

Timing Gog-Magog: Before the Tribulation

By [Nathan Jones](#)

In this series of articles called [Timing Gog-Magog](#), we are looking to the Bible to discover when the great battle the prophet Ezekiel described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is going to take place.

To recap, the Gog-Magog Battle involves a coalition of nations led by a ruler from the ancient lands once covered by the former Soviet Union and modern-day Turkey which consist of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Libya, and possibly Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Algeria and Tunisia. They are united in their fervor to loot and destroy Israel. The invading coalition comes to the mountains of Israel to discover not an easy victory, but a setup by God who utterly destroys them with violent weather. The supernatural defeat of the invading hordes reveals to the world that God is real and indeed protects the nation of Israel. Israel spends the next seven months burying the dead invaders and seven years expending the leftover fuel and weapons.

We have looked upon the General Timing Clues given by Ezekiel that demonstrate that the Gog-Magog Battle is yet future. The first clue was the use of the terms "*latter years*" (Ezek. 38:8) and "*last days*" (Ezek. 38:16). The second clue is the historical record that shows no such battle in Israel's history has fit the description. The third is that Israel is a nation once more. The fourth is that the nations that comprise the invading coalition are finally united today by their hatred of the Jews. And, the fifth clue from Ezekiel 38:11 is that Israel has to be living unsuspecting and in peace.

We'll continue with the study of the views that place the Gog-Magog Battle before the Tribulation, looking at what each view believes are their pros and cons. The following two views lie heavily on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture viewpoint.

We'll continue utilizing what I believe is the best written book on the subject — *Northern Storm Rising* by Dr. Ron Rhodes.

Before Both the Rapture and the Tribulation

Of the 687 respondents who voted on our ["When will the Gog-Magog Battle take place?" poll](#), 101 (14%) voted "Before the Rapture" and 245 (35%) voted "Before the Tribulation." Combining those views would be the "Before Both the Rapture and the Tribulation" view.

Supporters of this view are Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins of the *Left Behind* series, and Joel Rosenberg who wrote the currently popular *Epicenter*.

Pros:

- 1) Israel using seven years to utilize the weaponry of the invaders for fuel (Ezek. 39:9) matches the seven years "Seventieth Week of Daniel" (Dan. 9:27) that the Tribulation will last. The "sevens" compliment each other in a timeline.
- 2) With the Muslim world in ruins and their faith in Allah shattered from their defeat in the Gog-Magog Battle, the Muslim world would no longer be an impediment for the Jews to rebuild the Temple which the Antichrist will later desecrate (Dan. 9:27 and 2 Thess. 2:3-4).
- 3) God declaring Himself to the world is in character with His willingness to warn the world before impending judgment. A great multitude could come to God before the Rapture due to God revealing Himself more fully by His victory in the Gog-Magog Battle, and so more would be included in the Rapture and avoid the wrath of the Tribulation.

Cons:

1) Placing the invasion before the Rapture would contradict the first general time clue of the terms "*latter years*" (Ezek. 38:8) and "*last days*" (Ezek. 38:16). Old Testament prophets like Ezekiel used these terms to indicate a specific "time of Jacob's trouble" for Israel, which is the Tribulation.

2) Placing the invasion before the Rapture would contradict the fifth general time clue which tells of Israel living in unsuspecting peace before the attack. Unless the peace is derived from a Psalm 83 scenario where Israel has subjugated its surrounding neighbors, true peace may only come to Israel by the peace covenant made between the Antichrist and Israel (Dan. 9:27). That covenant starts the seven year countdown of the Tribulation.

3) The New Testament teaching that no prophetic event has to occur before the Rapture, called "imminency." Imminency precludes such prophetic events like the Gog-Magog Battle from happening before the Rapture.

4) The removal of the "Restrainer" (2 Thes. 2:6-8) causes the Antichrist to emerge. Because the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), the Rapture has to happen before the Antichrist can come on the scene and provide the peace Israel's looking for.

5) A timing problem exists for Israel in that midway through the Tribulation the Antichrist's abomination in the newly built Temple will cause the Jews to flee into the desert (Matt. 24:15-16). The Jews will no longer have access to the Gog-Magog invader's weapons to burn. And so, the seven years of Tribulation can no longer match the seven years of burning the weapons.

After the Rapture but Before the Tribulation

A popular supporter of this view is Dr. Tommy Ice of the Pre-Trib Research Center.

Pros:

1) With the world in chaos from a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, Russia and its Muslim coalition could seize the opportunity to attack a friendless Israel.

2) With the Muslim Gog-Magog nations out of the picture just before the Tribulation, the Antichrist would have an easier time of making good on a peace covenant with Israel.

3) With the more christianized nations in tatters due to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture and the Islamic world in ruins from the Gog-Magog Battle, the remaining European world power could fill the vacuum in the Middle East. By making a peace treaty with Israel and easily conquering the lands of the once Middle-Eastern Muslim countries, the Roman Empire could truly be revived once more. The only remaining world powers would be East-Asian, and the Bible records their continued existence (though under the control of the Antichrist) until the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 16:12).

4) With the Muslim world in tatters, Israel would have no resistance to their rebuilding the Temple.

5) The Rapture does not start the Tribulation, but rather the signing of the peace covenant between the Antichrist and Israel does (Dan. 9:27). This fact would allow a 3 1/2 year or more time delay between the Rapture and the Tribulation, giving Israel the full seven years to burn the weapons from the Gog-Magog Battle before being forced to flee into the desert (Matt. 24:15-16).

Cons:

1) Placing the invasion before the Tribulation would contradict the first general time clue of the terms "*latter years*" (Ezek. 38:8) and "*last days*" (Ezek. 38:16).

Old Testament prophets like Ezekiel used these terms to indicate the specific "time of Jacob's trouble" for Israel, which is the Tribulation.

2) The peaceful precondition of Ezekiel 38:11 in which Israel has to be living unsuspecting and in peace before the Gog-Magog Battle may only occur because of the peace covenant with the Antichrist, who can't be revealed until the Tribulation begins.

The next article in this "Timing Gog-Magog" series will look at views that place the timing of the Gog-Magog Battle during the Tribulation.