



## A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

### Week 35: The Seal Judgements, Part 3

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#### Review:

- We are studying the Seal Judgements of **Revelation Chapters 6-8**
- We've covered Seal Judgement #1, and we've now begun to study Seal Judgement #2
- I've shared with you that my present belief is that these Seal Judgements – at least the first five of them – likely fall in that timeframe BETWEEN the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation.
- I've already given you a couple reasons for that perspective, and I will give you more as we work through these prophetic events.
- At some point, I'll collect all those reasons together one more time and I will review them again, together with some additional thoughts on it. I think there are some very compelling reasons to hold this view, and we will be sure to cover those...
- Last week, we began to look at the Red Horse – this is Seal Judgement #2, and it follows the White Horse which is Seal Judgement #1
- Seal Judgement #1 is about the political debut of the antichrist on the world scene.
- Some scholars emphasize that this first Seal Judgement is a time of relative peace on the global scene as the nations of the world throw their support behind this one world leader.
- The antichrist will arise from within a group of ten individuals that the Bible regards to be “as kings.”
- They are **not** kings or territorial leaders in the traditional sense, but they have that power and sway all the same. They will support this globalist agenda and this “push for peace.”
- Anyway one slices it however, this peace is a false peace, and it concerns a time where the world will wrestle with the chaos and carnage that follows the Rapture.
- This relative calm doesn't last long, as Seal Judgement #2 follows, and it introduces a timeframe where war and conflict breaks out around the globe.
- We learned last week that Seal Judgement #2 is one that “takes peace from the earth” according to **Revelation 6:4**. This is a global dynamic, and it is very likely there are many different conflicts in many different places.
- Two more dynamics are noted in God's Word about this particular Seal Judgement:
  1. Men will slay each other, and
  2. A great sword was given to the antichrist during this phase of God's judgement.
- With the Gospel accounts of the Olivet Discourse also considered, this is clearly a time where racial tensions and wars between nations will escalate into unprecedented chaos, and the antichrist it seems will have a role to play with some of them.
- Whatever false peace pretense had been in place, it now precipitously erodes. What replaces it is absolute carnage and bloodshed.

**NOTE:** We may very well be seeing the early dynamics of some of these future global conflicts in our own time (China vs. Taiwan, India vs. Pakistan, North Korea vs. South Korea [again!], and more).

**NOTE:** It needs to be stated here, "God is in control." (EX: "...its rider was **given** power..." (**vs. 4**); **BY WHOM?**)

- Just like the white horse where its rider was 'given a crown.'
- All these things that will be happening occur at the sovereign command of God. God remains firmly in control.
- Things on a human level will get much worse than they are now, but God will never lose control. It's all part of His plan.
- These events come from the throne, from the little scroll in the hand of God, and from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who carries out the details.
- It is God's unfolding process of judgement: God granted the false peace and the political rise of the antichrist, and God granted the wars which follow.
- Any other position diminishes God and elevates man. Any other position seeks to affirm that God is not everything He says He is!

**I. Now, the antichrist is obviously a key player in some of this carnage and war.**

- A. We know that in part from **Revelation 6:4** which, again, says, "To him was given a great sword."
- B. We also know that from a parallel account about these times (**Cf. Daniel 8:24.**)
  1. Now, we don't exactly know what his role is going to be at this time, but we know he's going to be very involved in it, and just like the erosion of our culture and our laws today, it will all be very intentional.
  2. We also know he's going to be very successful at warfare.
  3. Perhaps when conflict starts to break out everywhere, to maintain his authority, he turns to war.
- C. We have a bit more insight into his methods or style in **Daniel 11:36-38**. (Some general observations):
  1. **HE IS UNACCOUNTABLE:** "He will do as he pleases..." (**Daniel vs. 36**) – he gets what he wants when he wants it; he gets his way (this is a dictatorship)
    - a. (**SAME**) "He will exalt and magnify himself..." (**Daniel vs. 36**) – he answers to nobody on the human level
  2. **HE IS UNPRECEDENTED:** "...he will say unheard-of things against the God of gods..." (**Daniel vs. 36**) - he is arrogant and proud (blasphemous)
  3. **HE IS UNSTOPPABLE:** "he will be successful..." (**Daniel vs. 36**) – there is no stopping this guy; he will prosper in his goals
  4. **HE IS UNDETERRED:** "he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers (et al, **Daniel vs. 37**)" – (much can be said here, but **NOTE**, he is not distracted)

- a. *(SAME) "he will honor a god of fortresses" (Daniel vs. 38) – his goal is power and might*
  - b. *(SAME) "...honor with gold and silver and precious stones, etc." (Daniel vs. 38) - he has incredible wealth to pursue his objectives*
5. Not everyone will willingly subject themselves to this tyrant and to his conquest agenda **(Cf. Daniel 11: 40-45)**
- a. Reference to 'king of the South' (likely Egypt and surrounding territories; **Cf. vs 42**)
  - b. Reference to 'king of the North' (provinces of Russia? Turkey? – NOTE: 'great fleet of ships' in **vs. 40**)
  - c. We could be seeing another mutinous uprising here - - a coalition of such countries that are trying to shake off the power and ego of the antichrist
  - d. It's possible that his base of military power at some point will be based in Israel **(Cf. vs. 45)**

**NOTE:** But it's here, at this point, that I want to focus on one particular conflict that I feel is MOST LIKELY to take place somewhere within this timeframe: The War of Gog and Magog **(Cf. Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39)**. Several general comments to start:

- D. This is a future conflict which several prominent prophecy scholars and teachers are looking for as the NEXT major Middle East War
  - 1. I am not one of those since I am looking for other conflicts to happen in the Middle East first
  - 2. I believe these other conflicts will set the conditions for the War of Gog and Magog. (I am not alone in my views.)
- E. I try to avoid getting into debates with other prophecy scholars and writers who may disagree with me and with others who hold the views I do. I don't think that is productive.
  - 1. As God's prophetic Word plays out, some of us will need to 'eat crow' a bit more than others. That's OK.
  - 2. My views are sculpted by taking a literal approach to Bible prophecy, and by using some common sense as we observe events within the world. I think both approaches end up reinforcing the same points.
- F. The parameters and details of the War of Gog and Magog define a massive conflict that has clearly NOT happened to this point in human history. That's important to say because:
  - 1. Preterists and other individuals that choose to take an allegorical approach to Bible interpretation believe many future prophetic events have already happened

2. Fundamentally, such people hold to the conviction that the Bible does not always mean what it says. I do not subscribe to this view - - nor will I ever.
3. **(Cf. Ezekiel 12:25)** – *“But I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious people, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign LORD.”*
4. The takeaway is God means what He says. This verse also drives home the point that we should not seek to dilute those prophecies concerning Israel and God’s plan for the Jewish people - - these are among the clearest prophecies in the Bible.

**Again, the text: Ezekiel 38&39**

**Basic Summary:** Describes a future attack on Israel by a coalition of nations. The odds against Israel are overwhelming. God supernaturally delivers His people, and the world recognizes God has intervened.

A fantastic and riveting portion of scripture, one that forces us to do one of two things: (a.) take God at His word, or, (b.) as we’ve already discussed, to choose otherwise (I choose the former).

**Note:** Ezekiel (means ‘God strengthens’) lived in Jerusalem and was taken captive to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar.

- He was married and he prophesied for about 22 years. His ministry was at the same time as Jeremiah’s, and also overlapped Daniel’s early years.
- Ezekiel’s ministry was to remind the Jewish exiles of their sins and to reassure them of God’s future blessing according to His covenant promises to them.

II. **Let’s look at the details of this great prophetic conflict:** I’ll take a **‘Who, what, when where and how?’** approach for unpacking this text.

**A. Who?**

**1. Invasion from the far north (Cf. Ezekiel 38:15)**

- a. Remember, Israel, and more specifically, Jerusalem, is generally the hub or starting point of any directional elements given in the Bible
- b. Drawing a line due north from Jerusalem to the eastern edge of Mediterranean Sea, across central Turkey, over the Black Sea, and into heart of Russia (directly across Moscow)
- c. Specific attention is focused on *“Gog, (leader of) land of Magog,” (Cf. vss. 2, 3, 14,)*
  - We do not know who Gog is, and we won’t know until the invasion (could potentially be Putin, or someone who follows Putin’s leadership).
  - Scholars agree Gog is not a proper name (i.e. Steve), but a title such as ‘Pharoah,’ ‘Czar,’ or ‘Kaiser’

- d. Identification of other northern nations **vss. 1-3** (depending on translation, “Magog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, etc”)
- Can be determined more or less – these were tribes from the ancient world that occupied the areas of modern day Russia.
  - Magog, Meshech, and Tubal were tribes that lived in area between Black and Caspian Seas (southern Russia, but northeast from Israel, which includes parts of modern day Turkey and northern Iran).
  - Ancient Arab writers, in the Arabic language, called the Great Wall of China “The Wall of Al Magog” because the Great Wall was built to keep out the invading armies from Magog (Russia).
  - According to some, tribal names of Meshech gave name to Moscow, and Tubal to Tobolsk. Also, Rosh was a tribe in northern Russia, suspected by many to be basis of modern name, Russia.
  - These names cover modern territories of northern and southern Russia in the general eastern European region, and possibly to portions of Siberia in the east in Asia. Modern Russia encompasses all this territory.
  - To limit doubt, see **vs. 6** – ‘uttermost parts of the north’
  - Ancient rabbinical texts (i.e. ‘The Artscroll Commentary’) supported this.

**2. Russia is not alone (Cf. eyes on vss. 5-6); though Russia is leader of this confederacy**

- a. Persia - (modern-day Iran; different than that part known as Biblical Elam)
- Was generally pro-western and pro-Israel till Shah was overthrown in 1979.
  - Led to the radical leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, and today to the dangerous and virulently anti-western and anti-semitic leadership it has. It denies the holocaust, and regularly calls for destruction of Israel.
  - Israel today considers Iran her most dangerous enemy.
- b. Cush –
- Most Biblical references for Cush describe Ethiopia which currently is more Christian than not > that is changing!
  - Furthermore, if the war of Gog and Magog is indeed a post-Rapture event (I believe it most likely is – not dogmatic), then the Christian element will be gone, and the country will be yielded to more radical elements
- c. Put –
- Has generally been stated to be Libya (Biblical ‘Lub’ or “Lubim’)
  - Another option is to see “Put’ as Somalia (could be either)
  - Somalia borders Ethiopia and is clearly hostile to Israel, being dominantly Islam

- d. Gomer – (generally recognized as Germany)
  - View shared by the Midrash (“Germania” - early rabbinical exegesis) and the Talmud
  - I am content with understanding Gomer to mean portions of ‘eastern Europe’
- e. Beth Togarmah, or Togarmah – (Present day Armenia including parts of Austria).
  - Could very well include a large portion of Turkey, and probably does.

### 3. Observations about this confederacy –

- a. Combines old and new enemies of Israel (some staunchly anti-Israel, and others quickly becoming that way).
- b. Not a communist invasion (Russian-led) but, in most respects, an Islamic invasion (very similar to the dynamic of the *Psalms 83, Isaiah 17, and Jeremiah 49* conflicts)
- c. IMPORTANT: The Biblical focus is on the geography of the invasion (The names and governments have changed a good deal, but today these same areas appear ripe for this sort of action).
  - **Note:** In recent times, Russia, Iran, and Turkey have become very close allies.
  - There are political and economic ties rapidly developing between these three nations.
  - Russia has also been developing close ties with Libya. It’s all coming together, and it’s part of the reason some folks think this conflict is next.
  - However, here’s where it’s also important to recognize events that have already come together for the conflicts which I believe precede it, and are FAR more likely to occur at any moment.

## B. Where?

### 1. Israel, or ‘the mountains of Israel’ more specifically (*Cf. Ezekiel 38:7-9*)

- a. Still addressing Gog as leader of this coalition in vs. 7
- b. Invasion is likened to a storm cloud covering the entire land. It will be overwhelming odds; the idea is nobody stands a chance against this horde
- c. Note: There is the pre-existing necessity of a Jewish state or nation, regardless of one’s choice of perspective regarding the nation of Israel. It must exist for this prophecy to have fulfillment.
- d. There is also the necessity of mountains, and Israel only gained the Golan Heights in their 1967 war

### 2. Seven things describe Israel here (also looking down at Ezekiel vs. 11-12) :

- a. a *'land brought back from the sword'* (**vs. 8**) – a nation that is recovered from war (not multiple skirmishes, but one birthed out of enormous conflict and carnage)
- b. *'a land whose people were gathered from many nations'* (**vs. 8**) – massive and diverse return to Israel from global origins
- c. a land with mountains that have been a *'continual waste'* (**vs. 9**) – have long been desolate and abandoned -
- d. *'all of them live in safety'* – two views of this phrase:
  - Not actual safety as in no chance for war, but confidence in their capacity to respond and deal with enemies.
  - The perception of actual safety, meaning Israel has successfully and already dealt with the threats that she is most concerned with (I see both elements being true. However, I feel this second one is particularly applicable).
- e. *'a peaceful and unsuspecting people'* - - this does not describe Israel today, not until she puts down those enemies and their relentless threats which immediately surround her. (*i.e. again, Psalms 83*)
- f. Note *'plunder and loot'* (*Ezekiel 38:10*) – One of the conditions described here: is Israel must be regarded as having resources and wealth an invading army might acquire.
  - This element has only recently gained some significance as Israel has discovered vast resources of natural gas and energy reserves
  - In fact, Israel has struck a deal with the EU to provide gas and oil to replace the energy supplies which Russia no longer provides
  - NOTE: This arrangement has made Russian leadership very angry - - it is not outside of the realm of common sense to see Russia will want to acquire these energy resources
- g. NOTE: Most of these things describe Israel today, and only today. One or two points are still coming into focus and need to be 'cemented' before the right Gog and Magog conditions are in place.

### C. Why?

#### 1. Gog has a goal or a plan (*Cf. vss 10-13*)

- a. Again: A key reason for Russia's invasion is 'war spoils' (*'plunder and loot'*). This is exactly what Russia stands to gain is not spelled out in the biblical text (oil, gas reserves, Dead Sea minerals (45 billion tons of valuable minerals).
- b. NOTE: The text mentions silver and gold and cattle and goods, but these are standard OT clichés for spoils of war and for national resources
- c. Some have suggested it could be the spoils of 'political gain and global influence.' This is less likely IMO. Whatever it is, it is in Russia's own self-interest.

- d. It is premeditated (**Cf. Ezekiel 38:10** – ‘*devise an evil scheme*’); Russia seeks an advantage by engaging in this conflict.

**2. Not all nations will support this invasion.**

a. Sheba and Dedan are territories in Arabia (most scholars point to the regions around UAE, Bahrain, etc. – probably not favoring Russian presence in Middle East

- **NOTE:** These are the very regions and nations currently seeking peace agreements with Israel as a result of Trump’s Abraham Accord terms.
- Perhaps this is an indication that those peace agreements we see coming together now will result in these regions NOT participating in this invasion

b. ‘*Tarshish with all the young lions thereof*’ (other translations state ‘*and all her villages*’) – speaking of a nation that has produced other nations.

c. Remember, Jonah fled to Tarshish to escape the Lord’s command to preach repentance to Ninevah. It was the farthest known regions of that time.

d. Two options for Tarshish are noteworthy to consider:

- **Spain** – nations from Spain include Central and South America (with the exception of Brazil), and possibly the USA in some respects.
- **England** – Then the villages would include USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and multiple other present day western democracies
  - NOTE: I lean towards England (the UK) as this seems most consistent with rest of Scripture and with various archeological and historical records.
  - One interesting note is the mention of ‘tin’ as being a key resource of Tarshish (**Cf. Ezekiel 27:12**), and tin ingots found in Israel have been analysed and shown to have originated in the tin mines of Cornwall and Devon.
  - So, the UK-Tarshish connection seems in several ways to be the strongest possibility.
  - Regardless, it is important to see that these other nations do little more than protest (seems very relevant to today’s pattern of responses by these same nations)

**3. Gog has his reasons for the invasion, but God has a reason too (Cf. Ezekiel 38:14-16).**

- a. The initial appearance of success gives way to complete destruction of the invading forces
- b. WHY? *So that “...the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes (vs. 16b).”*

- c. God desires His glory, He desires clear affirmation of His sovereignty, and He wants the world to see Him for who He is (will likely lead to many in the world accepting Him as Savior)
- d. NOTE: This is a supernatural defeat, and if it takes place in a post-Rapture world that is saturated with '*counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders*' (**Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9**), then this would be a powerful statement by God to remind people not to be misled and deceived.

**D. What and How? (seen together in ss. *Ezekiel 38:17-23*)**

- 1. It is clear that Russia's posture angers God, and God chooses these circumstances to have His justice (*the apple of God's eye is violated arousing God to anger*)
- 2. Three main means by which the invading armies are destroyed:
  - a. Earthquake (**vss. 19-20**)
  - b. Civil war amongst the invading soldiers (**vs. 21**)
  - c. Supernatural pestilence, bloodshed, rain, hail, and burning sulphur (**vs. 22**)
- 3. These things totally destroy the invading armies without the military aid or response of any other nations. God is then sanctified in the eyes of many people – *They know He did it!*

**E. Some further observations from Ezekiel 39 (a parallel account of same event).**

- 1. **There is a likely mistranslation of vs. 2 in King James and Webster versions** – (*states that 1/6 of invading army is left alive*) – this is not consistent with the original language of the text and is probably understood best in other translations that would indicate the invaders are totally destroyed
  - a. ('totally decimate' – Hebrew: **shawshaw**; sometimes phrased "to leave by the sixth part" as a way to illustrate utter annihilation; i.e. "it's raining cats and dogs" to illustrate heavy downpour)
- 2. **The land of Russia is also devastated by this event (Ezekiel 39:6)** – much of Russia itself. Back in 'safer areas' is rained on by fire causing immense destruction.
  - a. NOTE: will probably cause Russia to cease being a major political force in world affairs.
- 3. **The sanctification of God's name (39:7-8)** – God's name will be sanctified in (a.) Israel, and (b.) in the eyes of the world.
  - a. Bluntly, they all will know HE is God, and HE delivered Israel.
  - b. The purpose here is to provide opportunity for repentance and salvation. I believe there is an implication that a great revival will occur.
  - c. Again, this dynamic of a great revival is something we see in the greater counsel of God's Word as taking place AFTER the Rapture

4. **Seven years of burning weapons (39:9-10)- IMPORTANT POINT:** It will take 7 years to address the problem and opportunity of the weapons and those things left behind.
  - a. This is a very significant fact to note because it is not likely to happen during The Tribulation when Israel will be oppressed and running for their lives after 3 ½ years.
  - b. When we consider this timing matter, the latest (most likely) that the War of Gog and Magog could therefore happen would be 3 ½ years BEFORE the start of the Tribulation. Why?
  - c. This fact also reinforces some sort of gap of time between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation.
  
5. **Seven months of burial (39:11-16) –** all the dead will be buried in one of the valleys east of the Dead Sea
  - a. Most Bible scholars point to the Jordon Valley above and east of the Dead Sea, and it will be renamed accordingly ('The Multitude of Gog').
  - b. **INTERESTING:** This valley area is in modern Jordan today. This is another clue that Israel, by the time of the War of Gog and Magog, will have ALREADY gone through the ***Psalms 83*** conflict.
  - c. We saw a few lessons ago how the Bible specifies that portions of modern day Jordan will be acquired by Israel in the ***Psalms 83*** conflict, and in the accompanying destruction of Damascus and Ammon which occur around that same time.
  - d. Apparently, Israel will use some of her newly annexed territory to bury all the dead.