God is going to do the impossible.* Gog and his Alliance represents a force so mighty that Israel's annihilation is all but assumed. So large a force comes against this small, isolated, nation that its survival cannot be explained but by the finger of God. It is in this victory that God is revealed, and Israel, His covenant people is understood to be His beloved and chosen ones, along with a fresh and new outpouring of His Spirit upon them.

Our first step in interpreting "rosh" - "Rosh" is a proper noun. The presence of the "miraculous" in the victory leads us to the first step in the identity of Rosh, of whom Gog is prince. Rosh will be a nation of significance and power such that its defeat will be a miracle! Thus, to identify Rosh, we need look for a superpower nation at enmity with the nation of Israel. It so happens that Rosh is interpreted by many scholars as Russia for reasons we will discuss below; and, *Russia is a superpower at enmity with Israel.* This leads us to begin our identification of Rosh by concluding that "Rosh" should be interpreted as a proper noun, i.e, the name of a particular nation, rather than as an adjective describing "prince." This starts us down a pathway using the NAS translation of Ezekiel 38 and 39 rather than the NIV.

Ezekiel 38:2 ^(NAS) *"Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him."*

To give us a little confidence in our initial step interpreting Rosh as a proper noun, consider the following from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

"This name occurs in the prophecies against Gog in Eze 38:2,3 and 39:1, where the King James Version has "Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." This translation is due to ro'sh being the common Hebrew word for "head" or "chief" (compare the Greek variant and the Vulgate), and is regarded as incorrect, that of the Revised Version (British and American), "Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," being preferred."²

"Rosh" as Russia. The first nation named in the text from the "land of Magog" is "Rosh" (38:2). The identification of both Rosh and the other nations in Gog's Alliance is made difficult because throughout history the names of nations have changed and the dominion of a particular geography has changed as well. Nor is there sufficient historical or other evidence to clearly identify who these nations were in Ezekiel's day when the prophecy was first written. Further, given the existence in the 20th century of the "cold war" between the West and Russia, modern day interpreters are apt to interpret "Rosh" as Russia simply because of the presence of modern day factors leading to this conclusion. The most reliable historical references we

must draw upon, then, are those written prior to the “cold war,” and before Russia became a superpower at enmity with the West.

There are two pre-20th century sources often cited by interpreters. The first is 19th century, Hebrew scholar, H. W. F. Gesenius (whose Hebrew Lexicon was first published in 1847), who provides the following definition of “Rosh”:

“II. Ezekiel 38:2, 3; 39:1; pr. n. Of a northern nation, mentioned with Tubal and Meshech; undoubtedly the Russians, who are mentioned by Byzantine writers of the tenth century, under the name of “Ros,” dwelling to the north of Taurus, and . . . described by Ibn Fosslan, an Arabic writer of the same age, as dwelling on the River Rha (Volga). (See Ibn Fosslan, Bericht von den Russen . . .) Compare Jos. De Hammer, Origines Russes, Petersburg, 1827, . . . In the Koran, Kor. Xv. 31; 1.12.”¹³

Similarly, in a 19th century compilation by Lyman Coleman, we find the following regarding “Map 11,” “*The World as Known to the Hebrews.*” Coleman interprets Rosh as north of modern day Armenia, i.e., Russia; Togarmah as Armenia, and Gomer as modern day Turkey (Cappadocia, located in the heart of modern Turkey):

“This comprises the world as known to the ancient Hebrews, . . . The author, in locating these ancient tribes of men, availed himself of the labours of Gesenius, Ewald, Hitzig, and others, together with the researches of the most reliable geographies and antiquaries. Askenez, according to these authorities, occupies the western part of Asia Minor; Togarmah is Armenia, and Gomer occupies the region of Cappadocia between them; . . . Gog and Magog, the land of Gog, in conformity with classical and Armenian authors, is placed north of Armenia, in the neighborhood of Togarmah, Meshech, and Tubal; whose position is clearly defined. They are also set farther north, to represent the Scythian nations.”¹⁴

Describing the descendants of Noah’s grandson, Japheth, Lyman Coleman continues:

*“Togarmah is by common consent referred to as Armenia, . . .
“Magog. The Slavonic tribes in the north and north-east of Europe are comprehended under this term as the descendants from the grandson of Japheth. . . . The isles in this passage are countries of Europe. The original country of Magog was the Caucasian mountains and the regions north around the Caspian. From this point they early overran all the north of Europe, driving back the Cimmerians; and in the age of the prophet Ezekiel they had already become a powerful people in the north of Asia. . . . The Russians and Scythians are the descendants of Magog. . . they are remote northern nations.”¹⁵*

Moving to modern day biblical encyclopedias, we find:

International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia:

“Some have supposed that the Russians are here meant, as one of the three Scythian tribes . . . They invaded the land of Judah in the days of Josiah. Herodotus, the Greek historian, says: “For twenty-eight years the Scythians ruled over Asia, and things were turned upside down by their violence and contempt.”¹⁶

Smith’s Bible Dictionary adds:

“probably a proper name, referring to the first of the three great Scythian tribes of which Magog was the head.”¹⁷

Our initial conclusion, based on pre-20th century geographers, is that Rosh is Russia. There are a host of other reasons to support this initial conclusion.

1. Gog is the Supplier of Military Hardware to Other Members of His Alliance. The text tells us the following about Gog and the land he leads::

*“Ezekiel 38:2 “. . . Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, . . .7
“Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them.”*

The text warns Gog to prepare himself for the coming battle; but notice, Gog must not only prepare himself, but also all those “assembled about you.”

This is a significant “identifier” for Gog. We are looking for a superpower that has the means to supply many nations with military armaments. Russia is a known supplier of military equipment to the enemies of Israel. It is, in fact, the world’s leading supplier of military equipment to the developing nations of the world.¹⁸ As such, Russia is a superpower that has supplied Israel’s enemies with military supplies.

Consider this statement taken from the 2008 edition of the National Security Strategy of the United States which details a Russian retreat from “openness and democracy”:

“Russia’s retreat from openness and democracy could have significant security implications for the United States, our European allies, and our partners in other regions. Russia has leveraged the revenue from, and access to, its energy sources; asserted claims in the Arctic; and has continued to bully its neighbors, all of which are causes for concern. Russia also has begun to take a more active military stance, such as the renewal of long-range bomber flights, and has withdrawn from arms control and force reduction treaties, and even threatened to target countries hosting potential U.S. anti-missile bases. Furthermore, Moscow has signaled an increasing reliance on nuclear weapons as a foundation of its security. All of these actions suggest a Russia exploring renewed influence, and seeking a greater international role.”¹⁹

We will soon discuss Iran’s important role in Gog’s Alliance. For now, consider the following description of Russia’s ongoing supply of military arms to Iran. This statement is only one example of similar statements that could be found in other Middle East nations, *excepting Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq*. The statement is taken from a Congressional Research Study for Congress by analyst Richard F. Grimmett:

“Elsewhere in 2005, Russia made an agreement with Iran for 29 TOR-M1 (SA-15 Gauntlet) surface-to-air defense systems for over \$700 million. Russia also agreed to upgrade Iran’s Su-24 and Mig-29 aircraft, as well as their T-72 main battle tanks. Sales of advanced military equipment to Iran by Russia and others has been an issue of intense interest to U.S. policymakers for some time, given the hostile relations the U.S. and Iran have had since the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, and the rise to power of an anti-American

government in Tehran. . . . As the U.S focuses increasing attention on Iran's efforts to enhance its nuclear as well as conventional military capabilities, major arms transfers to Iran continue to be a matter of concern."²⁰

Douglas Berner in his book, *The Silence is Broken*, describes Russia's armament activities as follows:

*"This nation has taken an aggressive lead in the production of military equipment and armament as well as the equipping of military weaponry to the Islamic nations of the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. It has been directly responsible for the stockpiling of weapons and equipment intended for the invasion of Israel in the past. This nation has provided military and diplomatic backing and support for the Arab-Islamic nations in their wars against Israel. It has provided support to the Palestinians and their campaign to divide the nation of Israel through waves of deceit and terrorism. It has provided the support of nuclear technology to Iran. There is only one nation that has assumed this tremendous leadership role – that has been so instrumental in the preparation of the nations of the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia to wage war against Israel. That nation is Russia."*²¹

Similarly, Joel Rosenberg in his work, *Epicenter*, details the Russian agenda with Iran in an interview with Dore Gold, former Israeli Ambassador to the UN:

*"The Russians want an empire, and to get one they need to establish 'special relationships' with Arab and Islamic regimes in the Middle East whom they can use as their agents of influence. . . . From 1948 to the collapse of the Soviet Union the Soviets were the main backers of the Arab threat to Israel. But they were never able to secure Iran as an ally until now. . . . Iran is pivotal in Russia thinking. It is a major regional power in its own right, and it is a gateway into the rest of the Middle East."*²²

Conclusion. Russia is a major supplier of military armaments of many Middle East nations. As such, they fulfill Ezekiel's characterization as a major nation that supplies others with military supplies.

2. Gog Possesses What Appears to be Nuclear Weapons. The text describes the military equipment as follows:

Ezekiel 38:4 *"I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; 5 . . . , all of them with shield and helmet; . . . 9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you." . . . 15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; . . . 39:3 "I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. . . ."*

A literal reading of Ezekiel's text describes an army advanced *only in the eyes of the 6th century BC*. In the 6th century BC, Ezekiel's prophecy was, certainly, a horrifying sight. To the modern day reader? Hardly terrifying; in fact, almost comical if intended to describe a modern day superpower! Bows and arrows hardly bring the picture of a "mighty army" to mind.

As with most biblical prophecy, this text must be interpreted metaphorically. Otherwise, the passage has no relevancy to any modern time subsequent to the time of bows and arrows, horses and chariots. Also, remember the purpose of the Ezekiel battle – to reveal God to the nations of the world. Gog's power and invincibility are so overwhelming that Israel will be presumed defenseless against Gog. This prophecy can only be fulfilled if Gog attires his army in the weaponry of the modern day, not the 6th century BC. The battle is clearly a battle in the modern to future days as it has not yet occurred; and, the text tells us that the battle will take place "in the latter years":

Ezekiel 38:8 "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them."

Here is an even more compelling reason to interpret Gog's military hardware in a modern day view. Look at the "clean up" required after Gog's death:

Ezekiel 38:22 "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. . . 39:6 "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the Lord. . . . 9 "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn them, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of them. 10 "They will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them," declares the Lord God. 11 "On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. 12 "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. . . . 14 "They will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15 "As those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. 16 "And even the name of the city will be Hamonah. So they will cleanse the land."

Here is a summary of the after-battle events and the leftovers of the battle:

1. It takes 7 months to bury the bodies (39:12).
2. It takes 7 years to burn the weaponry (39:9).
3. There is one location where everything is to be buried, Hamon-gog. (39:11) The bodies are not buried where they fall but in this special location (39:15);
4. The valley where the bodies and equipment are buried will block off all passers by (39:11)
5. Anyone who sees a dead man's bone is not to bury it but to set up a marker so that the "buriers" can bury it in its designated burial ground (the valley of Hamon-gog) (39:15).
6. It takes an "official person" to bury the bones and bodies; the buriers are referred to as

- “set apart men” (39:14);
7. The “set apart men” will “constantly pass through the land” burying those “left on the surface of the ground,” and also those “passing through” (39:14).
 8. The reason why everything must be buried is to “cleanse the land” (39:12, 16).

The details of the battle scene have the characteristics of a modern day nuclear bomb that has contaminated the earth and everything in it. Notice, no one can pass through the land because the land is contaminated. Only those “set apart” can bury anyone, i.e., only those who are trained to decontaminate the land! It is only in Hamon-gog that the burials take place, a burial ground specifically set aside for those contaminated. Finally, the dead include those killed in the battle as well as those killed who were “passing through.”

The aftermath of this battle is much like what happened after Russia’s nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986. The nuclear fallout from radioactive materials resulted in the relocation of large groups of people in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia due to contamination. Over 336,000 people were evacuated and eventually resettled, and areas still exist today that cannot be inhabited.²³ This area referred to as the “Zone of Alienation,” cannot be inhabited or even visited today because of continued contamination.²⁴

3. Gog is from the “remote parts of the north.” We have already concluded that Gog is an individual, the commander of the military Alliance. The text tells us that he is located in the “remote parts of the north”:

Ezekiel 38:14 *"Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it? 15 You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you,*
 . . .;

It is logical to conclude that Gog, as the leader of the superpower nation that equips and prepares the other members of the Alliance, makes his “abode” with the superpower nation he leads. The text tells us that Gog is located in the “remote north.” The significance of this geographical hint should not be underestimated. There have been many nations in ancient bible times who were Israel’s enemies “from the north.”

Isaiah 14:31 *"Wail, O gate; cry, O city; Melt away, O Philistia, all of you; For smoke comes from the north, And there is no straggler in his ranks."*

Jeremiah 1:13 *"The word of the Lord came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." 14 Then the Lord said to me, "Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. 15 "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the Lord; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah."*

Jeremiah 6:1 *"Flee for safety, O sons of Benjamin, From the midst of Jerusalem! Now blow a trumpet in Tekoa And raise a signal over Beth-haccerem; For evil looks down from the north, And a great destruction."*

Jeremiah 50:9 *"For behold, I am going to arouse and bring up against Babylon a horde of great nations from the land of the north, And they will draw up their battle lines against her; From there she will be taken captive. Their arrows will be like an expert warrior who does not return empty-handed."*

The above prophecies have been fulfilled in Israel's ancient history. The Assyrians defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722BC. The Babylonians defeated the Southern Kingdom of Israel in 586BC. All of the victors in this series of battles have been from the north of Israel. It is important to note that the present text includes a refinement of the meaning of "north" when it gives the location of Gog as the "remote north." The Hebrew text in transliterated form is "yerekah," meaning, "flank, side, extreme parts, recesses."²⁵ Thus, the kingdom of Gog, the land of Magog, i.e., Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, is located geographically, not just to the north, but to the "remote north." The modern nation to the extreme north of Israel is Russia. In fact, Moscow, Russia, is on a line directly north of Jerusalem.

Wikipedia provides us the following summary of this nation comprising the largest land mass of any nation in the modern world:

"Russia or the Russian Federation. . . is a transcontinental country extending over much of northern Eurasia. It is a semi-presidential republic comprising 83 federal subjects. Russia shares land borders with the following countries (counterclockwise from northwest to southeast): Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (via Kaliningrad Oblast), Poland (via Kaliningrad Oblast), Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia and Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and is also close to the United States (Alaska), Republic of Korea, Sweden, and Japan. It borders the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Caspian Sea, the Baltic Sea, and the Black Sea. At 17,075,400 square kilometres (6,592,800 sq mi), Russia is the largest country in the world, covering more than an eighth of the Earth's land area; with 142 million people, it is the ninth largest by population. It extends across the whole of northern Asia and 40% of Europe, spanning 11 time zones and incorporating a great range of environments and land forms. Russia has the world's greatest reserves of mineral and energy resources, and is considered an energy superpower. It has the world's largest forest reserves and its lakes contain approximately one-quarter of the world's unfrozen fresh water."²⁶

4. Gog (and the primary nation he leads) will be brought into the battle against his wishes. Notice an interesting statement made by the text:

Ezekiel 38:4 "And I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords;" 5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops-- many peoples with you.."

If Rosh is Russia and Gog is the leader of the military Alliance including Russia, then on what basis might verse 4 above be fulfilled? The text tells us that God will "put hooks into your jaws" and "bring you about." Clearly, it does not appear that as mighty as Gog is, he really wants this war. He is pressed into it! Why? Because superpower Russia does not want to be involved in WW3.

Israel is supported by the United States and its allies. If Russia launches an attack, it risks its own nuclear annihilation at the hands of America and her Allies. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, Russia is one of nine nations that have tested nuclear weapons, of which five are members of the "nuclear club."²⁷ These five are the United States, United Kingdom, France, China and Russia (North Korea, India, Pakistan, and Israel, are the non-member nations that are thought to have tested nuclear weaponry). These five are considered to be "nuclear weapons states," an internationally recognized status conferred by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.²⁸ With this list of five, it seems quite logical that Russia would be hesitant in launching an attack against Israel – regardless of the prospects of victory over Israel. Russia's own existence is threatened by nuclear retaliation even if it is successful in a war against Israel. In fact, Russia will be quite willing to arm the Alliance while it sits on the sidelines as others take the lead in this war. Perhaps this is what is being referred to in this next passage

Ezekiel 38:10 *"Thus says the Lord God, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil plan,"*

Perhaps the "evil plan" is that Russia intends to attack without the world (or Israel) knowing of its involvement; but God is not going to allow this to happen. Gog, the supplier of military hardware, will be drawn into this battle. Thus, the text describes "hooks" in Russia's jaws; hooks that pull it into the battle though its intentions are otherwise.

Further, notice that the only one who is "turned about" with "hooks in jaw" is Gog. The other nations in his Alliance are not included in the phrase "turned about." Verse 38:5 is absent of any drawing for "Persia, Ethiopia, and Put, . . . , Gomer. . . and Beth-togarmah." Why? Perhaps it is because they have been enemies since the beginning of their days. They do not need any incentive to attack Israel; in fact, some of them are waiting for the opportunity. As we will see below, Gog's Alliance is made up of two primary divisions: one Russian, hesitant to reveal its adversarial role; the other, Islam. Islam, quite willing to take the lead, but with one problem - *it must depend upon Gog for its military hardware to be successful.*

Conclusion. The text gives us four "hints" to identify Rosh: 1) Rosh (through Gog, his prince) is the supplier of military hardware to the Alliance while also a nation at enmity with Israel. 2) Rosh is a superpower that possesses nuclear weaponry. 3) Rosh is located in the "remote parts of the north." 4) Rosh will be "turned about" to lead an Alliance of nations against Israel. Modern day Russia meets all four of these characteristics. We conclude, "Rosh" is Russia.

Meshech and Tubal. Having concluded that Rosh is Russia, the interpretation of Meshech and Tubal should not be as difficult since they are described along with Rosh as the "land of Magog" (38:2, 39:1). Once again, we turn to 19th century scholar, Gesenius:

*"Moschi, a barbarous people inhabiting the Moshian mountains, between Iberia, Armenia, and Colchis, Psa. 120:5, almost always joined with the neighboring Tibareni, Gen. 10:2, Ezek 27:13, 32:26, 38:2, 39:1; just as in Herodutus (iii. 94; vii. 78). . . ."*²⁹

Gesenius bases his view, at least partly, on the works of Herodotus, Greek Historian of the 5th century BC, and frequently regarded as the "father of history" in Western culture.³⁰ The specific statement in Herodotus which aligns Meshech with Tubal is as follows:

*"The nineteenth provincial district – the Moschians, Tibarenoi, Makrones, Mossynoikians, and Mares– was assessed 300 talents."*⁸¹

Gesenius states regarding Tubal:

*"Tubal, . . . , a nation of Asia Minor, dwelling by the Euxine sea, to the west of Moschi. . . ."*³²

As does Lyman Coleman:

*"Her merchandise was with Tarshish in the far west, and Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, in the northeast, provinces in the Caucasian mountains, between the Caspian and Black Sea."*⁸³

Easton's Bible Dictionary goes so far as to name Meshech and Tubal as the ancestors of the modern day nations comprising Moscow and Tobolsk, Russia:

*"They were in all probability the Moschi, a people inhabiting the Moschian Mountains, between the Black and the Caspian Seas. In Ps 120:5 the name occurs as simply a synonym for foreigners or barbarians. "During the ascendancy of the Babylonians and Persians in Western Asia, the Moschi were subdued; but it seems probable that a large number of them crossed the Caucasus range and spread over the northern steppes, mingling with the Scythians. There they became known as Muscovs, and gave that name to the Russian nation and its ancient capital by which they are still generally known throughout the East"*⁸⁴

Fausset's Bible Dictionary agrees with Easton's and states,

*"The Moschi, a warlike race in the mountainous region between Armenia, Iberia, and Colchis. Associated with Tubal, the Tibareni of Pontus. . . Moscow and Tobolsk may derive their names from Mesech and Tubal. . . Mesech was once one of the most powerful nations of western Asia. The Assyrians were frequently warring with them, from 1100 to 700 B.C.; then living East of Taurus range and in Cappadocia. The inscriptions call them Muskai, the Tibareni Tuplai (Tubal)."*³⁵

Doug Berner quotes from Grant Jeffrey's work, *Armageddon - Appointment with Destiny*, as follows:

*Jewish commentaries such as Kesses HaSofer identify "Magog" with the Russians and state that the word "Mongol" for Siberian-Russian peoples is in fact derived from Magog. . . Arab writers confirm that in the Arabic language their name for the Great Wall of China is the "wall of Al-Magog" because the Great Wall was built to keep out the invading armies from Magog (Russia)."*³⁶

Meshech and Tubal are nations geographically located in the vicinity of modern day Russia, north of the Caspian Sea, *perhaps now known as Moscow and Tobolsk*. Regardless of their specific modern day identity, i.e., whether they are actually Moscow and Tobolsk, they are certainly in proximity to "Rosh," i.e., Russia.

Conclusion. Meshech and Tubal are interpreted as member countries, cities, of the modern day, post Soviet Union, Russian Federation.

Gomer and Beth-Togarmah. The ISBE identifies Gomer as we have noted above – *"the sons of Gomer. . . were all settled in the West Asian tract."* The West Asian tract is the modern land of Turkey. An important reference is found in the works of Josephus, the Roman-Jewish historian of the 1st century AD who describes the sons of Japheth as follows:

"Japhet, the son of Noah, had seven sons: they inhabited so that, beginning at the mountains Taurus and Amanus, they proceeded along Asia, as far as the river Tansis, and along Europe to Cadiz; and settling themselves on the lands which they light upon, which none had inhabited before, they called the nations by their own names. For Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians, [Galls,] but were then called Gomerites. Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians."

Thus, according to Josephus, "Gomer" was the area the Greeks called "Galatia," an area once located in modern day Anatolia, Turkey.

Gesenius states the following regarding Beth-Togarmah ("beth" = "house", literally, the "house of Togarmah"):

*". . . of a northern nation and country sprung from Gomer (the Cimmerians), abounding in horses and mules. We should, apparently, understand "Armenia," as very abundant in horses . . . Such is either tradition or the opinion of the Armenians themselves, who regard Torgom the son of Gomer. . . As the founder of their nation, and they call themselves the "house of Torgom." See J. D. Michaelis Spicileg. Georg., t.i., p 67-78.*⁶⁷

Conclusion. We interpret Gomer and Beth-Togarmah as Turkey and Armenia, respectively.

"Many Peoples" with You. The third division of Gog's allies is found in Ezekiel 38:6, ". . . many peoples with you." There are four references in Ezekiel to this group

:Ezekiel 38:6 "Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you."

Ezekiel 38:9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you."

Ezekiel 38:15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army;"

Ezekiel 38:22 "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone."

It is important to note that this third division in Gog's Alliance is not identified by citizenship or national identity. That is, the "many peoples" that join Gog's Alliance are not described as

“Persians,” “Ethiopians,” etc., . . . but simply as “many peoples.” In the next section, we will be discussing a major battle by Iran with the Muslim countries *neighboring* Israel that are *not named in Ezekiel 38/39*. The “kings” and “kingdoms” of these countries will be subdued as prophesied by Daniel 7:23-24. Yet, even though the “kings” of these Muslim countries have been subdued by Iran, the populations of these countries still survive; but now under the “kingdom” of Iran. The “many peoples” of Ezekiel 38 refers to the Muslim populations of these subdued countries who will join Gog’s Alliance against Israel – *either by choice or by force*.

What brings Islam into Gog’s Alliance are three factors:

1. Islam’s quest for world domination that is inherent within its faith;
2. The unending enmity with Israel of the descendants of Ishmael and Esau. Psalm 83 and Numbers 24.
3. The belief that Allah has willed it.

In addition, there is another category of Muslims included in the “many peoples” of Ezekiel 38/39. As of December 31st, 2008, the United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, listed 44 organizations that it labeled as “Designated Terrorist Organizations.”³⁸ HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement), Hizbullah (Party of God), Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Al-Qaeda, are among this 44. The charter of most of these organizations includes specific language identifying their purpose: to wipe Israel off the face of the map; and, to reclaim the land of the Middle East that Islam had acquired during its jihads of the 7th - 10th centuries (which Islam considers to be permanently theirs regardless of later conflicts that may have returned the land to their conquerors (*Dar al-Islam*)). Thus, Gog’s “many peoples” also includes the organizations that make up the terrorist “watch lists” of the World’s free nations.

Look Who Got Left Out of Gog’ Alliance. Did you notice the nations of the Middle East the text fails to mention as joining Gog’s Alliance? Nations one might assume to be a part of the Alliance if for no other reason than their geographical proximity to Israel (they are Israel’s closest neighbors)? Here is a map showing the nations that neighbor Israel but which are not named by the text as a part of Gog’s Alliance:



Israel's neighbors not named in Alliance = blue

Here is the list of Israel's six neighbors, none of which are included in Gog's Alliance:

1. Iraq
2. Syria
3. Jordan
4. Lebanon
5. Saudi Arabia
6. Egypt

Doesn't make sense does it? Why are these six not included in Gog's Alliance? Further, why would Armenia ("Beth-Togarmah" in our conclusions), presently an independent republic and not a Muslim state, join in Gog's Alliance?³⁹ Also, Ethiopia is predominantly Christian in population in the modern day. Why does Ethiopia join the Alliance if all the non-Russian ("non-Magog") nations in the Alliance are all Muslim?

*I propose that the reason why the 6 nations neighboring Israel are absent from Ezekiel's list is because they have been subdued by one of the nations included in Gog's Alliance; and, at the time of the Alliance's attack on Israel, they are all under the dominion of this nation. I also propose that the subduing nation in Gog's Alliance is a *Muslim* nation. My reasoning for this conclusion will be explained below. For now, the nations in Gog's Alliance that are Muslim and therefore considered possible candidates are: Iran (Persia), Turkey (Gomer), or Libya (including Libya and Sudan).*

The significance of Ten Nations in Bible Prophecy. To answer these questions, we must go to other prophetic scriptures and our interpretation of these prophecies. Two prophecies include references to "ten nations," all of one "kingdom," that come together in the Last Days. These two passages have already been interpreted to apply to Islam as the spiritual "kingdom" from which ten nations will arise in the Last Days. Now, we will bring Ezek 38/39 into the prophetic mix to see if ten nations are identified by Ezekiel's prophecy.

Revelation 17:12 "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 "These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. . . 16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled."

Daniel 7:24 "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."

We have previously discussed these passages and interpreted them to refer to Shia Islam's al Mahdi as the coming Antichrist. Al Mahdi is referred to as "another" and "he" in Daniel 7:24 and 7:25 above, who subdues *three of ten* nations. In Revelation 17:12-13, 16-17, we interpreted the 8th head of the scarlet beast to be al-Mahdi, i.e., the Antichrist. The text tells us this one will

lead *ten* nations to destroy “Babylon the Great,” whom we interpreted as Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. In both of these passages, the ten nations are all part of *one kingdom*. Daniel 7:23-24 specifically states:

Daniel 7:23 “Thus, he said, “the fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms,. . . 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; . . .”

Revelation 17 is not as clear, but the intent seems to also be that the ten nations will be from one kingdom:

Revelation 17:12 “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.”

Does Ezekiel 38/39 identify the Ten Nations? We begin by looking for ten *non-Russian* nations in Ezekiel 38. The reason why we are looking for ten non-Russian nations is because Daniel 7:23 tells us that the ten are “out of this kingdom;” and, we have identified the “kingdom” from which they arise as Islam. Here is the group of nations that Ezekiel 38/39 gives us:

Nations Named in Ezekiel 38/39:

1. Iran (Persia)
2. Libya (Put)
3. Turkey (Gomer)
4. Armenia (Beth-togarmah)
5. Ethiopia (referred to as “Cush” in some translations)

Nations Omitted from Ezekiel 38/39 and neighboring Israel:

6. Iraq
7. Syria
8. Jordan
9. Lebanon
10. Egypt
11. Saudi Arabia



Israel's neighbors not named in Alliance = blue
Nations named in Ezek 38/39 to be in Gog's Alliance = yellow

Seems we have one nation too many. We are looking for ten nations not 11. . . but don't forget the prophecies we have already interpreted. We must *combine our interpretations* if we intend to end up with a complete picture of the Last Days.

We previously interpreted Revelation 17 to be fulfilled in the coming defeat of Saudi Arabia, i.e., "Babylon the Great," the "harlot" who rides the "scarlet beast," and who is prophesied to be defeated by a consortium of ten nations. This is a separate prophecy from Daniel 7:24; and, therefore, to correctly count the nations to be involved in Ezekiel 38/39, we must *remove Saudi Arabia from the list*. It was annihilated in fulfillment of Revelation 17, not Ezekiel 38/39. Now count the nations we have left. *We have ten.*

Conclusion. Ezekiel 38/39 identifies ten nations of the Last Days that have significance in Last Day's bible prophecy; five of the ten are specifically named by the text; five of the ten are named by their omission from the text: *they should be present, but are not*. By their absence, they are identified so that in total we have ten nations that combine for Gog's "non-Russian" division of the Alliance in fulfillment of both Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12.

Our next questions to address become: (1) Is there a Shia nation named in Gog's Alliance that is a likely candidate in strength and purpose to subdue three of the five Sunni Arab nations not in Gog's Alliance and neighboring Israel? And, (2) which three of the five Sunni Arab nations will be subdued by this Shia nation? (3) Of the remaining two Sunni Arab nations, what happens to them? Do they align with this one Shia nation to attack Israel?

The Two Horned 2nd Beast of Revelation 13. One more prophecy must be added before we continue our interpretation of Ezekiel. It is the prophecy of the "two horned," "second beast" of Revelation 13. We previously interpreted this beast as the "Antichrist" who directs the "world" to worship the 1st beast of Revelation 13:1-8.⁴⁰ We interpreted the second beast as the coming Antichrist, al-Mahdi of Shia Islam. We interpreted the 1st beast of Revelation 13 to be Allah, the god of Islam.

We were unable to interpret the meaning of the second beast's two horns. In other passages, horns have symbolized "kings" or the kingdoms they led, interchangeably (see Daniel 7:17, 23-24). I propose the following: the second beast is the embodiment of the "spirit of antichrist" in human form; but, this 2nd beast has two manifestations as symbolized by the two horns: (1) one horn symbolizes Gog (and his Magog Alliance), and (2) the other horn symbolizes the Antichrist, interpreted to be the coming al-Mahdi of Shia Islam (and the Muslim nations that follow him). Gog leads the entire Alliance which includes the "Magog group" and the Muslim group led by al-Mahdi; and al-Mahdi leads the Muslim group but under Gog's leadership (I know that it is unlikely that the Antichrist will submit to Gog. As we will see below, the so called Alliance falls apart). *Together, they form the Alliance which will attack Israel in the Last Days.* They are the two-pronged arm of satan in his last Armageddon against the "woman" (Israel), and her "offspring" (Christianity) (Rev 12:17).

The leader of the Muslim group of Gog's Alliance. Since our previous interpretation identified Iran to defeat Saudi Arabia, we will continue with Iran as the most likely candidate to fulfill Daniel 7:23-24, Revelation 17:12, and now Revelation 13:11. That is, Iran, led by al-Mahdi, will be one of the two "horns" of the 2nd beast of Rev 13. Combining our prior interpretations with those of Ezekiel 38/39 results in the following events to look for:

1. Iran will lead the Muslim world as a part of Gog's Alliance. The leader of the "non-Russian group" of Gog's Alliance will be Iran. Iran is the only Muslim country with a 90% Shia population; and, Daniel 2, 7, and Revelation 17, all pointed us to Shia Islam rather than Sunni Islam as the "Antichrist" sect in the Last Days. (The only other Muslim countries that have significant Shia populations are Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq). Iran is also the most likely choice because Shia Islam's version of the Mahdi is found in prophetic scripture not Sunni Islam's version (Daniel 7:7-8).

Iran satisfies another requirement of Daniel 7:23-24: Iran is "different." In our earlier chapter, we interpreted Daniel 7:24 to refer to the Mahdi as a supernatural, demonic incarnation, and therefore, "different" from the other "kings" (who are human beings). We stated that the "Mahdi" found in prophetic scripture is the "Shia" version rather than the Sunni version. We also stated that in prophetic scripture, horns refer to kings and/or the kingdoms they lead, interchangeably. Thus, in the same way that the Mahdi/Antichrist will be "different," we should expect that the kingdom he leads to be different.

Daniel 7:23 *"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.'"*

First, Islam is "different" than the three preceding kingdoms of Daniel 7 – all of these were national, political kingdoms (Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece). Islam is not a political kingdom. *It is a spiritual kingdom.* Islam is "different."

Likewise, Iran is also different from the other nations that make up the ten. There are six Middle East neighbors of Israel left out of Ezekiel 38/39. These six nations are all Arab nations *Iran is not Arab. Iran is Persian; and, it is the only Persian Muslim nation in the Alliance.*

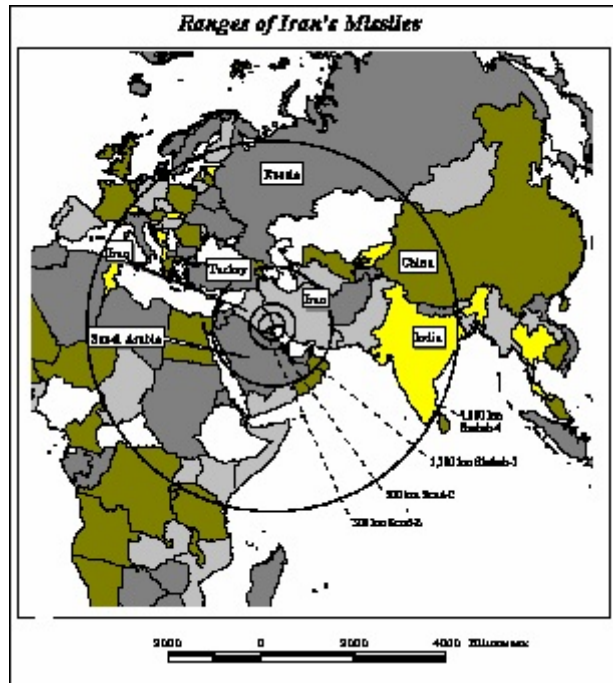
Consider this statement as reported by *The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, Inquiry and Analysis - No. 426, March 12, 2008. The statement is made by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu Gheit in response to Iran's desire to renew relations with Egypt (*Egypt is an Arab nation*). It seems that the Egyptian Minister prefers that "Arab problems . . . should be dealt with by Arabs," not by Persian Iran:

*"Iran is an influential power in the Gulf. For the last two or three years . . . it has been trying to involve itself in Arab problems so as to gain influence that will serve it in its struggle with the West. Thus, Egypt believes that Iran has a problem with the Arab world, and that its interference in [Arab] problems is detrimental to Arab interests. This is Egypt's position at this stage. . . . The Arab problems in the region should be dealt with by the Arabs, and not by other forces inside or outside the region. . . "Let me stress that there is no conflict between Egypt and Iran. Egypt recognizes Iran's value, and respects it as a religious [force] with a [distinguished] Islamic history. Egypt also appreciates Iran's influence in East Asia, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan and in the Gulf.. [However], it would be inconceivable for Egypt to consent to [establish] full and normal relations with a country that reveres the man who assassinated [the late] Egyptian president [Anwar Sadat]. There is an Egyptian consensus [on this]. . ."*⁴¹ (Emphasis supplied)

I quote this statement from the Egyptian Minister only to demonstrate that in the Middle East, to be “Arab” is quite different than to be “Persian.” This “difference” matters in the Middle East ! It also matters in bible prophecy.

The threat of Iran. We began this section by stating that we must identify a nation included in Gog’s Alliance that is sufficient in strength and purpose to subdue three other Muslim countries, not named in Gog’s Alliance and neighboring Israel. Is Iran able to accomplish such a feat? Does it have the military to accomplish such? Consider this Senate Intelligence Report which describes Iran’s current missile inventory as “among the largest in the Middle East”:

“One of the most disturbing aspects of the Iranian WMD [“weapons of mass destruction”] program is its determined effort to construct ballistic missiles that will enable Tehran to deliver conventional or, potentially, chemical, biological, or nuclear warheads against its neighbors in the region and beyond. Iran claimed last fall that its Shahab-3 missile can currently strike targets at distances up to 2,000 km (1,200 miles), including Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and southeastern Europe. It is believed that Iran’s Shahab-4 will have a range of 4,000 km (2,400 miles), enabling Iran to strike Germany, Italy, and Moscow. The below map by the Congressional Research Service illustrates the estimated ranges of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing:



“The U.S. Intelligence Community concluded in its November 2004 721 Report: **Iran's ballistic missile inventory is among the largest in the Middle East . . .**”⁴² (Emphasis supplied)

Quoting from the same Congressional Report, it seems that Iran and its President Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad have made public threats against both the United States and Israel, the sum of which poses a “serious threat to national security and to the security of friends and allies” of the United States:

“Iran poses a threat to the United States and its allies due to its sponsorship of terror, probable pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and support for the insurgency in Iraq. The profile of the Iranian threat has increased over the last year due to the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has made public threats against the United States and Israel, the continuation of Iranian nuclear weapons research, and the recent attacks by Hezbollah, an Iranian terrorist proxy, against Israel. Iran has provided Hezbollah with financial support and weapons, including the thousands of rockets Hezbollah fired against Israel in July and August 2006. Iran thus bears significant responsibility for the recent violence in Israel and Lebanon.”⁴³

“This report attempts to explain to the American people that, although intelligence is inadequate to develop a thorough understanding of the threat posed by Iranian activities, there is sufficient information available to conclude that Iran poses a serious threat to U.S. national security and to the security of our friends and allies. . . . Iran’s missile programs provide Tehran with the ability to strike targets far beyond its borders, as do its support of terrorism and meddling in Iraq. Moreover, the IAEA’s belief that the Iranians may be testing missile reentry vehicles with nuclear applications poses the real possibility that Iran could spark a major regional war.”⁴⁴

Quoting from CRS Report to Congress #32048, by Kenneth Katzman, we find that Iran’s nuclear program is but one of Iran’s threats to the United States. Iran regularly provides “material support to groups that use violence to prevent Israeli-Arab peace.” Additionally, Iran provides support to terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Hizbullah:

“Iran’s nuclear program is not the only major U.S. concern on Iran. Successive administrations have pointed to the threat to the United States and its allies posed by Iran’s policy in the Near East region, particularly material support to groups that use violence to prevent Israeli-Arab peace. Such groups have long included Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Although there is no evidence of an operational relationship with Al Qaeda, some senior Al Qaeda activists are believed to be in Iran, although Iran claims they are “in custody.” U.S. officials also accuse Iran of attempting to exert influence in Iraq by providing arms and other material assistance to Shiite Islamist militias, some of which are participating in escalating sectarian violence against Iraq’s Sunnis there.”⁴⁵

Iran is Aligned with Russia. We have interpreted Rosh as Russia. We have stated that Russia will align with a nation from the Middle East in its attack against Israel; and, we have posited Iran to be that nation. If this interpretation is correct, then we must find evidence in the modern day that Iran and Russia are aligned with one another.

As reported by Internet Yahoo.news, Associated Press, the alignment of Russia and Iran is far from a secret relationship:

“Iranians in test run of first nuclear power plant” Associated Press Writer Nasser

Karimi,– Wed Feb 25, 2009, 2:22 pm.

*BUSHEHR, Iran – Iranian and Russian engineers carried out a test-run of Iran's first nuclear power plant Wednesday, a major step toward starting up a facility that the U.S. once hoped to prevent because of fears over Tehran's nuclear ambitions. American opposition to the plant eased when Iran agreed in 2005 to return spent fuel to Russia to ensure it can't be reprocessed into plutonium. Russia is providing enriched uranium fuel for the plant in the southern port city of Bushehr. But the U.S. and its allies say there are deep questions about whether Iran intends to use other parts of its nuclear program to develop atomic weapons. Tehran denies that. The United States said Wednesday that the fuel deal with Russia shows Tehran does not need the most controversial part of its nuclear program — facilities to produce its own enriched uranium. . .*⁴⁶

“Reset” Sought on Relations With Russia, Biden Says, Speech at Security Conference Offers Look at Policy, By Craig Whitlock, Washington Post Foreign Service , Sunday, February 8, 2009; Page A18: MUNICH, Feb. 7 -- Vice President Biden told an international security conference here Saturday that the White House wants to “press the reset button” on one of Washington's biggest challenges: its increasingly troublesome relationship with Russia. Biden ticked off a list of security headaches that the Kremlin has the potential to help or hinder, including the faltering war in Afghanistan and fruitless efforts to persuade North Korea and Iran to forswear nuclear weapons. . . .”⁴⁷

From a 2006 Report by Lionel Beehner, Council of Foreign Relations, on the history of Russian-Iranian arms sales, it seems that the Iran/Russia alignment began with the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and the rise of the Ayatollah:

What is the history of Russian-Iranian arms sales? *After the fall of the Shah in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran sought to secure itself by purchasing conventional arms mainly from China, North Korea, and, despite prickly bilateral relations, the Soviet Union (under the Shah, its chief supplier had been the United States and Britain). In 1989, following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Moscow and Tehran negotiated their first major arms deal along with agreements on scientific-technical cooperation, which included pledges of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. Relations soon improved. By the end of the 1990s, once Iran's cooperation with North Korea had slowed, Russia emerged as Iran's main supplier of conventional arms. Between 1995 and 2000, Russia suspended its advanced weapons trade with Iran as part of a voluntary agreement with the United States. The value of arms transfer agreements between the Iran and Russia ballooned from \$300 million between 1998 and 2001 to \$1.7 billion between 2002 and 2005.”*⁴⁸

From another 2006 Report by Lionel Beehner, Council of Foreign Relations, on Iranian Russian relations:

“Russia, Iran: Brothers in Arms. *The burgeoning partnership between Iran and Russia threatens to unravel UN efforts to squeeze Tehran to forego its nuclear ambitions. A veto-wielding member of the Security Council, Russia has thus far resisted efforts to punish the Iranians for forging ahead with their enrichment activities and ignoring a raft of UN resolutions. Of course, Moscow is motivated by fears of losing lucrative business opportunities, not to mention an important ally in the region. Bilateral trade eclipsed \$2*

billion in 2005, and as this new Backgrounder explains, Russia now supplies the bulk of Iran's conventional arms. That includes a proposed air-defense system that would give Iran a credible deterrent against any American or Israeli move to strike its nuclear installations. Russia also built a light-water nuclear power plant at Bushehr, an \$8 billion project set to go online as early as next year (GlobalSecurity.org).⁴⁹

Conclusion. I could quote report after report. The bottom line? Iran is a significant military threat in the Middle East and, therefore, the entire world. As a Russian supplied Middle East nation and as an emerging nuclear armed nation, it is a likely candidate in the modern time to fulfill our interpretation of Last Day's Bible prophecy.

This leads us to the second part of our question regarding Iran. Is there a spiritual purpose that Iran fulfills in this role? Is that purpose supported by other bible prophecies?

Other Bible Prophecies Regarding Iran. Unlike the six Arab nations that border Israel, Iran is not prophesied to be at enmity with Israel based on passages such as Psalm 83 or Numbers 24 (which apply to the sons of Ishmael and Esau).⁵⁰ Neither is Iran "to the north" of Israel and thereby referenced in prophecy as an enemy "from the north." Notice the map below. Iran is due east of Israel:



The question that must be answered is whether or not the Bible prophecies of a nation from the east of Israel that will be at enmity with Israel in the Last Days? Consider the following bible prophecies:

Isaiah 41:2 *“Who has aroused one from the east whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with*

his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow.”

Isaiah 46:11 *“Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.”*

Revelation 16:12 *“The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. . .16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”*

Notice, a nation “from the east” (literally, “from the rising of the sun”⁵¹) will be called by God in the Last Days to initiate Armageddon. Revelation 16 includes very important geographical information to identify this nation – the nation is “from the east.” *Iran is the only nation included in Gog’s Alliance that is from the east.*

What about Iraq? First, Iraq is *not included in Gog’s Alliance*; but even if it were, when the Bible refers to “Babylon” (Babylon was located in what is now modern day Iraq), it uses the phrase “from the north” (Ezekiel 1:4, 26:7), not “from the east.” Therefore, *Iran is the only nation of the ten that is uniquely located east of Israel.*

Revelation 16:12 tells us that the “*water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.*” We must interpret this phrase metaphorically, not literally. In modern times, the presence of water in the Euphrates River does not limit a nation’s army from crossing the Euphrates. The text is telling us that, in the Last Days, something will happen that will allow the nations “from the east” to cross barriers otherwise present so as to be able to initiate Armageddon. Whatever the barriers are, their removal will cause an advantage to be realized by the nations from the east. Otherwise, the text would not state that the “*way would be prepared for the kings from the east.*” The lead nation *from the east* will be Iran since it is the only nation from the east mentioned by Ezekiel 38/39. Since Revelation 16 text is plural (“kings from the east”), it is conceivable that Iran will not be alone but will be joined by other nations “from the east,” e.g., Afghanistan, Pakistan or India. The ultimate purpose? Iran will be used by God to gather the nations of the world for Armageddon, and in the process, God will execute His judgment against the nations of Gog’s Alliance.

The result? According to Ezekiel 38/39, the world will know that Israel is God’s chosen people, that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the one true God; and Israel will come to know that the savior of the world is Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew put to death by the Jewish religious leaders some 2000 years ago, who will ultimately be revealed as the Messiah of Israel. This part of Ezekiel’s prophecy will be discussed in the last of this chapter.

Other than biblical support. Look with me, now, at the world of intelligence and see if Iran, the nation “from the east” has publicly demonstrated a “religious” reason to launch an attack against Israel.

From CRS Report to Congress #RL32048 describing Iran’s current president, Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad, and other Iranian leaders of the past, we find statement clearly indicative of Iran's enmity to Israel:

"Iran's support for Palestinian militant groups has long concerned U.S. Administrations, particularly since doing so gives Tehran an opportunity to try to obstruct Israeli-Palestinian peace prospects. . . . However, other Iranian leaders have made similar statements in the past. In the 1990s, Khamene'i called Israel a "cancerous tumor" and made other statements suggesting that he seeks Israel's destruction. In December 2001, Rafsanjani said that it would take only one Iranian nuclear bomb to destroy Israel, whereas a similar strike against Iran by Israel would have far less impact because Iran's population is large."⁶²

Iran's president at the time of this writing, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has been equally public of his enmity towards Israel. The same Report to Congress states,

"Ahmadinejad has inflamed world opinion with several anti-Israel statements:

- *On October 26, 2005, he stated at a Tehran conference entitled "A World Without Zionism" that "Israel should be wiped off the map" and that "anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations' fury." A U.N. Security Council statement and Senate and House resolutions (H.Res. 523 and S.Res. 292), passed in their respective chambers, condemned the statement.*
- *On December 9, 2005, and then again on December 14, 2005, and May 28, 2006, he questioned the veracity of the Holocaust. In the CRS-5 December 14 case, he called it a "myth" — and stated that Europe should create a Jewish state in Europe, not in the Middle East. . .*
- *On January 1, 2006, Ahmadinejad said that the European countries created Israel after World War II to continue the process of ridding the European continent of Jews.*
- *On April 14, 2006, he said Israel is "heading toward annihilation."⁶³*

"Other accounts say Ahmadinejad believes his mission is to prepare for the return of the 12th "Hidden" Imam, whose return from occultation would, according to Twelver Shiite doctrine, be accompanied by the establishment of Islam as the global religion."⁶⁴ (Emphasis supplied)"⁶⁵

Conclusion. There is ample non-biblical evidence that Iran is a likely candidate to launch an attack against Israel, including ancillary efforts by Iran to subdue other Muslim nations if required to accomplish its objectives.

Three Muslim nations that will be "subdued." Before joining Gog's Alliance against Israel, Iran, led by al Mahdi, will "subdue" three Muslim "kings" as prophesied by Daniel 7:24:

Daniel 7:24 *"As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings."*

The Mahdi is the "another" one of Daniel 7:24. The text states he will subdue three kings (and the kingdoms they lead). Daniel 7:23 stated that this leader (and his nation based on this interpretation) will be different. Iran is Persian. Here are the five nations surrounding Israel, all

of which are Arab nations:

1. Syria (74% Sunni⁵⁶)
2. Lebanon (Sunni, but with large Shia populations)
3. Egypt (99% Sunni⁵⁷)
4. Jordan (89% Muslim, with only 2% Shia Islam⁵⁸)
5. Iraq (60% Shia).

Here is our map locating these five nations colored in blue. Saudi Arabia is now in bright green:



Israel's neighbors not named in Alliance = blue
Israel = red
Saudi Arabia, removed by Revelation 17 = green

We are looking for the three mostly likely candidates to be “subdued” by Iran. Here is our problem. Daniel 7:24 gives us very almost nothing to identify the three nations that Iran will subdue. Therefore, any conclusions we make as to the identity of these three nations are not based on our “interpretation” of Bible prophecy, but rather, based on our personal opinion of who those nations might be. This opinion must be informed as best we are able, but in the end, that is pretty much all it is – personal opinion. So, with that in mind, here is my *opinion* of who those three nations are most likely to be.

Two of the five nations are primary candidates - Egypt and Jordan. *These are the only two Muslim countries in the world that have normalized relations with Israel through treaty.*⁵⁹ This immediately distinguishes these two from the other members of this group, and places these two countries at the top of Iran’s list since they have shown some “favor” to Israel. Further, both of these countries are aligned with Israel’s ally, the United States, the “Great Satan,” a term of derision first used by the Ayatollah in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979.⁶⁰ Lastly, both of these nations are strategically important to any nation launching an attack on Israel.

Here is a recent statement summarizing relations between Egypt and the United States – the importance of which is that it places Egypt alongside the United States and its allies rather than on the side of Iran (and Russia):

“U.S. policy toward Egypt is aimed at maintaining regional stability, improving bilateral relations, continuing military cooperation, and sustaining the March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Successive Administrations have long viewed Egypt’s leaders as a moderating influence in the Middle East, though in recent years, there have been increasing U.S. calls for Egypt to democratize. . . The United States has provided Egypt with an annual average of over \$2 billion in economic and military foreign assistance since 1979. The Administration has requested \$1.3 billion in military aid for Egypt in FY2009 — the same amount it received in FY2008. For FY2009, the Administration is requesting \$200 million in ESF for Egypt, a notable decrease from previous fiscal years. According to the U.S. State Department’s FY2009 Congressional Budget Justification, “FY 2009 economic assistance funds for Egypt will decrease from the FY 2008 level, reflecting a more balanced, mature bilateral relationship consisting of foreign assistance and commercial linkages.”⁶¹

As Iran’s “Great Satan,” the United States has supplied both Egypt and Jordan with military and other aid. In addition, both of these two Muslim nations are strategically located so that any nation attacking Israel will need the airspace of both of these two countries. Egypt’s strategic importance can be seen in the following statement reported by MEMRI. The statement is a quote from an Iranian source that notes the importance to Iran of attempting to renew relations with Egypt because of its strategic location:

“Sobh-e Sadeq [the “mouthpiece of Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei circulated among the Revolutionary Guards] went on to describe Egypt’s strategic importance in the Middle East, framing it as a reason for Iran to renew relations with it: “. . . The geopolitical status of Egypt, which is located at the crossroads of three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe); its control of the Suez Canal; its enormous capabilities in industry, agriculture and tourism . . . its proximity to the North African countries; its contiguity with occupied Palestine; the activity of [Egyptian] Islamic movements like the Muslim Brotherhood; and countless other factors all conspire to make Egypt an important and strategic player [in the region]. . . Despite the ups and downs in Egypt’s regional, Arab, and Muslim status over the three decades since it signed the Camp David accords, we must acknowledge that this country is, thanks to its immense political, cultural, religious and economic capabilities as well as its geopolitical [advantages], still the leader of the Arab world in many respects. Consequently, it is regarded as a significant rival of Saudi Arabia, which sees itself as the ‘mother’ of the Muslim world. . . The Egyptian government can form a safe bridge to relations between Iran and North Africa; [that is,] it can prepare the ground for warmer relations [between Iran and] countries like Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. [Moreover,] a close relationship among Tehran, Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad will play an invaluable role in resolving regional crises, and will frustrate the U.S.’s and the Zionist regime’s attempts over the last few years to shift political leadership [of the region] from Cairo to the Gulf states.” (Emphasis supplied)

We find the a similar strategic importance for Jordan, another U.S. ally as described in CRS #33546.⁶²

“Although the United States and Jordan have never been linked by a formal treaty, they

have cooperated on a number of regional and international issues over the years. The country's small size and lack of major economic resources have made it dependent on aid from Western and friendly Arab sources. U.S. support, in particular, has helped Jordan deal with serious vulnerabilities, both internal and external. Jordan's geographic position, wedged between Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, has made it vulnerable to the strategic designs of its more powerful neighbors, but has also given Jordan an important role as a buffer between these potential adversaries. In 1990, Jordan's unwillingness to join the allied coalition against Iraq disrupted its relations with the United States and the Persian Gulf states; however, relations improved throughout the 1990s as Jordan played an increasing role in the Arab-Israeli peace process and distanced itself from the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.⁶³ (Emphasis supplied)

Conclusion: Egypt and Jordan are likely to be two of the three Arab Muslim nations that will be subdued by Iran. They have both signed treaties with Israel, are U. S. allies, they are strategically located to Israel and the Middle East, and they are both Sunni Islam (Iran is Shia).

The Third Likely Nation to be Subdued by Iran. We will look at Syria and Lebanon next. Syria has been designated by the United States as a "sponsor of international terrorism."⁶⁴ The consequence of this designation is the prohibition of direct aid by the United States to Syria and the restriction of bilateral trade relations between Syria and the United States. Additionally, on December 12, 2003, President Bush signed the Syria Accountability Act, H.R. 1828, which imposed additional economic sanctions against Syria.⁶⁵ The United States has also "designated several Syrian entities as weapons proliferations and sanctioned several Russian companies for alleged WMD or advanced weapons sales to Syria."⁶⁶ Here is a description of the relations of Iran and Syria taken from a recent CRS Report to Congress. Notice particularly the recent agreement between Syria, Iran, and Turkey (another member of Gog's Alliance) to allow Iran to export natural gas to Syria via Turkey; and, the \$1 billion in military aid by Iran to Syria to purchase Russian anti-ship missiles:

"Reliable information on the extent of Iranian influence in Syria is difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, there have been several recent reports of increased Iranian investment and trade with Syria. In the manufacturing and industrial sectors, Iran has proposed to build car manufacturing plants in Syria, establish an industrial zone for Iranian companies in Damascus, invest in concrete production and power generation, and overhaul Syria's urban transportation network. In the energy sector, Syria, Iran, Venezuela and Malaysia recently established a joint petroleum refinery in Homs, Syria. In addition, Iran, Turkey, and Syria reached a new natural gas deal that would allow Iran to export 105 billion cubic feet of natural gas annually to Syria via Turkey. Syrian-Iranian military cooperation also may be expanding. During a visit to Damascus in the summer of 2007, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reportedly offered to provide Syria with \$1 billion in military aid with which Syria would purchase tanks, MIG-31 fighter jets, and anti-ship missiles from Russia and North Korea."⁶⁷ (Emphasis supplied)

Consider this modern day statement by the Syrian Education Minister Dr. Ali Sa'd regarding Syria's school curriculum changes naming Israel as a "terrorist Zionist entity" and having perpetrated another Nazi holocaust in the recent Gaza Strip conflict. :

"At the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, held February 3,

2009 in Khartoum, Syrian Education Minister Dr. 'Ali Sa'd announced that the concept of the "terrorist Zionist entity," presented by Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in his speech at the January 16, 2009 Doha summit, would be incorporated into the Syrian school curriculum. In that speech, Assad accused Israel of perpetrating another Nazi holocaust in Gaza, claiming that the spilling of Arab blood since the establishment of Israel was intended to bring about a purely Jewish state. Assad also called to instill in the future Arab generations the principle "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," to ensure that they would never forget or forgive Israel's actions."⁶⁸

Consider this statement from CRS #33487 which describes Hizbullah, the Lebanon based terrorist organization, and the role it plays to connect Syria, Lebanon, and Iran:

"Syria is an important interlocutor between Iran and its Hezbollah protégés; Iranian weapons transit through Syria on their way to Hezbollah caches in Lebanon. Syria emerged as a key, if indirect, actor in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon-Hezbollah crisis, primarily through its role as a source and conduit for the delivery of rockets and other mainly Iranian weaponry to Hezbollah units in southern Lebanon; some believe Syria is still shipping weapons from its own inventories to Hezbollah as well. In March 2007, Israeli officials presented the U.N. Security Council and foreign governments with evidence and pictures of trucks crossing from Syria into Lebanon and unloading weapons.²⁵ One former U.N. peacekeeping official said it would be "humanly impossible" to cut off the flow of arms to Hezbollah without Syrian help,²⁶ commenting on the task of interdicting Lebanon's porous 230-mile border with Syria and 140-mile Mediterranean coast line."⁶⁹

Analyst Jeremy Sharp continues to describe the Syrian/Iran relationship:

"Finally, Syria's longstanding relationship with the Iranian clerical regime is of great concern to U.S. strategists. As Syria has grown more estranged from the United States, Syrian-Iranian relations have improved, and some analysts have called on U.S. policymakers to woo Syrian leaders away from Iran. Others believe that the Administration should go even further in pressuring the Syrian government and should consider implementing even harsher economic sanctions against it."⁷⁰ (Emphasis supplied)

Syria and Oil. Revenues from oil account for an estimated 40% - 50% of the annual budget for the Syrian government.⁷¹ Syria has one of the smallest known reserves of oil in the Middle East and most energy experts believe that, barring significant new discoveries, Syria will exhaust its oil reserves in the coming decades.⁷² The significance of this fact must not be overlooked for it places Syria at a distinct disadvantage in coming years. Without oil, Syria will be forced to rely on outside interests for its economic survival. As we have seen in prior chapters, Iran has significant oil and gas reserves, in fact, second only to Saudi Arabia. However, in spite of Iran's reserves, Iran's infrastructure needed to bring oil to market is severely lacking.⁷³ For this reason, it is unlikely that Syria will look to Iran for its future petroleum needs but to other member's of Gog's, Alliance. Specifically, Russia. As we have already discussed, Iran and Russia are two partners on the world scene; and, we interpret them to be partner's in Bible prophecy as well. The alliance of these two nations has benefits to both – Iran is rendered as more able to exert its influence on Muslim countries through the partnership fringe benefits obtained through Russia; and, Russia is able to gain the fringe benefits of Islam through Iran. We have seen how Russia is prophesied to supply military arms in fulfillment of Ezekiel 38:9.

Perhaps, Russia's supplies will also include petroleum products as well. Regardless of whether petroleum is supplied by either country, this factor only serves to reinforce the interlocking relationships of Syria, Iran and Russia.

Nuclear Syria? In a 2002 speech to the United States Senate, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Israel's inherent right to protect the lives of its citizens.⁷⁴ Israeli leaders have vowed to bomb any nuclear facility of Arab nations it considers a threat to its people. It doesn't appear that Syria has taken Israel's warning to heart. Consider the report below by the Washington Post which describes Israel's 2007 bombing of Syria's nuclear facilities:

"Shock Waves From Syria, Did Israel bomb a secret nuclear facility equipped by North Korea? Thursday, September 20, 2007; Page A20

"THERE'S BEEN no official confirmation of the targets or results of an Israeli air raid in northeastern Syria on Sept. 6. Yet, like a subterranean explosion, the event is sending shock waves through the Middle East and beyond. Syria has protested to the United Nations, though it hasn't been very clear about what it's protesting. On Tuesday, a front-page editorial in Damascus's main government-run newspaper criticized the United States for not condemning the attack. An Israeli newspaper, meanwhile, noted triumphantly that no nation other than North Korea had come to Syria's defense, rhetorically or otherwise."⁷⁵

For those who need more information on Syria's construction of nuclear facilities, point your browser search engine to this phrase: "Israel bombs Syria," and you will find a 1,455 page "Sourcebook on the Israeli Strike in Syria, 6 September 2007, Version of 2009-02-01" located at web address: <http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/syria.pdf>. This "Sourcebook" includes hundreds of pictures documenting Syria's construction of a nuclear facility as well as its interactions with North Korean leadership who allegedly supplied the materials in this clandestine effort. This event is precisely what Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophesy will occur.

Based on these reports, it appears far more likely that Syria will be a willing ally of Iran rather than a nation subdued by Iran. Yet, Ezekiel 38/39 fails to include Syria as one of the nations in Gog's Alliance against Israel. How can we explain their absence along with Iran's presence? We can only conclude that *Syria will surrender to Iran*. As we will discussed briefly below, both Syria and Lebanon will consider this option far better than a war against Iran. If Egypt is not able to defend itself against Iran, how will Syria or Lebanon be able to?

Lebanon and its Relationship with Iran. In recent years, Lebanon has depended upon Syria for military and intelligence support. This has created a dependance by Lebanon upon Syria. Analyst, Alfred B. Prados, states the following in his report to Congress dated, November 23, 2007:

"Syria has long regarded Lebanon as part of its sphere of influence. . . . Another remaining question concerns the ability of the Lebanese security forces to assume responsibility for maintaining order in areas vacated by Syrian forces. Lebanon's ground forces number approximately 70,000 organized into 11 under strength brigades and a few separate units and armed largely with obsolescent equipment, plus minuscule air and naval forces, each

consisting of about 1,000 personnel. In this connection a Lebanese study group has prepared a report indicating despite Syria's formal withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, Syria continues to occupy as much as 180 square miles of Lebanese territory (approximately 4.5% of the country). The drafters of the report believe Syria maintains camps and smuggling routes through which they infiltrate foreign fighters and weapons into Lebanon."⁷⁶

*"A cornerstone of Syrian foreign policy is domination of the internal affairs of Lebanon. Many hard-line Syrian nationalists consider Lebanon to be an appendage of the Syrian state and, to this day, there is no official Syrian diplomatic representation in Beirut. From a geostrategic standpoint, Lebanon is considered Syria's "soft underbelly" and a potential invasion route for Israel. The Lebanese economy also is deeply penetrated by pro-Syrian business interests."*⁷⁷

Based on the current relationship of Lebanon and Syria, it is likely that these two countries will align similarly in any effort that endangers either country, whether Iranian or otherwise. Further, Lebanon is host to Hizbullah. CRS Report to Congress #RL32048 details the Iran/Hizbullah relationship as follows,

*"Iran has maintained a close relationship with Hezbollah since Hezbollah's inception in 1982. Hezbollah was formed by Lebanese Shiite clerics sympathetic to Iran's Islamic revolution and responsible for several acts of anti-U.S. and anti-Israel terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s. . . Whether or not Iran instigated Lebanese Hezbollah to provoke the July-August 2006 crisis with Israel, Iran has long been a major supplier and benefactor of Hezbollah. Iranian-supplied rockets were fired by Hezbollah on Israel's northern towns during the fighting. As part of a package of aid to Hezbollah said to exceed \$100 million per year, reported Iranian shipments to Hezbollah over the past five years have included the "Fajr" (dawn) and Khaybar series of rockets that were fired at the Israeli city of Haifa (30 miles from the border), and over 10,000 Katyusha rockets that were fired at cities within 20 miles of the Lebanese border."*⁷⁸

This is another situation where the evidence to document the likelihood of an Iranian alignment between both Syria and Lebanon is an almost foregone conclusion. This conclusion is all but cemented by the presence in both Syria and Lebanon of significant Shia populations.

We conclude: neither Syria or Lebanon will be the third country that Iran subdues. In fact, these two countries will voluntarily come alongside and "under" Iran.

Iraq will be the Third Nation Subdued by Iran. The remaining Muslim nation neighboring Israel and not named in Ezekiel 38/39 is Iraq. Iraq has a Shia majority (60%), located predominantly in southern Iraq on the border with Iran. Iraq and Iran have historically been rivals from ancient times. Iraq, the modern day equivalent of Babylon in the Old Testament, was defeated by Media-Persia in 539 BC under the leadership of Cyrus the Great.⁷⁹ Encarta Encyclopedia gives the following background of the more recent Iran/Iraq divide:

"The border between Iraq and Iran has been contested diplomatically and sometimes militarily for several centuries. After the Ottoman Empire conquered present-day Iraq in 1534, making it the easternmost part of its empire, Iran, its eastern neighbor, became a frequent rival. More recently, when Iraq was made a separate state in the aftermath of

World War I (1914-1918), Iraq and Iran disagreed sharply over the precise border between them, especially in the area of the Shatt al Arab, a river channel providing Iraq's only outlet to the sea, via the Persian Gulf."⁸⁰

*"The Iran-Iraq War began . . . when Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980 and ended in August 1988 after both sides accepted a cease-fire sponsored by the United Nations. The war was one of the longest and most destructive of the 20th century, with likely more than one million casualties. Despite the conflict's length and cost, neither Iran nor Iraq made significant territorial or political gains, and the fundamental issues dividing the countries remained unresolved at the end of the war."*⁸¹

Globalsecurity.org, describes the Iran/Iraq conflict similarly:

*"The Iran-Iraq War permanently altered the course of Iraqi history. It strained Iraqi political and social life, and led to severe economic dislocations. Viewed from a historical perspective, the outbreak of hostilities in 1980 was, in part, just another phase of the ancient Persian-Arab conflict that had been fueled by twentieth-century border disputes. . . . In this respect, Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Iran has historical precedent; the ancient rulers of Mesopotamia, fearing internal strife and foreign conquest, also engaged in frequent battles with the peoples of the highlands." The Iran-Iraq War was multifaceted and included religious schisms, border disputes, and political differences. Conflicts contributing to the outbreak of hostilities ranged from centuries-old Sunni-versus-Shia and Arab-versus-Persian religious and ethnic disputes, to a personal animosity between Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini. Above all, Iraq launched the war in an effort to consolidate its rising power in the Arab world and to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state."*⁸² (Emphasis supplied)

The point of our very brief review of Iran/Iraq's history? It is unlikely that the rivalry between these two nations will ever be healed much less cause them to align on the same side of a military dispute. This statement is affirmed by the present context of Iran/Iraq relations in the post-Sadaam era. Iraq is presently "aligned" and supported by the United States. At the date of this writing, United States and coalition troops are still on Iraqi soil. It is well documented by the Intelligence community that Iran has actively participated in the arming and supplying of the insurgency in Iraq in an effort to destabilize the U.S. backed government in Iraq. Where Iran has supported Iraq, it has not been the post-Sadaam Shia majority government led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, but the Shia Islamist leaders. Consider the following description of Iran's influence in Iraq in the modern day:

"The significance of the issue of Iranian influence in Iraq derives not only from the U.S. interest in stabilizing Iraq but also from tensions between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear and regional ambitions. Now that the conventional military and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat from Saddam Hussein has been removed, the thrust of Iran's strategy in Iraq has been to perpetuate domination of Iraq's government by pro-Iranian Shiite Islamist leaders, as well as to obtain leverage against the United States to forestall a potential confrontation. Iran sees control of Iraq by friendly Shiite parties as providing Iran with "strategic depth," ensuring that Iraq remains pliable and attentive to Iran's interests. At the same time, Iran's aid to Iraqi Shiite parties and their militias is contributing to sectarian violence that, in addition to causing about 3,000 Iraqi civilian

*casualties per month, is threatening the U.S. stabilization effort as well as U.S. and partner forces in Iraq.*⁸³

From updated CRS Report #22323, Iran's continuing influence on the post-Saddam Iraq regime is purposeful: "to ensure that Iraq can never again become a threat to Iran":

*"With a conventional military and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat from Saddam Hussein's regime removed, Iran seeks to ensure that Iraq can never again become a threat to Iran, either with or without U.S. forces present in Iraq. Some believe Iran's intentions go well beyond achieving Iraq's "neutrality" – that Iran wants to try to harness Iraq to its broader regional policy goals and to help Iran defend itself against international criticism of Iran's nuclear program. By supporting armed Shiite factions, Iran's activities in Iraq have hindered – and continue to pose a threat to—U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq, and have heightened the U.S. threat perception of Iran generally. However, Iran faces difficult choices in Iraq now that its protégé Shiite factions, formerly united, are competing and often fighting each other. This competition is intensifying in the run-up to January 31, 2009 provincial elections."*⁸⁴

Conclusion. It seems a foregone conclusion that Iraq is a likely candidate for Iran's coming conflict to subdue three Arab nations. This conclusion does not change if the United States were to remove itself from active military involvement with Iraq. Iran cannot afford for Iraq to ever become a military threat to its survival. Although it is only "opinion," it seems that Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan are the most likely three Arab nations to be subdued by Iran in fulfillment of Daniel 7:24.

The Revived Caliphate. In an earlier chapter, we discussed the biblical prophecy of a revived and united "kingdom of the beast" (Revelation 17:8, 11). Since we interpret this kingdom to be the spiritual kingdom of Islam, the united and revived kingdom will be the "revived caliphate" of Islam. However, in our prior interpretations, we were unable to provide specifics of how this united Islam will take place. Ezekiel 38/39 fills in some of the blanks for us. Here is an order of events based on combining our interpretations of several Last Day's bible prophecies:

1. Saudi Arabia will be defeated by Iran, led by al-Mahdi, the Antichrist. As discussed, the Saudis are "Babylon the Great" of Revelation 17 whose annihilation at the hands of ten Muslim nations is prophesied by Revelation 17/18 .
2. Three Arab Muslim nations will be defeated by Iran. Daniel 7:23-24 prophesies that three of ten nations will be subdued by the Antichrist and his kingdom. Those three nations will be Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq, all Arab nations defeated by Persian Iran.
3. The two remaining Arab nations bordering Israel will surrender to Iran. Ezekiel 38/39 omits from Gog's Alliance six Arab nations that are neighbors to Israel. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq are four of this six based on the just described interpretations. The two remaining Arab nations are Syria and Lebanon. These two nations will not be defeated by Iran. They will surrender to Iran and join the Alliance under the Iranian banner and the banner of Islam against Israel.

The result of this coalition will be all of Islam (in the Middle East) will be united. The Mahdi will

be the Caliph of Islam comprising the groups and/or nations aforementioned. Revelation 17:8-13 will be fulfilled in one last kingdom of the beast. Those Muslims not located in the Middle East will follow the example of the Muslims of the 7th century AD. They will see the success of al-Mahdi (and Iran) as an indication of the will and blessings of Allah. Using history as our guide, they will join al-Mahdi in a Revived Caliphate of Islam.

4. Gog's Alliance will be comprised of:

A. Muslim coalition:

1. Iran and other nations "from the east," *perhaps*, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India
 1. Modern day Saudi Arabia (likely the entire Arabian Peninsula), defeated by Iran;
 2. Modern day Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, defeated by Iran;
 3. Modern day Syria, Lebanon, surrenders to Iran;
2. Africa Muslims, including Libya, Sudan, and Ethiopia (see below);
3. Turkey and Armenia (see below), named by Ezekiel 38:6
4. Muslims not affiliated by national identity, e.g., Hizbullah, HAMAS, Al Qaeda and similar organizations and groups regardless of Muslim sect, named by Ezekiel 38:6

B. Russian coalition:

1. Rosh, Meshech, Tubal

Gog's Alliance. Two more steps will be required to complete the Alliance according to Ezekiel 38/39:

1. Beth-togarmah (Armenia) will fall. We haven't discussed how Armenia, an independent, non-Muslim country, will join Gog's Alliance. Armenia was a previous "vassal state" of the Soviet Union following WW1, having shed the yoke of its Ottoman lords, the Turks, in 1922. From 1922 - 1991, the Republic of Armenia was a part of the former Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, Armenia reestablished its independence.⁸⁵ According to Ezekiel 38/39, Beth-togarmah is a part of the Russian Alliance. The reason can only be because Russia has now invaded Armenia and forced it to join the Alliance in the same way that Russia recently invaded Armenia's neighbor, Georgia. An alternative to the Russian invasion of Armenia is that Turkey will invade Armenia, returning Armenia to its Ottoman status. Regardless of which country subdues Armenia, the result will be the same. Armenia will join Gog's Alliance against Israel.
2. Ethiopia will fall. Ethiopia is currently surrounded by Muslim nations even though it is predominantly Christian. Yet, in Gog's Alliance, Ethiopia joins. How so? Look at our line of command. Iran will have secured the important strategic location of Egypt along with her many Muslim peoples. Having conquered Egypt, Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq; and, having received the allegiance of Syria and Lebanon; and having the support of the Muslims of Africa already, the Christians of Ethiopia will be easily subdued. They will either be killed or convert to Islam. Ethiopia, or what is left of it, will be forced to join Gog's Alliance.

Here is a map of the Alliance that will be against Israel:

Everyman's sword will be against his brother. We have stated in this chapter that Israel will not be defeated by Gog's Alliance. In fact, God will be revealed through the defeat of Gog and his Alliance. But how will this occur? How will the Alliance be defeated and God revealed at the same time? The text gives us a hint:

Ezekiel 38:21 *"I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord God. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22 "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone."*

We have already identified the nature of the weapons used in the battle: they appear to be nuclear. But who "pushes the button"? Israel? Russia? Perhaps, Iran? One thing we know – *it is not Israel*. If Israel initiated the nuclear attack against the forces of Gog and was somehow victorious, God would not be glorified, Israel would. Israel's glory would be similar to what occurred during the 1967 Six Day War when Israel's military succeeded in returning much of Jerusalem to Israel's possession. No. The text tells us how God will be glorified: *"I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord. . . . Every man's sword will be against his brother."*

Let me show you the same phrase used in another battle in an Old Testament passage. The battle takes place in the 8th century BC. Gideon is an Israelite. The Midianites are camel riding, sword wielding, desert nomads from Arabia. The angel of God visits Gideon, a man without renown, and tells Gideon to lead Israel against the mighty Midianite army. At first, Gideon's courage fails him; but after God reveals His power to Gideon, Gideon has the courage to lead Israel's army against the Midianites. 32,000 Israelites answer Gideon's call to war (Judges 7:2). "But that is too many," says the Lord, "Israel will see the victory as their own doing" (Judges 7:2). Through a series of events, God commands Gideon to reduce his army from 32,000 to 300 men. These 300 are each given a torch, a trumpet, and an empty clay pitcher. The battle is described as follows:

Judges 7:20 *"When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" 21 Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled. 22 When they blew 300 trumpets, the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled. . . ."*

The mighty Midianite army is defeated, not by Israel's military prowess, but by God, who causes confusion among the Midianites. In the confusion of the battle, the Midianites turn against one another – the army destroys itself - for *"every man's sword is against his brother."* The same will happen with Gog's Alliance. They will destroy each other.

We have stated that Gog has two primary divisions – one Russian, and the other Muslim. How will they turn against one another? Perhaps, Iran turns against Russia; or Turkey turns against Iran, or the Sunnis turn against the Shias; perhaps, the Mahdi turns against Gog. We cannot know how this will happen because the text only tells us what will happen, not how it will happen. But one thing we can know – *Those who are with Gog will turn upon Gog and upon one another*. If you think about it, this really shouldn't surprise us. From the opening pages of this book, the underlying thought is that satan uses others to "cloak" himself without their

knowing what he is doing. satan is the prince of destruction. he always destroys. We should expect that in the end, he will do the same. Gog's forces will destroy one another. Israel will remain on the sidelines watching in amazement. When the battle is over, they will rejoice just like the Israelites did in Judges 7 above; and, all the world will know that this victory has been won by the Lord because Israel will not even launch a single missile in its own defense!

The Timing of Gog's Battle and Ensuing Defeat. We have discussed the defeat of Gog and his entire Alliance, including the Muslim nations and the "many peoples" with Gog. We have also discussed Ezekiel's description of who defeats Gog – it is not Israel, but God, Himself, who defeats Gog. Now, we must look at one final passage from Revelation. It prophesies of the return of Jesus Christ in battle array against the "kings of the earth."

Revelation 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. . . 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. . . 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Ezekiel's battle is the same battle that is described in Revelation 19 at the return of Jesus Christ. Here is the primary reason we can make this conclusion. Both battles prophesy that the enemies of God are completely destroyed in the battle, and also, that God is revealed as the one true God in each battle. How is it possible for the two battles to be separate since both battles prophesy that the enemies of God (and His people) are destroyed in both battles? Since the enemies of God are defined by Psalm 83 and Numbers 24 (the sons of Ishmael and Esau (and the nations from the east" based on Rev 19)), i.e., modern day Islam, and these people are defeated in the first of the two battles, who is left to fight the second battle! *This can only mean that the two prophecies are describing the same battle, but from different perspectives.*

As we will discuss in our next chapter, this battle (as described in both Ezekiel 38/39 and Revelation 19) is at the end of the seven year period of tribulation. At the close of this battle, satan, the false prophet (the Antichrist and the 2nd beast), and the 1st beast (Allah) are judged in the Lake of Fire. For 1000 years they remain bound in this Lake of Fire:

Revelation 20:7 "When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp

of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Conclusion. The battle of Ezekiel 38/39 is the same battle described in Revelation 19:11f.

What about "Gog" and "Magog" of Revelation 20? At the conclusion of this 1000 year bondage, satan is *released for one final judgment*. Once again, he gathers the nations together. But these nations are not the same nations as Gog's Alliance of Ezekiel 38 even though the words "Gog and Magog" appear again. Here is why we conclude they are different.

1. ***The initiator of the two conflicts is different.*** Revelation 20:7 states that *it is satan* that initiates a deception over "Gog and Magog" to gather them for war against the "saints and the beloved city." Conversely, Ezekiel 38:15-16, 39:1-2 states that *it is God* that initiates Gog's conflict against Israel, not satan. These two conflicts cannot be the same if they have different initiators.
2. ***The purpose of the two conflicts is different.*** In Ezekiel 38 - 39, the purpose of the conflict has a divine, redeeming purpose. That is, God will use the conflict to reveal Himself to the entire world. Here is one of the verses:

Ezekiel 39:7 *"And My holy name I shall make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I shall not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. 8 "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord God. "That is the day of which I have spoken."*

This is the same purpose that the entire book of Ezekiel focuses on: *that through the fulfillment of prophecy, God will be revealed as the Lord God*. The prophet Ezekiel uses the phrase "you will know that I am the Lord" 44 times in the book of Ezekiel. When the prophecy is fulfilled, the people of Israel "will know that I am the Lord." This prophecy was fulfilled in 586BC when Israel was defeated by the Babylonians and Jerusalem was completely destroyed. The prophecy of Gog has yet to be fulfilled. Yet, the destruction of Gog and his military Alliance will have a similar redeeming purpose; but it will not be Israel that will be judged. Rather, Gog and his Alliance of nations will be judged. In the process, the nations "will know that I am the Lord." God will use the miracle of this judgment to reveal Himself.

Not so in Revelation 20. In Revelation 20, satan is released from his 1000 year imprisonment, along with his two companions, the beast and the false prophet, *to deceive once again*. The nations that are deceived are not Muslim nations; rather, they are the unbelieving world that has somehow not followed Christ in spite of His 1000 year Millennial reign. These nations will be deceived by satan so as to bring them to a final battle. Following satan's brief deception of the nations, satan will be judged for his actions in the Lake of Fire, where he will remain forever.

The divine will of both passages is fulfilled. In Ezekiel, 38/39, the divine will is fulfilled as God is revealed to the nations of the world. In Revelation 20, the divine will is fulfilled as

satan is ultimately judged the final time for his lies and deceptions. Two separate fulfillments, and two separate events.

3. **The military forces of Gog and Magog are different.** The conflict of Revelation 20:7 gathers the nations of the whole earth against the saints and the beloved city. The phrase “four corners of the earth” encompasses *the entire world*. “Four corners” communicates the “whole part” not a portion of the whole.⁸⁶ A similar phrase is used in Revelation 7 as follows:

Revelation 7:1 *“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.”*

Both passages use the phrase “four corners of the earth” to refer to the entire earth. The text is not referring to a region or even one or more continents. There are seven continents in the world: the “four corners of the world” symbolizes all of them or, at a minimum, the militaries of the nations that encompass the whole world! Conversely, Ezekiel 38/39 specifically locates the Russian coalition to the “remote north.” How is it possible that the nations from the “remote north” (Ezekiel 38 and 39 above) are the same nations as those described as from the “four corners of the earth” (Revelation 20:7)? They cannot be!

Conclusion: Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:7 and Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 are not the same. They are two completely separate prophetic events separated by the 1000 year reign of Christ wherein satan is bound, along with the false prophet and the beast.

Israel’s Redemption. One very important and final note regarding Ezekiel 38/39. Notice what the text tells us will happen to Israel.

Ezekiel 39:25 *“Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. 26 “They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid. 27 “When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. 28 “Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. 29 “I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” declares the Lord God.”*

Notice the 29th verse above: it states: *“I [God] will no longer hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured forth of My Spirit upon the House of Israel.”* The fulfillment of this prophecy can only take place when Israel proclaims Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord; only when Israel repents of its sin of rejecting Jesus, the only Son of God, will God no longer hide His face. Only then will God demonstrate His favor by “pouring out His Spirit upon the house of Israel.”

Bible prophecy tells us that Israel will reject Jesus as their Messiah:

Isaiah 53:3 *“He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with*

grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

Here is a New Testament passage that describes Israel's rejection:

John 1:9 "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."

Here are passages that prophesy of the time that Israel will reject Christ – the time of the Gentiles– and the close of that time when Israel's sins will be taken away:

Luke 21:2 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Romans 11:25 "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The deliverer will come from Zion , He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." 27 "This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! 35 "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "

Psalms 118:22 "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. 23 This is the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. . . . 24 This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. 25 O Lord, do save, we beseech You; O Lord, we beseech You, do send prosperity! 26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; . . . "

What event will bring Israel to the point that it repents of its rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? As we stated above, the battle of Ezekiel 38/39 is the same battle described in Revelation 19:11f; and, the Revelation 19 prophecy is accompanied with the *return of Jesus Christ*.

Revelation 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. . . 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.. . . 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. . . "

Matthew's gospel describes this same event as follows:

Matthew 24:29-31 29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened , and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

Revelation does likewise:

Revelation 1:7 *"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."*

The time of rejoicing by Israel could be described by many Old Testament passages. Perhaps the following will bless you as it has blessed me:

Zephaniah 3:14 *"Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 The Lord has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. 16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. 17 "The Lord your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. 18 "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts— They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. 19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. 20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the Lord."*

I could give you many, many more passages; yet, they all lead to the same conclusion:

When the "time of the Gentiles is fulfilled," i.e., when every Gentile whose name is in the Lamb's book of life since the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8, 20:12, 15; 21:27) has received eternal life, Jesus Christ will return. He will establish the Millennial Reign of His Church (Revelation 20:4). The Jews will witness the miracle of the return of Christ. They will witness the miracle of His defeat of Gog and His Alliance. In the process, they will come to know the reality of what God has done for them in Jesus Christ; and, *they shall be saved – all Israel will be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb* (Romans 11:26).

Endnotes to Chapter

1. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 690.
2. *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Edition, word search, "Ethiopia."
3. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 669; Lyman Coleman, *An Historical Textbook and Atlas of Biblical Geography*, New Edition, Carefully Revised, p. 18.
4. *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Edition, word search, "Put"
5. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p432, "an opinion not improbable opinion" citing Josephus (Anti. 6, sec 4).
6. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 175, interprets "the "Cimerii," inhabiting the Tauric Chersonese and the region near the Don and Danube;" which is modern day Bulgaria, Ukraine.
7. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 175, 856.
8. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 800.
9. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 190.
10. *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Edition, word search, "Magog."
11. *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Edition, word search, "rosh".
12. Pinches, T. G.. "Rosh (2)," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Edited by James Orr. Blue Letter Bible. 1913. 5 May 2003. 27 Dec 2008. <http://cf.blueletterbible.org/isbe/isbe.cfm?id=14137>.
13. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 752.
14. Lyman Coleman, *An Historical Textbook and Atlas of Biblical Geography*, New Edition, Carefully Revised, unnumbered page describing Map 11.
15. Lyman Coleman, p. 15.
16. *Easton's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*, Electronic edition, using word search, "rosh."
17. *Smith's Bible Dictionary: Comprising Antiquities, Biography, Geography, Natural History, Archaeology and Literature*, Electronic Edition, using word search, "rosh."
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20. Available at, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RL33696.pdf>, at February 6, 2009.
21. Douglas Berner, *The Silence is Broken, God Hooks Ezekiel's Gog & Magog*, p. 64.
22. Joel Rosenberg, *Epicenter, Why the Current Rumbblings in the Middle East will Change Your Future*, p. 114.
23. Available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chernobyl_accident at November 29, 2008.
24. Available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zone_of_alienation at November 29, 2008.
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26. Available at, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia>, at February 6, 2009.
27. Available at, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12050/>, at March 3, 2009.
28. Ibid.
29. H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, p 516.
30. Available at, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus>, at December 30, 2008.
31. Robert H. Strassler, Editor. *The Landmark Herodutus, The Histories*, p. 254.
32. Gesenius, p. 858.
33. Lyman Coleman, p. 127.
34. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*, Electronic Edition, word search, "Meshech and Tubal."
35. *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Edition, word search, "Meshech."
36. Douglas Berner, p. 41.
37. Gesenius, p. 856.
38. Available at, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/08/103392.htm>, at January 28, 2009.
39. Available at, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenia#Religion>, at December 30, 2008.
40. Revelation 13:8 prophesies that those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will not worship the 1st beast; Revelation 13:8..
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43. Ibid, p. 6.

44. Ibid., p. 22.

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63. Ibid.
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80. Ibid.
81. Available at, http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761580640/iran-iraq_war.html, at February 24, 2009.
82. Available at, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm>, at February 24, 2009.
83. *CRS Report to Congress, #RS22323, Iran's Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman, dated February 2, 2007, opening statements.

84. CRS Report to Congress, #RS22323, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman, updated, January 31, 2009, opening statements.

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