Ezekiel 38

Gog of Magog:
The Last Assault

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

When God's people are finally at peace, the biggest coalition yet comes to swallow them. But Gog never had the upper hand — God put the hooks in his jaws and led him to the place of his own ruin. The point of the whole war is that the nations will know the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 38 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Ma gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

6 Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.

7 Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

13 Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?

18 And it shall come to pass at the same time when ⇄ Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that ▲ my fury shall come up in my face.

19 For in my jealousy and ▲ in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day ◷ there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, ▲ shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: ⚠ every man's sword shall be against his brother.

22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, ▲ an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

23 ▲ Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** Son of man, set thy face against Gog
- **v2** ⇄ Gog *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Gog
- **v4** ▲ put hooks into thy jaws
- **v7** Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself
- **v8** ◷ After many days thou shalt be visited
- **v8** ◷ in the latter years
- **v8** ★ they shall dwell safely all of them
- **v9** ⚠ come like a storm
- **v10** ⚠ thou shalt think an evil thought
- **v11** ⚠ I will go up to the land of unwalled villages
- **v12** ⚠ To take a spoil, and to take a prey
- **v14** ★ when my people of Israel dwelleth safely
- **v15** ◷ out of the north parts
- **v16** ◷ it shall be in the latter days
- **v16** ▲ that the heathen may know me
- **v16** ▲ when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog
- **v18** ▲ my fury shall come up in my face
- **v19** ▲ in the fire of my wrath have I spoken
- **v19** ◷ there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel
- **v20** ▲ shall shake at my presence
- **v21** ⚠ every man's sword shall be against his brother
- **v22** ▲ an overflowing rain, and great hailstones
- **v23** ▲ Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself
- **v23** ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:8 (KJV)

8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

Setting

The oracle is not dated. Chapter 37 ended with Israel raised, reunited and living under "a covenant of peace" with God's sanctuary in their midst (37:26). Chapters 38–39 now picture one last enemy coming against that restored people — and God destroying him — before the temple vision of chapters 40–48. The time marker is "after many days" and "the latter years" (v8). The enemy is "Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (v2).

Structure

- vv1–3 — **God against Gog:** "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (v2). "Behold, I am against you, O Gog" (v3).
- vv4–7 — **God draws him out:** "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out" with horses, horsemen and a great company (v4). Allies: "Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them" (v5); "Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north" (v6). "Be prepared, and prepare yourself" (v7).
- vv8–9 — **the time and the target:** "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword" — gathered from many nations, "and they are living securely, all of them" (v8). "You will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land" (v9).
- vv10–13 — **Gog's evil plan:** "thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan" (v10): "I will go up against the land of unwalled villages" (v11), "to capture spoil and to seize plunder" (v12) from a people "who live at the center of the world" (v12). "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish" ask whether he has come for spoil (v13).
- vv14–17 — **God's purpose:** "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?" (v14). Gog comes from "the remote parts of the north" (v15). "It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog" (v16). "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel" (v17)?
- vv18–23 — **God's fury and Gog's ruin:** "My fury will mount up in My anger" (v18). "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel" (v19). All creation shakes at His presence; mountains fall (v20). "Every man's sword will be against his brother" (v21). Pestilence, blood, "a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone"

(v22). "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" (v23).

Repeated words

Gog (vv2, 3, 14, 16, 18); Thus says the Lord GOD (vv3, 10, 14, 17); declares the Lord GOD (vv18, 21); many peoples (vv6, 9, 15, 22); living securely (vv8, 11, 14); like a cloud covering / to cover the land (vv9, 16); on that day (vv10, 14, 18, 19); north (vv6, 15); spoil / plunder (vv12, 13); sanctified / sanctify (vv16, 23); know (vv14, 16, 23).

Contrasts

Gog's plan (v10) ⟷ God's hooks in his jaws (v4). "I will go up" (v11) ⟷ "I will bring you against My land" (v16). Unwalled villages, living securely (v11) ⟷ a vast army like a storm (v9). Gog comes to take spoil (v12) ⟷ God comes in fury (v18). A cloud covering the land (v9) ⟷ hailstones, fire and brimstone falling on him (v22). Gog's great company (v4) ⟷ every man's sword against his brother (v21). The nations' armies gathered ⟷ the nations knowing that He is the LORD (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

When God's people are finally at peace, the biggest coalition yet comes to swallow them. But Gog never had the upper hand — God put the hooks in his jaws and led him to the place of his own ruin. The point of the whole war is that the nations will know the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:16 (KJV)

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Who is Gog? (vv1–3)

Gog appears nowhere else as a person in the Old Testament; Guzik calls him a "wholly new and strange enemy." Morgan, in Guzik: "It is a new confederacy and antagonism." Magog was a son of Japheth (Gen 10:2), and Alexander, in Guzik, places Magog "as the land of the Scythians, a mountainous region around the Black and Caspian seas." Meshech and Tubal, also sons of Japheth, "refer to geographical areas or countries in eastern modern Turkey" (Alexander, in Guzik). The Hebrew *rosh* can be read as "chief" (KJV, "chief prince") or as a place name, "Rosh" (NASB). Many have linked Rosh with Russia. Feinberg, in Guzik: "There have been many writers who connected the name Rosh with the Russians, but this is not generally accepted today." Guzik says "the only direct evidence of this is the similar sound of the names," though it "matches what we do know." Wiersbe, in Guzik: "This doesn't rule out the participation of modern Russia, since it is located in the north." Block, in Guzik,

sees these northern peoples as "perfect symbols of the archetypal enemy, rising against God and his people." Guzik calls historical identifications such as Antiochus IV "extremely unlikely."

The allies (vv4–7)

The coalition comes from every direction: Persia (modern Iran) to the east, Ethiopia (Hebrew *Cush*) to the south, Put (usually Libya) to the west, Gomer and Beth-togarmah from the north. Alexander, in Guzik, suggests Gomer is "probably the ancient Cimmerians"; Block, in Guzik, calls it "a wild tribe living in the fog-bound region north of the Black Sea." Togarmah is often linked with the Armenians. Notice who is really in charge: God turns Gog about, puts hooks in his jaws and brings him out (v4). Guzik: whatever Gog's motives, "the ultimate reason is that God said He would *compel* Gog to come against Israel." Ancient conquerors led captives with hooks (compare Isa 37:29) — God treats the mightiest army like a captive animal.

When? (vv8–9, 14–17)

"After many days" and "the latter years" (v8) and "the last days" (v16) point to the end of the age. Feinberg, in Guzik: "No student of prophecy can afford to overlook this phrase." The invasion comes after Israel is regathered and "living securely." Christians read this in several ways:

- **A literal future invasion** (dispensational premillennial) — placed before, in the middle of, or at the end of the seven-year tribulation; the end-of-tribulation view links Ezekiel 39:17–20 with Revelation 19:17–18.
- **After the millennium** — because Revelation 20:7–9 names "Gog and Magog" gathering against "the beloved city."
- **Symbolic of the final assault of evil** (many amillennial readers) — the last great rebellion against God's people, crushed at Christ's return.

Guzik lists four timings — before, in the middle of, or at the end of the tribulation, or after the millennium — and does not choose: "the information is not complete enough for much certainty among several options," and "this may be a case where the specific fulfillment of the prophecy is not truly understood until its fulfillment."

Gog's evil plan (vv10–13)

God's sovereignty doesn't erase Gog's guilt. The thoughts are his own: "you will devise an evil plan" (v10). He sees a people without walls, bars or gates, prosperous and at peace, and wants their goods. Smith, in Guzik: "Gog calculated that the attack against the people of God would be relatively easy and extremely profitable." "The center of the world" (v12) — literally "navel" — Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: it "is Jerusalem, which this text conceives as being more than a political capital." Sheba and Dedan, says Feinberg in Guzik, "were Arab peoples"; the merchants of Tarshish ask about the loot. Taylor, in Guzik: "They are typical of those who will not initiate wrong-doing, but are eager to cash in on the proceeds."

Spoken of before (v17)

No earlier prophet names Gog, so God means the prophets who foresaw a final assault on His people and His victory over the nations (for example Joel 3; Isa 66:15–16; Zech 14). Wright, in Guzik: "we must somehow link this chapter with Joel 3 and Zechariah 14."

God's fury (vv18–23)

God's anger rises "in My zeal" — jealous love for His people and His name. Then come earthquake, terror throughout creation, panic in Gog's ranks, disease, blood, and judgment from the sky like Sodom's (Gen 19:24). Wright, in Guzik: "The invaders are destroyed by earthquake (cf. Zechariah 14:4-5), by violent distrust of one another." Alexander, in Guzik: Gog's armies "would become so confused that they would slay one another." Poole, in Guzik: "Each single was dreadful, but all meet in the destruction of Gog." Israel never fires a shot. The purpose is stated three ways: God will magnify, sanctify and make Himself known (v23).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Gog — *Gog* (H1463):** the leader of the final northern coalition.
- **Magog — *Magog* (H4031):** a son of Japheth; his land and people.
- **Rosh / chief — *roʾsh* (H7218):** head, chief; read by some as a place name.
- **Meshech — *Meshech* (H4902):** a son of Japheth; a people of Asia Minor.
- **Tubal — *Tubal* (H8422):** a son of Japheth; a people of Asia Minor.
- **hooks — *chach* (H2397):** a hook or ring put in the nose or jaw.
- **latter — *ʾacharith* (H319):** the end, the latter part, the last days.
- **securely — *betach* (H983):** safety, security, confidence.
- **unwalled villages — *perazah* (H6519):** open country, a village without walls.
- **spoil — *shalal* (H7998):** booty, plunder.
- **center — *tabbur* (H2872):** the navel; the highest or central point.
- **fury — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, burning anger.
- **zeal — *qinʾah* (H7068):** jealousy, zeal, ardor.
- **earthquake — *raʿash* (H7494):** a shaking, quaking.
- **brimstone — *gophrith* (H1614):** sulfur, brimstone.
- **sanctified — *qadash* (H6942):** to be set apart, shown to be holy.

Cross-references

Gen 10:2–3; Gen 19:24; Ps 2:1–6; Ps 46:1–10; Isa 37:29; Isa 66:15–16; Ezek 37:26–28; Ezek 39:1–29; Dan 11:40–45; Joel 3:1–2, 9–16; Zech 12:2–9; Zech 14:2–5; Matt 24:21–22; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 16:14–21; Rev 19:17–21; Rev 20:7–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

Command to obey — "Be prepared"

(v7). God said it to Gog with irony — prepare all you like, you're walking into My hands. But the word cuts the other way for me. The attack came when Israel was "living securely." The men I disciple know this: relapse rarely comes in the crisis; it comes when life finally settles down. I'll stay watchful in the good seasons.

Sin to confess — devising an evil plan

Gog looked at people who couldn't defend themselves and saw something to take (vv10–12). I confess the times I've sized people up for what I could get — time, money, comfort, approval. And I confess standing by like the merchants of Tarshish, not starting the wrong but glad to profit from it (v13).

Warning to heed — no one fights God and wins

Gog had the biggest army in the world and never got a battle. Earthquake, his own men's swords and fire from heaven did the work (vv19–22). Whatever proud plan I'm carrying, God can turn it on my own head. Better to surrender now than be hooked by the jaw later.

Promise to trust — "I am against you, O Gog"

(v3). God fights for His people. For a man in a prison yard surrounded by threats, for a man in recovery who feels the old life closing in from every side like "a cloud covering the land" — the enemy is real, but God's hook is in his jaw. The battle belongs to the LORD.

Example to follow — rest in God's sovereignty

Israel did nothing in this chapter but live in the land God gave them. I don't have to understand every detail of the end times to trust the God who holds them. Guzik admits the timing isn't clear; I can be humble about the details and certain about the outcome.

Worship

The Lord GOD rules the nations. He leads armies with hooks, shakes the earth by His presence, and defends His people in His zeal. He will magnify Himself and sanctify Himself, and every nation will know that He is the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You are sovereign over every army and every enemy. Keep me watchful when life is calm and humble when I think I'm strong. Guard the men I walk with from the enemy that comes like a storm. Turn back every plan against them. Be glorified in our weakness, and make Yourself known through what You do for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.