**(First published 20 Aug, 2011. Revised June, 2014; October, 2015; April, 2016; August, 2016; September, 2017; November, 2018; September, 2021. Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version of the Bible, unless noted otherwise.)**

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https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Ezk-38-39-1.mp3

**Although it was written some 2,500 years ago, the message in Ezekiel 38-39 offers an astonishingly accurate glimpse into our present world situation; it also catapults us into the future. We can imagine that it was no small task, in the culture of ancient times, to describe modern events, places, or technology using only the names and limited terminology available back then. But because this was such a crucial message for future generations, God did not let that be any kind of obstacle.**

**In this startling prophetic message about the future, some place names and terms sound as though they should belong in the past. In these cases, we can allow some leeway, remembering how difficult it would have been to describe modern realities using the limited vocabulary of ancient times. As we keep this in mind, the prophecy will unfold itself in a straightforward manner; it will be easy to catch the thrust of what the Lord was saying and get the most out of this intriguing message from so**

**long ago.**

**It is truly faith-building to behold the grand foresight of God who knew way back then how history was going to unfold 2,500 years later. It comforts us too, for we can have faith that world events, however chaotic and unsettling they may be now, are still under His control.**

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# EZEKIEL 38

**Verse 1 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**

**Ezekiel wasn't writing his own words; it was the *"word of the LORD".***

**Verse 2 Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,**

**This verse contains some mysterious, but crucial, details that will require some explanation. First of all, we should ask, who does this name *"Gog"* refer to? To get a full understanding, we can look at this question from three different angles – the linguistic, the historical, and the geographical.**

**From the linguistic angle:**

**Back in Ezekiel's time, the name of *"Magog"* (a son of Japheth and grandson of Noah) was understood as a sort of collective name for the tribes in southern Russia who dwelt mostly north of the Caucasus Mountain range. The Greek poet Hesiod, who lived around 700 B.C. (close to Ezekiel's time), referred to to this area by the name of Magog. Seems this was a common term, generally used by civilized regions in the ancient world, to designate this northern area wherein dwelt these wild, unknown, barbaric tribes. Thus, *"Gog"*, since it derives from the word Magog, would point towards being the name of a person from this area north of the civilizations of the Mid East.**

**In addition, in the Hebrew language *"Gog"* carried the meaning of**

**"high" or "supreme", so it was also a title, similar to how the titles Pharaoh or Caesar referred to the kings of Egypt and Rome. In this case, however, the title was not one of respect, but more one of contempt. In the Jewish culture the name *"Gog"* was applied to their worst enemies.**

**For example, *"Agag"*, a title used for the Amalekite kings who had fought against the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land, was referred to as "Gog". In the Book of Esther *"Haman the Agagite"*, an Amalekite official in the Persian court, almost succeeded in persuading the emperor to exterminate the entire Jewish population. Other opponents were *"Og"* king of Bashan, who also fought Israel during their Exodus to the Promised Land.**

**These various avowed enemies of the Jews were sometimes referred to by the cognomen, or nickname, of "Gog". In fact, some versions of the Old Testament, such as the Septuagint, actually have translated these names in this way. Although this was not, strictly speaking, the correct translation, it does show what the term *"Gog"* meant to the Jewish people.**

**And since it was a commonly used catch-phrase for the Jews' enemies, *"Gog"* proved to be a useful handle, or label, that the Lord could use in Ezekiel's prophecy about this last and final enemy of the Jewish people in the End Time – and not them only, but of Christians and God-fearing people around the world.**

**From the historical angle:**

**Just before Ezekiel's time, there actually was a northern king from Russia with a name similar to Gog. This was Gaagi, head of the northern tribe of Sakas, or Scythians from Magog, who used to roam in the regions around the Black and Caspian Seas in southern Russia. In the declining years of the Assyrian empire's glory, the Scythians, led by Gaagi, were swarming across the Caucasus into the northern districts of the empire.**

**Eventually, in the opinion of some historians, the sons of Gaagi confederated with the Babylonians to raze Ninevah to the ground. These unsophisticated barbarian hordes were known for their rugged brutality and were greatly feared amongst the Mid East nations in those days. They had even begun a siege of one of the cities in north Israel until the**

**Egyptians intervened.**

**Since these incursions from the north were happening in or just before the days of Ezekiel, they were fresh in the minds of the people of that time. In fact, Ezekiel was about 10 years old when Ninevah was sacked by the sons of Gaagi and the Babylonians in 606/7 B.C., and it wasn't until 596 B.C. that the Scythians, or Magogians, were finally driven out of the Mideast. These northern tribes – Meshech, Tubal, Rosh – who for centuries had remained in distant lands far north, were at this time in history having some contact with the civilizations of the Mid East.**

**Thus, in the prophecy the Lord could use this contemporary history as a sort of springboard to catapult Ezekiel far away from local, current events and off into the distant future into a time when a king from the same northern territories would once again invade the Mid East. Or like a telescope pointing in the right direction, the prophecy was able to adjust the focus away from the present (of Ezekiel's time) and get a view of events to come in the far distant future.**

**Not long after Ezekiel's time, another Scythian tribe achieved some prominence. The Massagetae, who lived east of the Caspian Sea, defeated the powerful armies of the Medo-Persian empire and even killed emperor Cyrus the Great in 530 B.C. Their name may have originated from Magog, and they are thought to be the origin of the Alans and Hun tribes, who are usually identified with the Scythians.**

**These examples, by way of association at least, show how fearsome these northern, warlike tribes, known generally as the people of Magog, could be, and they make a fitting preview to the equally fearsome armies of the Antichrist who will sweep down from the north in the days of the End. *"Who is able to make war with him?"* (Revelation 13:3)**

**From the geographic angle:**

**Gog was an ancient name for the people and the land north of the Caucasus Mountains. Up till the 2nd century B.C., "Gogarene" was the name the Greeks used to refer to a kingdom in this area (in present-day Armenia and Georgia). In fact, it is thought by many scholars that the name Caucasus came from the word "Gog-chasan" (meaning "fortress of**

**Gog"), which changed over time to "Gogasus", and finally to "Caucasus". It is also thought that the nation of modern Georgia derived its name from the ancient and well known designation of Gogarene; and today the Turkish name for Georgia is Gurgistan. Many of the mountains peaks in the Caucasian mountains and land areas there retained the place name "Gog" in medieval European and Armenian maps.**

**As for *"Magog"*, there are various places in Russia that bore names derived from their ancient forbear. Lake Maeotis, now the Sea of Azov, a section of the Black Sea; a people living on the River Tanais (present-day River Don) called "Magini" or "Magotis". The highest mountain (probably Mt. Elbrus) in the Caucasus range used to be known as Mugogh. Mugodzhary: a name in modern times of a group of mountains at the southern extent of the Ural Mountain range.**

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**After looking at the question of who this mysterious "Gog" figure might be from these different angles, the answer about his identity seems to come into focus quite easily: *"Gog"* was a title or label for a fearsome king of some future time (the Antichrist) who, from his stronghold in Russia, would invade the Mideast, persecute, even slaughter many of those living in Israel, and, as we know from other Scriptures, persecute Christians and God-fearing people from all over the world.**

**Continuing with this 2nd verse, *"Gog, of the land of Magog"* is said to be the *"prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal".* So who are these peoples spoken of here?**

**In the very beginning Magog, Meshech, and Tubal were sons of Japheth who migrated north into the area that is now occupied by modern Russia. *"Meshech"* became the name for the Meshcherian/Moschi tribe, from whom the city of Moscow got its name and became the main city of European Russia; Tubal's name was given to the city of Tobolsk and the Tobol River in Siberia. Tobolsk at one time was the major city of Siberia.**

**So there we have two of the principal cities in Russia, representing her two main west and east sections, whose names derive from these two names *"Meshech and Tubal"* mentioned in Ezekiel's prophecy. That, of**

**course, points to the land of Russia as the base from which will arise this mysterious *"Gog"* figure of the End Time.**

**The descendants of Tubal also settled in Georgia, just south of Russia, and gave their name to its capital city Tbilisi. Magog's descendants lived in the same general areas as those of Meshech and Tubal, that is, north of the Caucasus and eastwards through central Asia.**

**Now what about *"Rosh"*? In Hebrew this word also means "chief", which is why some translations say *"chief prince of Meshech and Tubal"* instead of *"prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal".* It would be a lengthy exercise to explain here the technical reasons, but the original grammatical sense of the ancient Hebrew seems to favor the translation *"Rosh"*.**

***"Rosh",* the Hebrew word for Russia, was the name of a Scythian tribe that used to roam around in the steppes area between the Black and Caspian Seas and as far north as Moscow. Surely, it is not just coincidence then for this name to appear in this passage about the northern kingdoms since it pinpoints so well the actual name of the future modern nation in which the descendants of Meshech and Tubal were headquartered.**

**Incidentally, the word *"Rosh"* appears not only in some recent Bible translations, but interestingly enough, in a very ancient Greek translation, the Septuagint, made in the 200's B.C. This suggests that the ancient translators thought *"Rosh"* was the better translation, either because they were aware of the existence of a people by that name or, because of their familiarity with ancient Hebrew, they felt that was the better word to use.**

**There is an interesting tale about this somewhat obscure tribe, the Rosh, that took place in the 9th century A.D., related by Jon Ruthven in his excellent study on Ezekiel 38-39 called *The Prophecy that is Shaping History* (2003), pg 91-92:**

> **Apparently a delegation from the unknown north appeared at the Byzantine royal court [center of the east Roman empire] on what proved to be a reconnaissance or spying mission.**

**The Byzantine bureaucrats may well have been anxious—an anxiety that grew as they examined the visitors. Stang summarizes the encounter.**

> ***"Being confronted with the appearance of some unknown far-northerners in 839 CE, the Byzantines first carefully interviewed them, noting their name or names; of these there were probably several, and perhaps several variants of the same names too—as these newcomers hailed from a multi-ethnic town in a nondefined region.***
>
> ***"Yet one name caught the Greek fancy. It was recorded with the precision accorded by the Greek alphabet and language… through the pen of a Greek scribe, as [Rosh]. It was with trepidation that the name was recorded, being a close call, too close for comfort, to the biblical. . . name of [Rosh].***
>
> ***"Launched by the Byzantines, the 'Second Rome' in European and Mediterranean history, this 'Third Rome' known to all as 'Russia' received its name some day or days in 839 CE."***
>
> **(from Stang, *Naming of Russia*, pgs. 298-299)**

**After the initial peaceful visit of the Rus' to Constantinople in 839 CE, the Byzantines had been fearful of an invasion by the "Prince of Rōs" because they fully believed that the Rus' might soon fulfill Ezekiel's prophecy…**

***…* the Byzantines consistently identified the specific name, [Rosh], with savage northern invaders who over the centuries threatened the great world center of Constantinople.**

**This story has significance because it shows that this Bible passage about the "Rosh" had always been understood as referring to a certain northern group of people by that name. They were an obscure tribe up until the time of their encounter with the Byzantines. At this time in the 800's A.D., they were finally establishing themselves as a kingdom, the "land of the Rus", centered around the city of Kiev.**

**To the ancient Mideast people these tribes of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal were the most northern groups of people they knew of. Some direct acquaintance with them did occur when branches of these wandering**

**tribes moved south into the northern Tigris-Euphrates region. This is why Bible maps often show Meshech and Tubal located much further south from their primary locations in the north. In the sparsely populated world of those days, nomadic living was common; people could shift around en masse more easily, and these northern, largely cattle-raising tribes had become accustomed to this kind of migratory mode of life.**

> **At the time of Ezekiel, at least a small percentage of each of his "northern nations" was located in eastern Anatolia (roughly, modern eastern Turkey). Within a few centuries, they seem to have migrated (or, more likely, returned) northward from their locations they occupied during Ezekiel's ministry. (from *The Prophecy that is Shaping History* by Jon Ruthven, pg. 55)**
>
> **In each case, it seems that some southern branches of Ezekiel's northern nations seem to have migrated northward from eastern Anatolia (Turkey) where they are usually located in Bible dictionaries and atlases. For these works, this southern location may be only partially accurate within the biblical time frame, but they fail to indicate either that the main body of these nations dwelt north of the Black Sea at the time the prophecy was written, or, as importantly, scholarship has failed to show the locations of these nations over history leading to the time of the fulfillment for Ezekiel's Gog prophecy. (From *The Prophecy that is Shaping History* by Jon Ruthven, pg. 79)**

**(For further explanation about the movement of tribes after the Flood, see the post: "Early Migration before the Rise of Civilization")**

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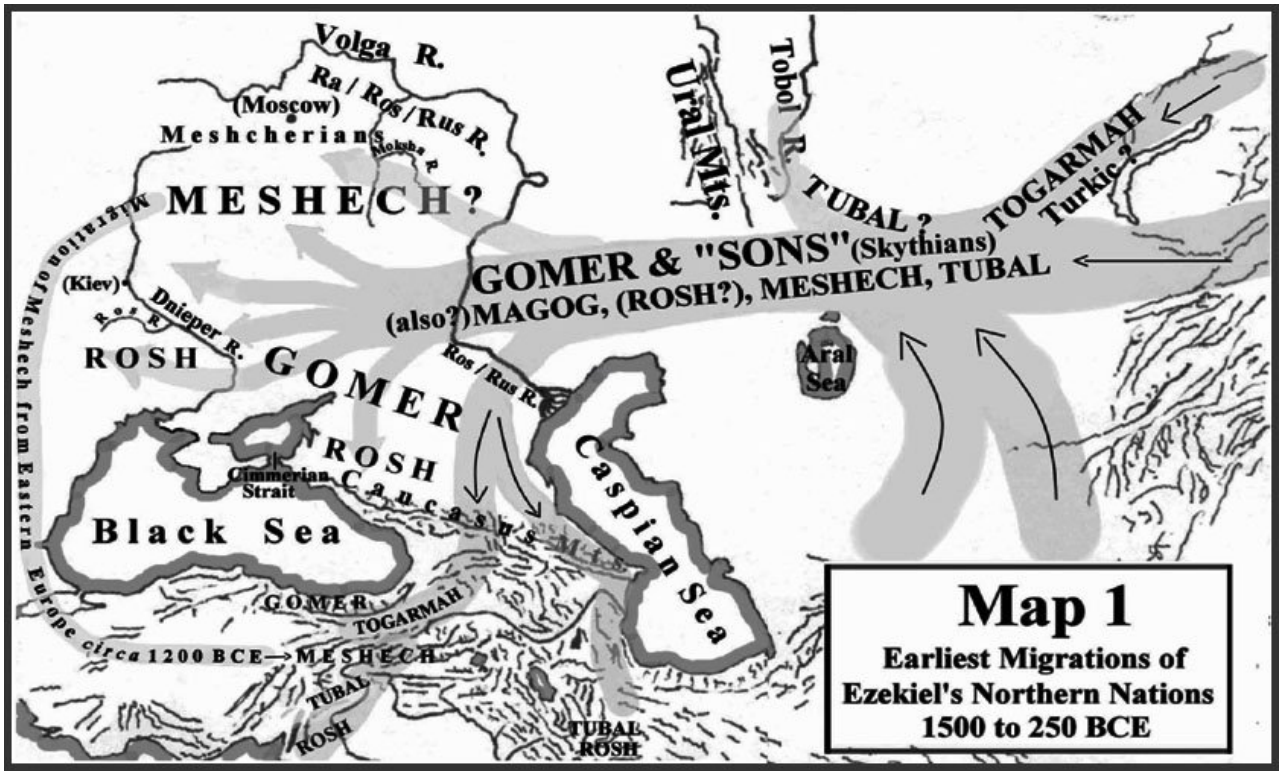
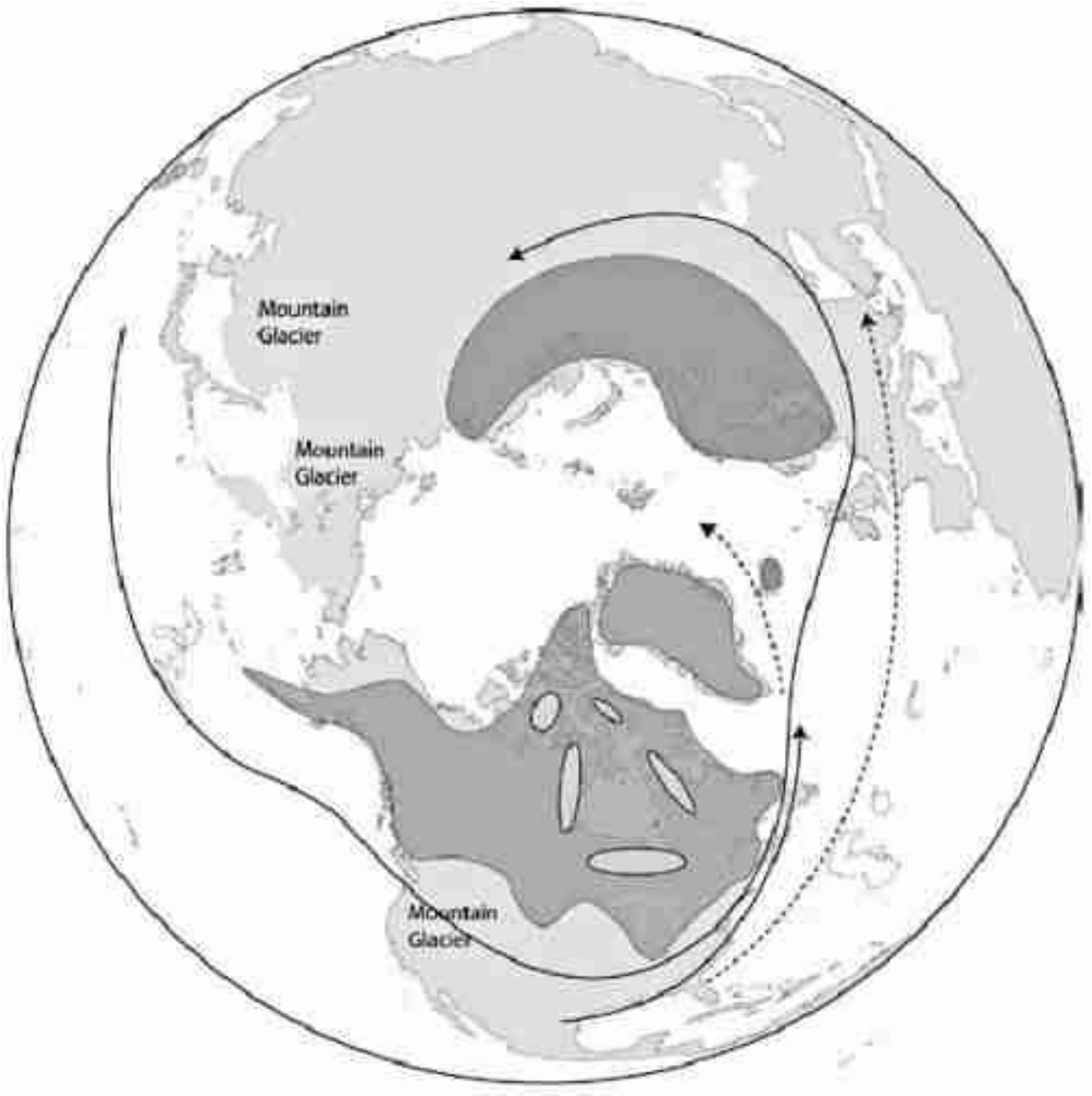
**[Two of the following maps are from Jon Mark Ruthven's remarkable, new research on Ezekiel 38-39, *The Prophecy that is Shaping History – New Research on Ezekiel's Vision of the End*, published 2003.]**



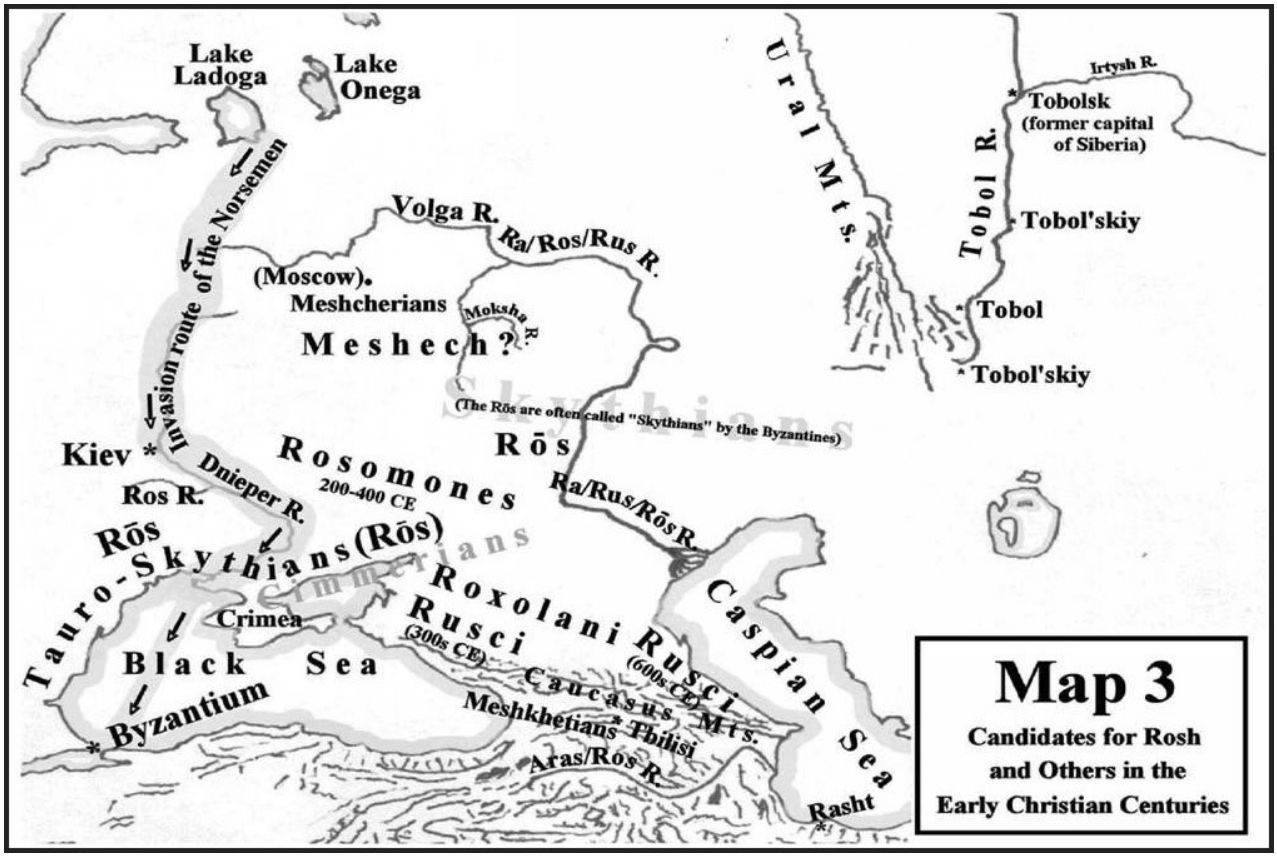

**The Skythians (name derived from Ashkenaz, the son of Gomer) were also known as the tribes of Magog and seemed to be quite a mixture of the various descendants of Japheth who migrated northward in the years after the Flood. Because of their nomadic lifestyle, there is evidence of their migration along a belt of grassland that extended from areas north of the Black and Caspian Seas eastward into Siberia and also of their incursions into the Mideast.**




**(Map from "Chapter 8: The Snowblitz" in *Frozen in Time* by Michael Oard)**

**As a matter of interest, it will help to understand that the post-Flood climate was quite different to how it is today. Because of the warmer Pre-Flood Age, the oceans continued to be somewhat warm during this time. This caused a huge amount of precipitation, which resulted in some northern areas becoming ice-covered (dark, shaded areas in the map). This also caused other areas, like Siberia (the land of "Magog" north of the Caucasus Mountains), to experience a moderate, rain-filled climate.**

**The sons of Japheth, who migrated northward from Mount Ararat, found this area, with its extensive grasslands to be quite hospitable for their herds and nomadic lifestyle. It did not have the kind of harsh and cold climate that exists there today. Learn more about this extraordinary era in Earth's geologic history in the post "The Ice Age".**




**This map shows various place names and tribal names north of the Mideast that were known by early historians – evidence that the tribes of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal inhabited these areas that are now part of Russia.**

**To conclude, it seems obvious that this ancient prophecy is referring directly to the land of Russia. Further ahead, Ezekiel was told that this northern power will invade the Mid East during the *"latter days"*, the End of the Age era.**

**We might wonder then how could Russia become powerful enough to carry out such a grand campaign of warfare now that she has become so**

**weakened since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s? Perhaps this situation could be compared to what happened in the last century when Germany lay in shambles after World War I, demoralized and humiliated; such conditions made it easy for a demagogue (Hitler) to rally the people and restore Germany to its former greatness.**

**So it would not be surprising to see history repeat itself in this way in the land of Russia. Russians haven't forgotten the old glory days of the Soviet Union, and a strong leader (the Antichrist or his predecessor?) could easily capitalize on that as he re-builds the nation into a great superpower. In fact, it is already happening. (See Appendix below – an insightful news article about how Russia is doing nowadays.)**

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**Continue to Chapter 2: Preparation for Invasion of Israel and the Mid East (38:3-6)**

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**Appendix: Excerpts from "New World Order in Meltdown, But Russia Stronger Than Ever"**

**by Jon Hellevig for *The Saker Blog*, 30 August 2019**

**The globalist New World Order project in its present form is dead, or at least in its death throes. It has bumped its head against an impenetrable Sino-Russian wall of resistance.**

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**All Western media, including what should be the most respected business journals and all those think tanks, had not published one honest appraisal of the Russian economy in 15 years. Every single piece I read over the years had clearly been written with the aim to denigrate Russia's achievements and economic development. Nowhere to be found were reports on how Putin by 2013 had totally overhauled the economy transforming Russia into the most self-sufficient diversified major country in the world with all the capabilities of the foremost industrial powers.**

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**"The crisis-torn economy battered by years of robber capitalism and anarchy of the 1990's, which Putin inherited in 2000, has now reached sufficient maturity to justify a belief that Russia can make the industrial breakthrough that the President has announced." [from Awara Group]…**

**The report represented an appeal to the Western leaders to give up on their vain hope of destroying Russia through their sanctions and risking nuclear war at it…**

**"… Knowing that Russia is not the economic basket case that it is portrayed to be would help to stave off the foes from the collision course with Russia they have embarked on." [from Awara Group]…**

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**… while Russia does not export a great deal of manufactured goods, it produces by far a bigger share of those for the domestic market than any other country in the whole world…**

**…Russia had won hands down the sanctions war having emerged from it as a quadruple superpower: industrial superpower, agricultural superpower, military superpower and geopolitical superpower.**

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**To summarize this introduction. The Western world is in turmoil: the previous overwhelming geopolitical domination is gone and over with; military solutions against the main adversaries – China and Russia – are off the books; hybrid wars against them have failed; China and Russia are economically stronger than ever, too strong for the adversary; and to boot the domestic Western economies are in extraordinary bad shape, risking a depression of epic proportions.**

**… Russia is virtually debtless, and that's really the clue to survival in this extraordinary economic environment. …**

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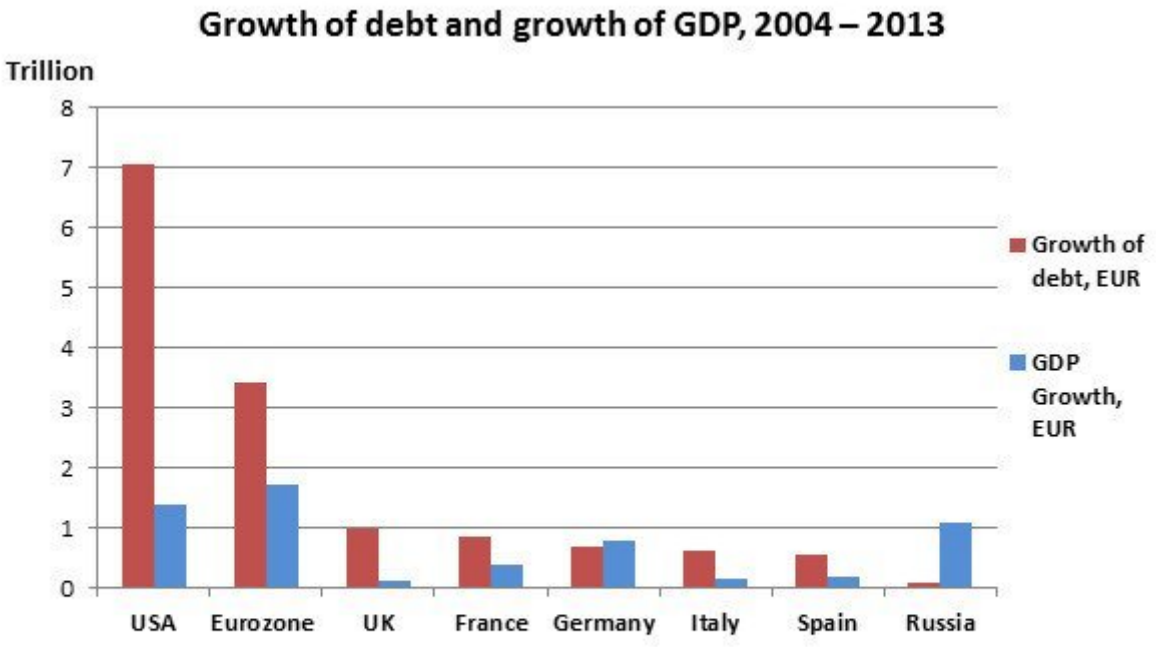
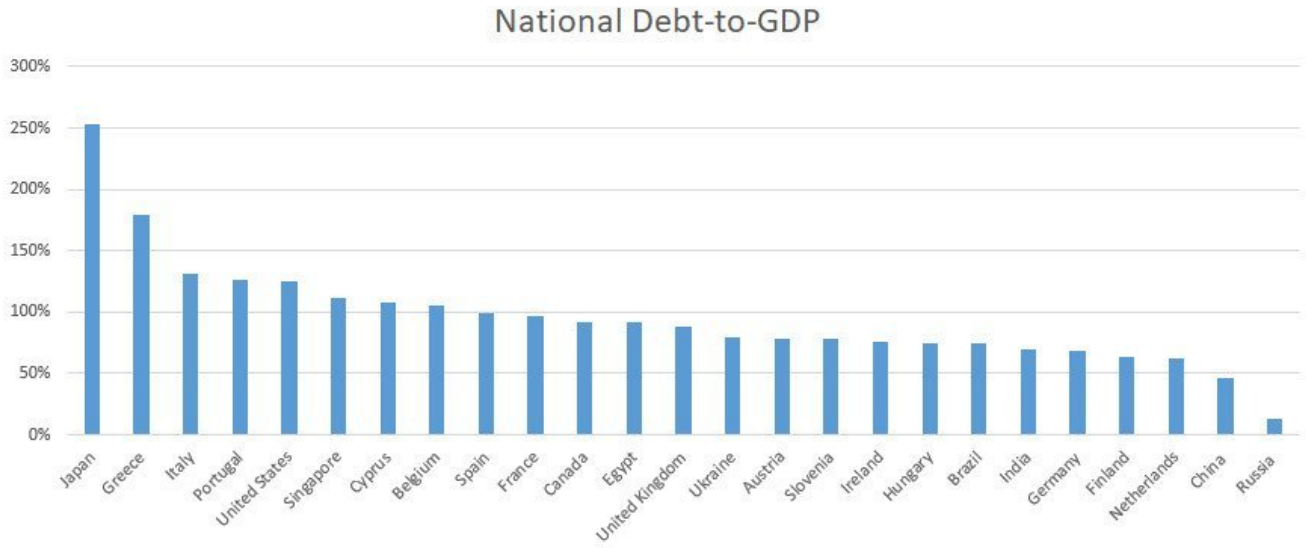
**Russia is low in debt, but you can't say the same about the US and other Western nations. ***




**Source:** Chart from Awara Study on Real GDP Growth Net-of-Debt
www.awaragroup.com/real-gdp

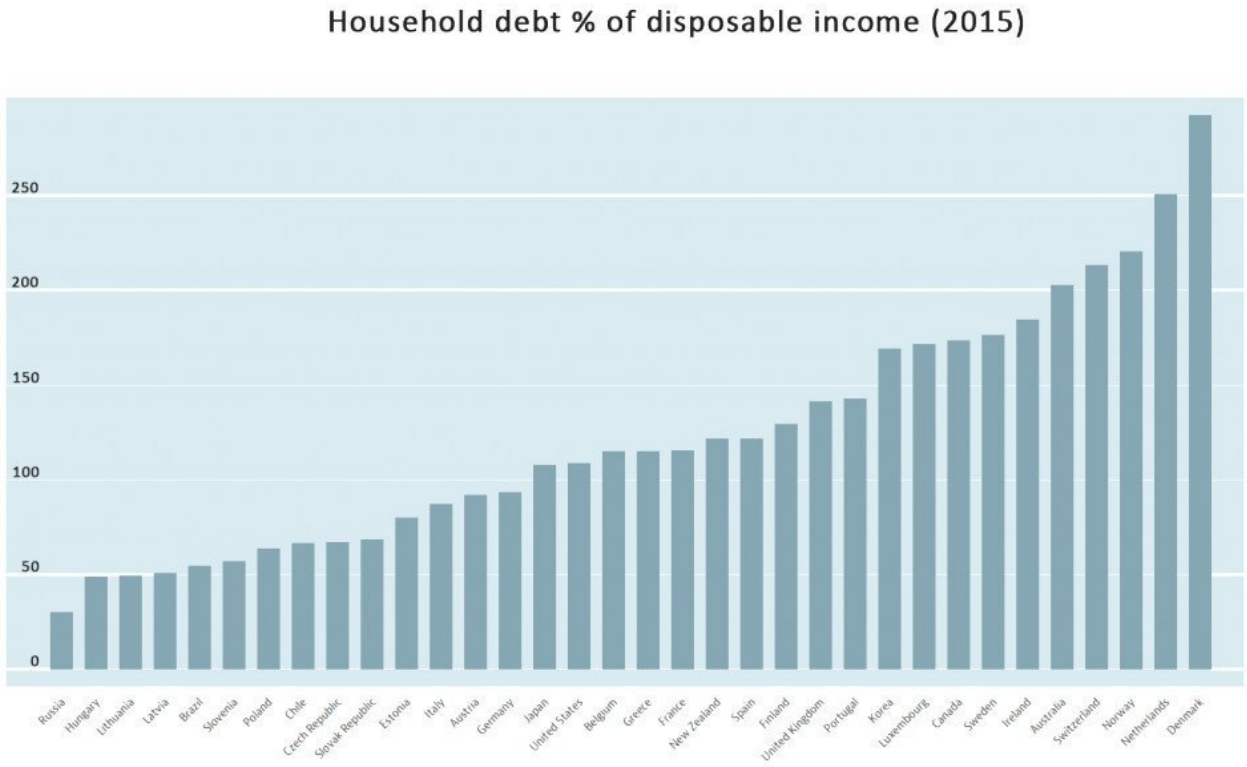
**Note Russia there as the shining exception.**

**Below chart ranks countries according to their debt burden relative to GDP. And again you see how debtless Russia is compared with the squandering nations.**




**Source:** Chart from Awara Study on Russia's Economy in 2018
www.awaragroup.com/ru-strong

List contains all major countries and all EU countries (other countries removed from list) with Public Debt-to-GDP above 60%. China, Russia and Ukraine are added for comparison. Data as per Dec/17 or Dec/16, as available.




**Source**: Chart from Awara Study on Russia's Economy in 2018
www.awaragroup.com/ru-strong

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**…Russia is the country with – by far – the least debt, both public and private. Having after 2014 following sanctions been cut off from the Western debt orgy, even Russian corporations are shielded against a possible Western debt apocalypse.**

**In a global recession, no country is safe, but Russia looks to have quite a lot going for it in terms of economic advantages. Russia's national balance sheet is next to none with by far the lowest debt of all major countries. … Not only is the government virtually debtless, but it has again replenished its spectacular forex and sovereign wealth fund reserves. On top of that comes a hefty budget surplus. – Yes, you heard that right, surplus. In a time when all Western countries are in a chronic fight against deficits, you rarely even hear the term budget surplus…**

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**In conclusion, we are not saying that Russia would not be hurt by the coming recession, we merely express our confidence that Russia is among the world's countries best placed to cope with it.**

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**Continue to Chapter 2: Preparation for Invasion of Israel and the Mid East (38:3-6)**