

## **The Middle East and Ezekiel 38**

### **Islamic Summit Rocked as Iraq Slams Kuwait**

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*By Ghaida Ghantous*

DOHA, Qatar (Reuters) - Bitter enmity between Iraq and Kuwait erupted in a vitriolic name-calling match on Wednesday at an Islamic summit meant to unite the voices of the world's one billion Muslims against war.

In a clash caught on live television before the Qatar state broadcaster shut down transmission, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's top aide Izzat Ibrahim departed from his text to zero in on the Kuwaitis sitting across the conference chamber.

"Shut up you minion, you (U.S.) agent, you monkey. You are addressing Iraq," Ibrahim said. "You are insolent. You are a traitor to the Islamic nation," he spat out as Qatar's Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani tried to shut him up.

A Kuwaiti delegate responded that the insults were "the words of an infidel and a charlatan," as the two sides shouted and gesticulated angrily at each other...

Muslim leaders had hoped the emergency summit of the 56-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would send a clear message opposing an attack on Iraq...

The written statement was not read on Qatar television, which only broadcast general closing remarks. "Islamic countries would not participate in any military action which targets the security and territorial integrity of Iraq or any Muslim country," the statement said.

In fact, several Gulf states plus OIC member Turkey host U.S. forces and bases which would be used in an attack on Iraq. [Notice how Turkey changed her mind when a new government was installed- as we shall see, this is very interesting prophetically!]

#### **RELIGION UNDER THREAT, SAYS IRAQ**

Ibrahim, second-in-command of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council told the members of the world's largest Islamic grouping that they were all at risk from "the reckless and foolish United States" and said Baghdad expected "concrete steps to support Iraq against this tyrant."

"There should be a point-blank refusal of any aggression and no help should be given to this enemy... We hope Islamic nations can face the challenge that is before them," he said.

"In the face of this bitter reality, we must rally our forces and the foremost condition for our success is joint Muslim action," Ibrahim added. "We must not allow anyone to break our ranks or religion will be wiped out and our territories placed under foreign control." Iraqi Foreign Minister Najib Sabri again rebuffed proposals that Saddam go into exile to avert war, telling reporters it was President Bush who should "step down and leave other people to live in peace."

...OIC Secretary General Abdelouahed Belkeziz said the Islamic nation "with all its political weight, power and resources" could make its voice heard if it was united and sincere...

"I think the Arab and Islamic world is divided because we do not know what we want to do," Qatar Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani told the summit's closing news conference. "We do not speak with a single voice."

## **Some of my own thoughts on this news article**

*By: Mike Porter  
Written in: 2007*

I found this article very interesting, but not surprising. Note some of the phrases that pop up repeatedly from the Muslim leaders (they aren't a coincidence): "the Islamic nation"- not "an Islamic nation"- the goal of Islam is 1 nation, 1 world under Islam. There's a phrase that is spoken in some Mosques on Friday, their holy day, "Today is Friday, tomorrow, Saturday, and then Sunday." The phrase means this: Today, Islam reigns here, tomorrow we destroy the Jews, and then the Christians. One day many will unite in an all-out war against Israel...

"infidel"- a term straight from the Qur'an. "infidel" is one who isn't a true believer in Islam. All Christians and Jews are "infidels". Isn't it interesting they would call each other "infidels" in this article- due to their current split over the Iraq situation? "56-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference"- repeatedly the liberal Western press likes to isolate Muslim issues, as if only Al Qaida or the Taliban are the issue. This Islamic conference showed that though the Muslim world in the Middle East is only partially unified, you can be sure that their religion binds them together in a powerful way. It wouldn't take a great deal to get them united- they have a common hatred toward Israel.

Notice their desire for unity: "Islamic countries would not participate in any military action which targets the security and territorial integrity of Iraq or any Muslim country." This isn't the same kind of weak unity that exists among Western nations. It is a power-keg, waiting to explode.

### **Why Study Prophecy?**

I've met some Christians that basically ignore prophecies on end times, stating that it isn't important to how they live their daily life. The Bible is filled with prophecy, yet these people ignore these passages or allegorize them. To them, all that matters is that one day they will escape hell and enter heaven. There are 9400 verses in the Bible on prophecy, and every single prophecy has come true or is in the process of coming true in these latter days. The Lord gave us many verses on the tribulations of the end times for a reason. Just as we have seen thousands of prophecies literally come true already in the Bible, so also will end times prophecies literally come true as well. God assures us that we do need to get a glimpse into the future, for in doing so our faith will be strengthened and

our hope will grow stronger as we cling to God in the midst of troublesome times. The Lord promised that, "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." (*Amos 3:7*) There is no major event in history that the Lord does not prophecy about. Every major event of history is His story. He knows the beginning from the end. How do we know that the Bible is the truth and all other religions are false? The Lord gave us a bold litmus test: "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." (*Deut 18:21-22*) The Lord's boast: "100% of My prophecies come true. Any prophet who claims to be of the truth, but has any prophecies that haven't come true, he is not My prophet! Ignore his teachings!"

Prophecy is one of the keys to knowing the Bible is the truth- the only truth: "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (*Isa. 46:9-10*). "God is not a man, that He should lie...has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (*Num 23:19*) We can take great confidence that the Bible is the inerrant word of God because every prophecy has come true. God promises blessings to those who take prophecy to heart, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it: for the time is near." (*Rev. 1:3, cf. Rev 22:7, 2 Tim. 4:8, 1 Jn 3:2, Heb 9:27, Phil 1:21*)

## **Prophecies in Ezekiel**

The Bible in *Ezekiel chapters 38-39* (590 B.C.) prophesied about a war in the end times between Israel and many nations gathered against her who are eager due to their greed and hatred of Israel to plunder her. *Please read Ezekiel chapters 36-39 for the context of this writing.*

I am persuaded that the current events in the Middle East are like a massive jigsaw puzzle gradually coming together. One day soon the last pieces will be set in place explosively before the world's eyes.

In *Ezekiel chapter 37* we read of the nation of Israel being resurrected from the dead after many years of the Jews being "dead" on the world scene, scattered among the nations. Israel is pictured as a bunch of dead bones in a valley. The Lord asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live? Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord...I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life...then you will know that I am the Lord.'" (*37:4-6*)

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land." (*37:12-14*)

"I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms." (37:21-22, cf. Lev 26:3-37, Deut 4:29, 30:1-8, Jer 16:14-15, 23:7-8, 30:8-31:37, 33:25-36, Ezek 28:25-26) This prophecy has been partially fulfilled in 1948 with the birth of Israel as a nation and the recapturing of Jerusalem at the 6-day war in 1967. It was 2553 years prior to this (586 B.C.) that the Babylonians invaded Israel and most the Jews were exiled to Babylon. The Hebrew Scriptures proclaim why they were exiled: they were in gross rebellion to the Lord.

One generation after the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah and crucified Him, once again they were invaded- this time by the Roman General Titus in 70 A.D., in fulfillment of the prophecies of Jesus and the Old Testament prophets (*Zech 11:1-17, 12:1-13:2, Isa 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12, Lu 19:43-44, 21:20-24*). Over 1.5 Million Jews were killed and the rest were scattered all over the earth. Any other peoples under such circumstances would have disintegrated, intermarried and eventually lost their culture, but not the Jews! There never has been anything like the nation and people of Israel, has there? A nation that was destroyed, its people scattered all over the earth, and then regathered into a nation 1900 years later- is that not a miracle? This prophecy continues this day to be fulfilled as one million Jews a decade stream into Israel. Israel has been born again as a political power, but once again Israel will be born again as a spiritual power- it's coming soon...

Ezekiel went on to prophesy: "My servant David [the Messiah, God become man, whom we Christians know is Jesus Christ, born of the lineage of David] will be King over them, and they will all have one Shepherd. They will follow My laws and be careful to keep My decrees...and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when My sanctuary is among them forever." (*Ezekiel 37:24-28*) Thus there will be a spiritual revival in Israel when she recognizes her true King and follows Him!

What is the Lord's sanctuary among Israel? The temple- but wait, there is no temple now- it was destroyed in 70 A.D., one generation after Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead- all that is left of the temple sits right next to and underneath the mosque in Jerusalem, one of the three holiest sites of the Muslim religion! Before this glorious kingdom of the Messiah reigns over all the earth, the Bible says that there will be a time of Great Tribulation and a war of Armageddon in which all the nations assemble against Israel; however, Ezekiel describes an amazing war that will take place before the battle of Armageddon over 3 ½ years prior to Armageddon. Is this the next world war? Ezekiel Chapter 38 lays out all the details...

*"The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Rosh, [Meshech] and Tubal; prophesy against him and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out [summon you, as in a court summons that must be answered] with your whole army-your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops- the many nations with you.'" (38:1-6)*

The most difficult part of this prophecy is identifying the nations. Who are these nations? The names were names very familiar to people during Ezekiel's day, but not familiar today. An additional problem is that these peoples weren't stationary- many have migrated since the writing of Ezekiel 2600 years ago. Genesis 10 records a genealogical table of 70 sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and great-great grandsons of Noah from whom all nations came (2400-2300 B.C.), and these are the nations (tribes) that Ezekiel called out. Amazingly, secular anthropologists have been slow to pick up on this vital resource for origins. Interestingly, news magazines such as Time and Life have stated that all languages came from one language 5000-10000 years ago (Interesting- that matches the Biblical account of *Genesis 10-11*) Secular Anthropologists have made statements that all mankind descended from one "Eve" in East Africa (you're getting warmer- it wasn't East Africa, it was Mesopotamia (present day Iraq), and it wasn't that long ago!)

We read in *Genesis 10*, "Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem [from whom the Jews, Arabs, Persians and others came from], Ham [which means "dark", from whom the Africans, Chinese, North and South American Indians and others came from], and Japheth [from whom all Indo-European nationalities came from]. The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah..." Each of these 70 tribes listed in Genesis have been traced down- some are not disputed and others are disputed as to their location in the day of Ezekiel and their current locations. I will focus on finding out who these tribes are (and the present day nations that they represent) that are called out in Ezekiel 38. I've reviewed several sources:

1. Commentary of John MacArthur, 1997, MacArthur Study Bible
2. Neal Lipkin, teacher of a 153 hour course on the end times (and Messianic Jew) who taught at Horizon Christian Fellowship on Ezekiel 38 on 3/19/03 and 3/26/03.
3. Mark Hitchcock, expert in Bible Prophecy, writer of many books on prophecy including, "The Coming Islamic Invasion of Israel", written in 2002 about *Ezekiel 38*.
4. Osterholm's "Table of Nations"- a researcher into *Genesis 10* and the Table of Nations. See [www.osterholm.info](http://www.osterholm.info)

5. Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel Pastor and Bible College Teacher.

6. Finally, Bill Cooper has written books on the Table of Nations which includes early genealogies from numerous European pagan kings (before Christianity came to these tribes) that go back all the way to Japheth, Noah's son from whom all Europeans descended from. See [www.ldolphin.org/cooper](http://www.ldolphin.org/cooper).

For further information on genealogies of the nations, do an Internet search on "Table of Nations"- there are thousands of entries into this fascinating field of Biblical Anthropology.

### **The Nations That Will Attack Israel in *Ezekiel 38***

1. Gog (*mentioned in the Bible in 1 Chron 5:4, Ezek 38:2,3,14,16,18,21, 39:1,11, Rev 20:8*) Gog is mentioned the most of all names in *chapter 38* and is actually a person, not a nation or a place. MacArthur noted, "This name is found in *1 Chr. 5:4*. The LXX [the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, completed 210-180 B.C.] used "Gog" to render names such as Agag (*Num 24:7*) and Og (*Deut 3:1*), possibly showing that though it was a proper name, it came to be used as a general title for an enemy of God's people. "Gog" most likely carries the idea "high" or "supreme one," based on the comparison in *Num 24:7*. It refers to a person, described as a "prince" from the land of Magog..." The other five sources agree. He is of the land of Magog and is prince over Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.

2. Magog (*Gen 10:2, 1 Chr 1:5, Eze 38:2, 39:6, Rev 20:8*)

According to Hitchcock, the ancient Jewish historian Josephus wrote that Magog founded the Magogians, who were called the Scythians by the Greeks. They were a nomadic tribe who inhabited Central Asia (nations that are what used to be the Southern provinces of the Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Southern Russia, etc.) (most of these nations are Islamic and some, like Tajikistan, are controlled by extremist Islamic governments). Lipkin identified Magog as Southern Russia south of Moscow.

Osterholm included the following peoples as descendants of Magog: Russians, Belorussians, Siberians, Helvetians, Milesians, Caledonians, Galatians, Picts, Irish, Scots, Welsh, and French.

3. Rosh- (*Ezekiel 38:2, Gen 46:21*) Rosh is believed to be Russia, where the name Russia means "land of the Rus." In the 10th century the Byzantine writers mentioned the Russians under the name Ros, dwelling to the north of Taurus...as dwelling on the river Rha (Wolga). The Hebrew word "Rosh" today means Russia. These six sources are in agreement that Rosh is Russia.

4. Meshech and Tubal are usually mentioned together in the Bible and these people appear to have migrated from Turkey to Georgia and then north to Eastern Russia. (*Gen 10:2, 23, 1 Chr 1:5, 17, Ps 120:5, Isa 66:19, Ezek 27:13, 32:26, 38:2,3, 39:1*): MacArthur and Hitchcock teach that both of these match up with the Mushku and Tubali

or Tubal peoples in Asia Minor of ancient times. Chuck Smith and Neil Lipkin state that Meshesh is the ancient name for Moscow and Tubal is the ancient name of Tobolsk, a city just West of the Ural Mountains. Osterholm taught that the following peoples descended from Tubal: Georgians, Albanians and other related groups, and the following peoples descended from Meshesh: Muscovites, Slovenians, Poles, Finns, Lapps, Czecks, Croatians, Slovaks, Yugoslavians, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Hungarians and other Slavic groups.

Bill Cooper noted: "The descendants of Tubal first come to our notice in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, King of Assyria c.1100 BC. He refers to them as the Tabali, whose original area of settlement (that is, Tubal) was adjacent to that of Tegarama (that is, Togarmah, in present-day Turkey). Subsequently, Josephus was to record the name of Tubal's descendants as the Thobelites, who later became the Iberes. Their land, in Josephus' day, was known to the Romans as Iberia, and covered what is today the [country] of Georgia. From here, having crossed the Caucasus mountain range, this people migrated due north-east, where they gave their old tribal name to the river Tobol, and hence to the modern-day city of Tobolsk."

Regarding Meshech, Bill Cooper wrote, "The descendants of Meshech are often spoken of in close association with those of Tubal, the Assyrians, for example, mentioning the Tabal and Musku, whilst Herodotus also writes of the Tiberanoi and Moschoi. A very much earlier reference to the posterity of Meshech is an inscription of c.1200 BC which tells us how they overran the Hittite kingdom; and an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I c. 1100 BC, who tells us that, in his own day, the Muska-a-ia were able to put an army of 20,000 men into the field. The activities of this same people are also subsequently reported by Tukul-ti-ninurta II, Ashurnasirpal II, Sargon and Shalmaneser III, who refers to them as the Mushki. Josephus knew them as the Mosocheni (LXX. Mosoch), whom, he says were known in his days as the Cappadocians. He also points out that their chief city was known to his contemporaries as Mazaca, which was also once the name of the entire nation.

Some later writers have pointed out that the name is preserved in the old tribal name of the Muscovites of Russia, who gave their name in turn to the city of Moscow. Such an identification, it must be said, is not at all unlikely, especially when we consider the subsequent history of their historically close associates, the people of Tubal, and the fact that the name of the city is still today rendered in the Russian tongue as Moskva - an exceedingly close, not to say identical relationship to the Assyrian Musku."

5. Beth Togarmah (or house of Togarmah) (*Gen 10:3, 1 Chr 1:6*) *Genesis 10:3* lists Togarmah as a son of Magog. Togarmah is Turkey according to most accounts. Chuck Smith stated that Togarmah includes the Balkan states of Turkey, Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania, etc. Bill Cooper noted, "His earliest descendants settled in Armenia. We know from certain Hittite documents that in the fourteenth century BC, the then region of Tegarama, which lay between Carchemish and Haran, was sacked by 'the enemy from Isuwa, (that is from beyond the Euphrates).' Both Sargon II and Sennacherib mention the city of Tilgarimanu, the capital of Kammanu which lay on the border of Tubal. This city

lay some 30 miles due east of present-day Malatya, and was not finally destroyed until the year 695 BC. It is after this destruction of Tilgarimanu that the descendants of Togarmah become lost in obscurity. In line with the Assyrian policy of that time, the survivors would have been uprooted and transported to other lands within the Assyrian empire.

6. Persia is present day Iran. Iran was called Persia until the '40s. The Persians were descendants of Abraham thru his wife Keturah (*Gen 25:1,4, 1 Chr 1:32,33*) and thus were "relatives" of the Jews along with the Arabs.

7. Cush, which means "black," is south of Egypt. Several English Bible translations interpret "Cush" as "Ethiopia." Lipkin and MacArthur take this viewpoint while Hitchcock sees Cush as Ethiopia's neighbor Sudan. Osterholm noted that most of Africa (other than Northern Africa) descended from Cush and that several African tribes actually trace themselves back traditionally to Ham, the father of Cush. Bill Cooper wrote, "Josephus writes: '...time has not at all hurt the name of Chus (i.e. Cush); for the Ethiopians over whom he reigned, are even at this day both by themselves and by all men in Asia, called Chusites'. The name of Cush is preserved in Egypt's hieroglyphic inscriptions as Kush, the name referring to the country that lay between the second and third cataracts of the Nile. This same land was later known as Nubia. Additional confirmation of this location is given in an inscription of Esarhaddon of Assyria (681-668 BC), who tells us that he made himself king of 'Musur, Patorisi, and Cush'."

8. Put is west of Egypt, and all of my sources identify it as Libya. Osterholm noted that the descendants of Put included Libyans, Cyrenacians, Tunisians, Berbers, Somalians and other North Africans. Bill Cooper wrote, "The country in which the descendants of Put settled is well known to us from Egyptian records, which render the name as Put or Punt. It is always spoken of as closely associated with Egypt, and its close proximity to that nation is confirmed by an inscription from the archives of Darius I the Great, King of Persia from 522-486BC. Here the land of Puta is shown as lying in the proximity of Cyrenaica, that is on the North African coast to the west of Egypt. This same land was also known as Puta to the Babylonians, and as Putiya in the Old Persian inscriptions."

9. Gomer: There are a variety of opinions about Gomer- one thing is sure from *Ezekiel 38*: they're far north of Israel. Neal Lipkin and Chuck Smith taught that Gomer is portions of Eastern Europe bordering Russia, such as Ukraine, Romania, Poland and possibly included part of Germany. MacArthur stated that the area is Armenia, which was known as Cappadocia (Western Turkey). MacArthur and Hitchcock based their information on where these peoples were at the time of Ezekiel. Osterholm noted that descendants of Gomer include many of the European peoples in northern and central Europe, including Germans, French, Scandinavians, English, Swiss, Austrians, Dutch, Belgians... Bill Cooper noted that Gomer "Was the father of the Cimmerians who settled originally on the shores of the Caspian Sea. They were later driven away by the Elamites. At the time of the Babylonian Exile, the Jews knew them as the tribes that dwell in the 'uttermost parts of the north' (*Ezekiel 38:6*). The Assyrians referred to them as the Gimirraya. Esarhaddon (681-668 BC) records his defeat of the Gimirrai; whilst

Ashurbanipal tells us of the Cimmerian invasion of Lydia, in the days of the Lydian king Gugu around the year 660 BC.”

10. The last phrase in *Ezekiel 38:6* tells us there are other nations, "the many nations with you." We notice that the nations described earlier are none of Israel's direct neighbors. God listed for us the nations furthest away and then added, "many nations with you." We can only conjecture which Islamic nations surrounding Israel would join in with the rest of these nations.

11. Israel's three archenemies throughout the centuries are missing from this list of nations in *Ezekiel 38*. The fact of their absence speaks loudly for prophecy:

a. Egypt- Egypt was often in war with Israel in ancient times and engaged in war with Israel four times from 1948-1971. In 1978 at Camp David Egypt made a peace treaty with Israel under Anwar Sadat, and has been at peace with them since.

b. Syria: The Syrians were the ancient Assyrians, who destroyed the Northern ten tribes of Israel and scattered them all over the globe in 722 B.C. In modern times, Syria has been Israel's most dangerous enemy. When Bill Clinton was president, he visited Damascus, the capital of Syria and talked with then President Hafez Assad who boasted to him that Damascus was the only ancient city that had never been razed- and he was right. The Lord prophesied about Damascus, "The burden against Damascus. 'Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap." (*Isaiah 17:1, see also Amos 1:3-5*) This has not yet happened. The Soviet Union made a treaty with Syria in the '70s that if Syria was in a war with Israel, that the Soviet Union would join in with her. This treaty was renewed by Syria and Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Syria is a nation that is very dangerous to Israel. They have Surface to Air (SAR) missiles pointed at Israel that could wreak much destruction on her. Many of these missiles are located in and around Damascus. The prophecy that Isaiah wrote about Damascus would have to be fulfilled before the war in *Ezekiel 38*, otherwise Syria would be one of the nations joining in on the attack of *Ezekiel 38*. One can conjecture how Syria will be taken out of the picture. Lately we've seen increased tension between the U.S. and Syria for supplying weapons to Iraq (on the news 3/26/03). One can also conjecture that if Israel and Syria ever get into a war, that Israel will first knock out Syria's SAR missiles, thus turning Damascus into a heap of rubble. Since Russia is in an alliance with Syria, this could be what draws Russia and her allies into war with Israel as described in *Ezekiel 38*.

c. What about Iraq (Babylonia)? Iraq has been bitter enemies with Israel throughout both modern and ancient history. Babylonia conquered Judah (the Southern tribes of Israel) in 586 B.C. and exiled all but a few poor peasants to the land of Babylon. It appears that currently Iraq is being defanged of her war machine by the U.S. and her allies. If the allies succeed, a government will likely be installed that will be not be a threat to Israel. Regardless of what happens in this war, we can assume that Iraq won't have the ability to wage war with Israel after this war with the U.S. and her allies is finished. Thus this current war with Iraq is one more stepping stone to setting up the nations for the *Ezekiel*

38 battle.

The closer we get to the war in *Ezekiel 38*, the more the lens on the camera seems to be getting more focused. Consider the 1960s- it would have been absurd at the time to think that Iran, Libya, Ethiopia (or Sudan) and Turkey would enter into a war with Israel. It would have been absurd as well to think that Egypt and Iraq wouldn't join in with Russia in such a war. But then in the '60s and '70s several key events took place that radically changed the political landscape in the Middle East: a revolution in Ethiopia caused a switch in alliances to the Soviet Union. Khadaffi took over Libya and switched allegiances to the Soviet Union. Egypt declared a peace treaty with Israel. The Iranian revolution took place and Iran went from ally to foe. Desert Storm and now the current war with Iraq have neutralized Iraq. Now all nations are in alignment, except Turkey and Syria. Turkey has just elected a more conservative government that wouldn't allow the U.S. to attack from Turkey- Turkey appears to be moving away from the U.S. and Israel and closer to her Islamic allies. Syria looks to be the last piece of the puzzle to move into place.

Interestingly, the Qur'an copied some of Ezekiel chapter 38-39 and conveniently changed some of the details, but still calls out these same tribes attacking Israel, to attack the Muslims there (that's interesting- Muslims attacking Muslims in Israel, land of the Jews? Sounds a bit fishy! The story is found in the Qur'an in Surah 18:96, and 21:96) Muhammad would have been wise to have left copying (and twisting) that text of the Bible out of the Qur'an! He also should have heeded this warning in the Bible, "The prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." (Deut 18:22)

### **Timing of These Events:**

The war of these end times must take place after several conditions have been met, according to the Bible:

1. Israel has regathered into a nation (1948). Throughout the Bible Israel is pictured as a fig tree (*Hosea 9:10, Micah 7:1, Joel 1:6-7*). Jesus cursed a fig tree that had only leaves on it but no figs (*Mark 11:20*) and it withered. This was just a few days before He was crucified. A fig tree without figs (no fruit) was of no benefit. Jesus taught elsewhere that, "I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit." (*John 15:5*) Israel hasn't born fruit yet because Israel has not abided in Jesus Christ.

Jesus prophesied just days before His crucifixion, "They [the nation of Israel that had rejected Him] will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (*Luke 21:24*) As we know from history, Jerusalem, after 2553 years, has been reconquered by Israel in 1967 due to the 6-day war.

Jesus then prophesied about a future day, "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is

near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near- at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." (*Matthew 24:32-34, cf. Luke 21:29-31*) Summer is the time for fig trees to bear fruit. Prophetically, it is the time for Israel to bear fruit- to know her Messiah, Jesus Christ, to have a spiritual awakening and enter into a spiritual marriage with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. However, when Israel's leaves come forth, we know that summer is near, and that this generation will not pass away until all these things have occurred. Israel's leaves came forth in 1948 and/or 1967- the nation has been born, and Jerusalem has been reconquered. Israel has not yet born fruit, but she has sprouted leaves. She is not yet spiritually alive, but she is politically alive! Many Bible passages in the Old and New Testament refer to Israel being regathered from the nations in the last days, including *Ezekiel 36-39*. We are living in this generation! Have you considered what a privilege it is to be a part of this generation and see all the things that the prophets longed to see?

2. The rapture of the church of Jesus Christ must also occur before this war in *Ezekiel 38* (*1 Thess 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess 1:3-10, 1 Cor 15:51-58, Acts 1:6-11, Rev. 19:11-21, Titus 2:11-14, Matthew 23:37-25:30, Daniel 7:13-14*).

3. It will be a time of worldly peace and security when Israel will be attacked (*Ezekiel 38:8,11,14*). As we know, Israel has been in a state of perpetual war since her re-birth in 1948. Many nations still are at war with Israel, vow to destroy her and deny she even exists- so how could Israel ever be caught off guard by a false sense of peace? The Bible stated that the Anti-Christ "shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week [seven years]; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." (*Daniel 9:27, see Matt 24:15, Daniel 7:25, 11:36, 2:31-45, 12:1-3, 11-14, Rev 11:2,3, 12:14, 13:5*). The anti-Christ is described throughout the Bible as a broker of false peace that the world will eagerly embrace in times of trouble. He will be a prince or ruler that will come from the nations that were fragmented after the collapse of the Roman Empire (present day Europe). He will make a seven-year covenant of world peace (with Israel as the focal point of that covenant) that will cause the world to rejoice. This artificial peace will give Israel a false sense of security. After 3 ½ years of this covenant, the Anti-Christ will break his covenant of peace. The reason? Because during the first 3 ½ years of this false peace, the battle in Ezekiel will take place as stated in Ezekiel, in "times of peace", and when the Middle Eastern and Russian alliance against Israel is decimated in battle by the Lord, the Anti-Christ will have no one standing in his way to world domination and in due time (3 ½ years after the peace treaty was made), he will dominate the world and establish himself as the false messiah of the world- god in the flesh (*2 Thess 2:1-12, Rev 13:1-8, Zech 11:15-17, Jn 5:43*).

### **What's the result of this war in Ezekiel 38?**

Ezekiel prophesied, "On that day thought will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme...you will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know Me when I show Myself holy

through you before their eyes...in that time there will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel...I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man's sword will be against his brother. I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. They will know that I am the Lord." (*Ezekiel 38:10-23*)

### **But Why War?**

War is certainly no time to rejoice. How are we to understand this prophesy in *Ezekiel 38* in the context of the Lord's master plan for the world?

We come to an understanding that He is Lord- He's the only One who can accurately predict the future. As a result, we come to trust in Him and submit our lives and our all to Him. Throughout the Bible we see God's master plan: to bring all people who would so desire into an eternal relationship with Himself.

The first war in the Bible is the war in heaven, where Satan rebelled against God, longing to set himself up as higher than God (*Isa 14, Eze 28*). Likewise, in the second "war", Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden. Like Satan, God gave them free will to choose whether to obey Him and maintain intimate fellowship with Him, or rebel against Him. A love relationship between God and mankind demands that free will be present. Man willingly chose to disobey and we live in a world where the consequences of that sin and broken intimacy with God and between each other have resulted in war and every kind of evil. Each of us has willingly chosen to rebel against God and reaped the consequences of alienation from Him.

Immediately after the sin of Adam and Eve, the Lord revealed the beginning of a master plan to bring mankind back to Himself. A "Seed" or descendant of Eve would one day crush Satan and the power of sin, but in the process He would be bruised on the heel- a reference to the spikes that went through the feet of Jesus Christ on the cross (*Genesis 3:15*). Through the cross sin would be paid for and mankind through faith could once again, by the grace of God, come into a personal relationship with God! Hundreds of prophecies from Genesis to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, went into detail about who this Seed was, so that we could know for sure that He was the Christ, the Savior, the Messiah, the Son of God who would die for the sins of the world, and place our faith in Him. God chose one nation, Israel, to be the bearer of that Seed, an intermediary between God and the nations, and a representative of the nations. Around 2000 B.C., God promised Abraham that through his Seed a nation and a people would be formed. Those who cursed that nation [Israel] would be cursed, and those who blessed that nation would be blessed, and all peoples would be blessed through that nation and her Seed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ (*Genesis 12:1-7*).

Satan, throughout the history of Israel has sought to destroy the work of God by attempting unsuccessfully to destroy Israel and her Seed, the Christ. One way was to establish counterfeit seeds- enemies of Israel, and counterfeit religions. Through

Abraham's lack of faith that God would produce a Seed through his wife Sarah, who was old and barren, Abraham and Sarah agreed to have Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah, become Abraham's 2nd wife and thus "fulfill the promise of God." This lack of faith had devastating consequences. Through Hagar, Ishmael was born, a counterfeit seed. Thus were the Arab peoples born. The Lord prophesied about Ishmael and his descendants, "He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (*Genesis 16:11-12*) God loves the Arab peoples just as much as any other peoples, but this prophecy has been fulfilled throughout history from 2000 B.C. to the present and on into the future- Satan would raise up leaders among the Arabs and other peoples surrounding Israel to continually seek to thwart God's plans, to no avail. In addition, false religions such as Islam would generate a hatred for God's chosen people the Jews, and those who aligned themselves with the Jews and the Seed of the Jews- Jesus Christ.

A psalmist wrote this psalm around 870 B.C. regarding Israel's neighboring enemies who included the Arabs [Ishmaelites]: "Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.'" (*Psalms 83:1-4*) Doesn't this sound just like the words spoken today by Arab leaders against Israel and her allies? "For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You: the tents of Edom [modern Jordan] and the Ishmaelites [Arabs]; Moab [modern Jordan] and the Hagrites; Gebal, Ammon [modern Syria], and Amalek: Philistia [modern Lebanon] with the inhabitants of Tyre [modern Lebanon]; Assyria [modern Syria] also has joined with them...fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; Yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth." (*Psalms 83:5-8, 16-18*)

To those who know the Bible well, this theme repeats itself throughout the Bible. Indeed, nothing is new under the sun in this regard! Around 500 B.C., after the Israelites had been exiled into Babylonia and had returned to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem, we read once again of their enemies seeking to thwart their plans: "It so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews...Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion... and our adversaries said, 'They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.'" (*Nehemiah 4:1,7-8,11*) Of course their plans came to naught, for how could they oppose the God of the Universe and His plans? Satan not only sought to destroy Israel from without, but also from within, tempting her to abandon God. Repeatedly we see Israel seeking everything but God and reaping the consequences, and repeatedly it looks as if all hope is lost, but God's stubborn love continues for this nation regardless of her rebellion, including her ultimate rebellion of

rejecting God's Son.

Israel is a representative of the nations. The Jew is a representative of the Gentiles. As Israel has rebelled, so have we. As Israel has continually received mercy from God and God's continual pursuit of love, so have we.

The Lord will win the battle against the nations that rally against Israel. The Seed of Eve, Abraham and David, our Lord Jesus Christ, has reversed the curse of sin and will reign as King on David's throne forever (*Genesis 49:10-11, Ezekiel 37:25*), who is God become man, born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem (*Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, Micah 5:1-4, Psalm 2*) Have you come to know that Jesus is Lord as prophesied? Have you repented of your pride and sinfulness and received the free gift of eternal life that you may bear fruit in your life as well as Israel will one day? He wants you to know and believe and act on the fact that He is Lord!

In Christ's Love,

Mike Porter