

Q4) Does Ezekiel 38 - 39 describe Armageddon?

Question: Some commentators interpret the last-days invasion of Israel described in Ezekiel 38/39 as the battle of Armageddon, while others believe it is a separate invasion by Russian-led Muslims. Which view is correct?

Answer: Some commentators have confused the invasion of Israel by Gog, from the land of Magog (Russia), as described in Ezekiel 38/39, with the final battle to be fought at Armageddon, as described in Rev.16:16.

The Bible makes it quite clear that there are **two invasions of Israel** during the Day of the LORD, otherwise called the Great Tribulation. These invasions have different participants, and have an entirely different purpose. Joel describes BOTH conflicts separately and indicates that Armageddon is AFTER the Russian/Muslim invasion and Israel's repentance (See Joel 2 and 3). Ezekiel's prophecy explains the rise of Islam, and cannot be Armageddon for the following reasons:

1) The invasion described by Ezekiel involves only **a limited number of nations** which are named. They are *Meshech and Tubal* from the land of *Magog* (Russia), *Persia* (Iran), *Togarmah* (Turkey), *Libya*, and *Ethiopia* (Sudan in our day) with protests from "*the merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof*" (Britain and USA etc) and "*Sheba and Dedan*" (Arabian Peninsula). The invaders are Muslim nations led by Russia, whereas the final battle to be fought at Armageddon will involve "*the kings of the earth and of **the whole world***" (Rev.16:14; Joel 3:1).

2) There are different leaders in these two invasions. The first invasion is led by **Gog** from the land of Magog (Russia), while Armageddon is orchestrated by **Antichrist** who is the final ruler of the Roman Empire (EU).

3) A large component of the armies at Armageddon will come from "*the kings of **the east***", and their number is stated as 200 million and is said to come from the east beyond the Euphrates, whereas the Russian-led invasion is described by Joel as "*the **northern** army*" (Joel 2:20). Muslim nations could raise an army of this size.

4) After the Russian/Muslim invasion one sixth of the invaders will be **driven into Siberia**, "*a land barren and desolate with his face toward the east sea*" (Joel 2:20), but there will be no place for the armies to escape from Armageddon. Those surviving will actually be **gathered to Jerusalem** for final judgment as "*sheep*" or "*goats*" (Matt.25:31-46).

5) The armies at Armageddon will fill the land of Israel and reach Jerusalem (Zech.14:2) and "*the valley of Jehoshaphat*" (Joel 3:2), whereas the Russian/Muslim army is destroyed on "*the mountains of Israel*"

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(Ezek.39:4). There is nothing to indicate they will reach Jerusalem.

6) Armageddon will see the **visible appearance** of Christ sweeping through the armies of the kings of the earth, who will be slain by the sword that proceeds from His mouth (Rev.19:15), but the northern army of Russians and Muslims will be slain by an earthquake, disunity (they will slay each other), disease, hail stones, and fire and brimstone. At Armageddon the Lord says, *“Of the people there were **none with me**”*(Isa.63:1-6) but in the northern invasion God uses natural agencies. They are totally different scenes.

7) The **purpose** of these invasions is quite different. Armageddon is to bring the judgment of God on the Gentile nations led by Antichrist and to deliver Israel who will be in grave physical danger, whereas the Russian/Muslim invasion is intended to bring Israel to repentance.

8) To describe Ezek.38/39 as Armageddon is totally inconsistent with the message of Ezekiel. His commission was **exclusively to Israel**, whereas Armageddon is the final rebellion of the Gentile powers. Ezekiel was told, *“Thou art NOT sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but **to the house of Israel**”* (Ezek.3:5). Daniel’s prophecies, however, are essentially about the “times of the Gentiles”.

If we trace the message of Ezekiel through his 48 chapters, he describes Israel’s sin and the glory of God departing from the Temple in his own day. This is followed by prophecies which have already been fulfilled by the Babylonians, and the final segment, from **chapter 34 to 48, describes events of the last days** which bring Israel to repentance, and sees the glory of God return to a rebuilt Temple in the millennial kingdom. There is nothing in Ezekiel’s prophecy about the final judgment of Antichrist and the Gentile nations but only God’s response when Israel repents (Ezek.39:22-29; Joel 2:20). The **purpose** of the Russian/Muslim invasion is to bring Israel to repentance.

9) Since the conversion of Israel occurs at the Russian/Muslim invasion (Ezek.39:22), and Israel has *“the testimony of Jesus Christ”* **at the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation** (Rev.12:17) when she is driven into the wilderness for the last 1,260 days, then the Russian/Muslim invasion must occur in the first half of the Tribulation. **It cannot be before the Rapture** or there would be no Jews here for the Tribulation. They would become part of the Church and all be raptured.

10) The reason why some commentators have confused these two conflicts is because they have assumed that Israel repents when Christ returns to earth, but Israel will then be a saved nation and looking for the

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Lord when He comes. It will be too late to repent when Christ appears in judgment. They will say, "*Lo, this is our God: **we have waited for him, and he will save us***" (Isa.25:9). He would not rescue a nation that was still rejecting Messiah!

