

## **A Spoil and a Prey**

By [Al Gist](#)

Ezekiel 38-39 is one of the most amazing prophecies found in the Bible. It describes an attempted surprise attack by Russia and a coalition of Muslim nations against Israel in which God intervenes and destroys 5/6ths of the invading forces, leaving only the 1/6 to return home and tell the story of their defeat by the God of Israel. Such a war has never happened, so we must see it as yet a future event.

For a number of reasons, this prophecy of the **“Battle of Gog of Magog”** is getting a lot of attention these days from Bible prophecy scholars. First of all, even though there is a lot of debate about exactly WHEN it will take place, most place its occurrence either just before or in the first half of the Tribulation. So obviously, any signs that seem to be pointing to the nearness of this event will also indicate the nearness of the Tribulation and more importantly, the Rapture of the Church, which we believe will happen BEFORE the Tribulation.

Of course, no one wants to see war and bloodshed. And, certainly none of the evangelical Christians want to see any kind of an attack on Israel. But understanding God’s foreordained outcome of this event as we do (His supernatural protection of the Jews), and seeing it as another sign that speaks of our Lord’s imminent return, gives us a great deal of excitement. So, please don’t think of those of us who watch for these kinds of signs of the last days as “warmongers”. We are simply “realists”, knowing that all that God has prophesied in His Word WILL come to pass, including the wars and other sad events like widespread immorality, apostasy, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. We desire NONE of these things. But we are realistic in recognizing that they are all part of the human story in these last days of the Church Age.

Another reason there presently seems to be so much attention on this particular prophecy is because it is easy to see how the world stage is being set for it NOW. Allow me to list a few of those “stage setting” developments:

**(1) Russia-Iran Ties** - Iran (the Bible calls it Persia) is the first country listed in the Muslim coalition of nations that will join Russia in the attack on Israel (Ezek. 38:5). But only in recent years has the political ties between Russia and Iran become so strong. Russia has helped Iran build its first nuclear power plant and has also sold them a lot of military weaponry, including just recently a very hi-tech anti-aircraft missile system to protect it. The previous president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, made a first ever state visit to Iran just a few years ago and the act has been reciprocated several times by Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Almost every economic sanction implemented by the UN security council against Iran in an attempt to stop their nuclear program has been vetoed by Russia.

**(2) Russia-Libya Ties** - Another nation listed in the Muslim coalition that will attack Israel is Libya (Ezek. 38:5). The following article dated 2/11/08 tells the tale:

[Libya, Russia Sign Civil Nuclear Deal](#)

“Libya and Russia signed a civil nuclear cooperation deal Saturday evening paving the way for stronger relations between the two countries in various fields...”

We haven’t heard much from Mr. Moammar Kadaffi in recent years, but it appears that he is now renewing his old friendship with the Russians.

**(3) Russia-Turkey Ties** - Turkey, referred to with the ancient names of

“Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah” (Ezek. 38:3,6) is another one of the Magog coalition nations. Since its establishment as a republic in 1923, Turkey has developed a strong tradition of secularism. In other words, they have been ruled by a secular (non-religious) government that has allowed them to have strong ties with western nations, including the USA. Also, even though it has not yet been granted, in 2005 they began negotiations for membership into the European Union, having had an associate membership since 1963. So, with such strong ties to the west, we often wondered how it would be possible for Turkey to end up in the Magog coalition made up of eastern Muslim nations and Russia.

In July, 2007, for the first time in post-Ottoman history, an Islamic-based party won 46% of the votes in the parliamentary elections and led to the inauguration of a strictly Muslim Prime Minister, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. So, for the first time since its founding in 1923, the government of Turkey is being controlled by Muslim politicians who lean strongly in favor of a political system based on Islamic law. Turkey is now rapidly turning from its historically western relations to a more eastern direction, including stronger ties with Iran.

**(4) The Muslim Alliance** - It is interesting to note that **ALL** of the coalition nations listed in Ezekiel 38 who join with Russia are **MUSLIM** nations. They are Iran, the central Asian, ex-Soviet block nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, etc. (I call them the “stan” nations.), Turkey, Sudan, and Libya. Although we are not positive about it, some other nations that MAY be included with these are the north African nations of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco and the Caucasus nations of Georgia, and Azerbaijan. With the hatred that the Muslims have for Israel, it is easy to see how these nations would join the fight to exterminate the Jews.

**(5) The Roki Tunnel** - In July, 2008, Russia attacked its tiny neighbor to the south, the nation of Georgia. Supposedly, they were doing so to protect the

people of South Ossetia, a province of Georgia sandwiched between Georgia and Russia. After an EU negotiated truce, Russia withdrew its forces, leaving behind only what they called a “peace keeping force”. The truth is, Russia still controls South Ossetia.

Georgia is situated in the Caucasus mountain range which sits like a east-west wall between the Caspian and Black seas. The only passageway through these rugged mountains is the Soviet built Roki Tunnel that connects southern Russia with South Ossetia in Georgia. Now that Russia controls this tunnel, they have the ability to move their military southward through it into Georgia, then into Turkey, then into Syria, and then into Israel. In other words, Russia now has a clear corridor southward all the way to Israel. (By the way, Syria, even though it’s not one of the Magog coalition nations has strong ties with Russia and is a long-standing, bitter enemy of Israel.) Ezekiel 38:15 says about Gog of Magog,

“And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee...”

**(6) A Spoil And a Prey** - In just the last few weeks, a news event occurred in Israel that is, without a doubt, one of the biggest since its founding in 1948! And yet, it has gone almost completely unreported by the American media.

Just off the coast of Haifa, Noble Energy announced in January, its discovery of three massive natural gas fields that are reported to be one of the biggest gas deposits in the world. Yitzhak Tshuva, one of the owners of the well said,

“I have no doubt that this is a holiday for the State of Israel. We will no longer be dependent [on foreign sources] for our gas, and will even export. **We are dealing with inconceivably huge quantities...**”

Then, just a few weeks later, Arutz Sheva, an Israeli newspaper reported,

**Huge Israeli Gas Find Even More Massive Than Expected**

“A massive natural gas find off the coast of Haifa which was lauded as capable of fueling all of Israel for 15 years is actually **more than 60 percent larger than originally estimated...**” (emphasis mine).

Ezekiel 38:11-12 says,

“And thou [Gog of Magog, Russia] shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages... to take a spoil and to take a prey...”

For years, Bible scholars have speculated about what kind of “spoil” in Israel would motivate Russia to attempt this attack. Some said that Israel would eventually make a huge oil discovery. And even though that has not happened, hopes are high now that such an oil deposit is located near this gas discovery. Others speculated that the spoil would be the millions of dollars of minerals found in the Dead Sea. But NOW.... We are wondering... could it be this massive natural gas field? Well, to make that seem a little more feasible, consider what has been happening in Europe this winter.

In the days of the Soviet Union, a large pipeline was built from Russia to its soviet neighbor, Ukraine, to supply them with natural gas. But since the collapse of the USSR and Ukraine’s move to independence, relations have not been so great between Russia and Ukraine. However, Ukraine has continued to be dependent on Russia for its gas. And not only Ukraine, because that same pipeline system passes through Ukraine to supply gas to several other European countries, including Germany. In fact, Germany gets about one third of its gas from Russia, 80% of which comes via the Ukraine pipeline.

Like the United States and many other countries, Russia has been suffering severely with its economy. So, this winter (Jan. 09), just when Ukraine was most dependent on the Russian gas to heat its buildings, Russia decided to increase the price on its exported gas to Ukraine from \$200 per 1000 cubic meters to \$418 to generate some much needed cash inflow into its economy. But Ukraine balked and refused to pay the higher price, so Russia simply cut off the supply. This, of course, also cut off the supply to the other European nations that were dependent on the Russian gas coming through the Ukraine pipeline.

Eventually, the EU convinced Russia to restart the supply. But it was stated

publicly by both sides that further stoppages are still possible.

Now, enter into this picture Israel... with all of this natural gas, some of which she intends to EXPORT. It's very likely that if Israel does export some of this new-found gas, it will be to Europe... something that Russia may not like very much. So, even though we are still speculating on the "spoil", it certainly **could be** Israel's new gas fields.

Now you can see why there is such interest these days in the Ezekiel 38-39 prophecy! **The stage is certainly being set for its fulfillment!**