Chapter 1: Who Are Gog and Magog? (38:1-2)
Chapter 2: Preparation for Invasion of Israel and the Mid East (38:3-6)
Chapter 3: Israel's Role in Bringing about Her Own Downfall (38:7)
Chapter 4: Prophecy Pinpoints Our Present Historical Situation (38:8-12)
Chapter 5: Role of America and Britain (38:13)
Chapter 6: How God is Honored in this Mess (38:14-16)
Chapter 7: God Fights Against Gog – Armageddon! (38:17-39:8)
Chapter 8: Clean-Up Campaign (39:9-20)
Chapter 9: Israel's Purging Results in Final Blessing (39:21-29)

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Verse 17 **Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?**

This verse is like a flash-forward, showing the reaction, the surprise that some future generation will have when they realize this invasion by Russia was predicted so long ago – *"in former days"* – by the prophets of ancient Israel. Indeed, the entire prophecy lays much emphasis on the fact that the invasion and its consequences were foreseen long before. *"After many years you will be visited. In the latter years you will come…"* (38:8). *"It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land"* (38:16). *"Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord GOD. This is the day of which I have spoken.* (39:8).

Verses 18-20 **And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, that My fury will show in My face.**
For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,
So that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on

the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

The passage here and on to verse 23 makes it clear that God will turn against Gog. This will happen, it says, *"at the same time"* as his invasion of Israel. Most likely we should understand this to mean the judgment on Gog comes at some point after the initial invasion which we know God had allowed originally for the purpose of chastening the wayward nation of Israel.

This "chastening" of Israel parallels another conflict that God allows (evident in the passage of Revelation 17:16-17). This has to do with His displeasure with the *Harlot* empire and her *"fornication"* and oppression over the rest of the world. The series of posts, *Fall of the Great Harlot*, offers an outline of how the prophetic message in the *Book of Revelation* applies to the catastrophic fall of America before the rising Eurasian superpower of these modern times.

So *Gog's* invasion of Israel in modern times is one aspect of a much larger conflagration: the war, described in Revelation 17-18, in which the *Beast* empire (*Gog*) unleashes terrible destruction onto the empire of the *Harlot.*

Although America and Israel deserve what they get, at some point *Gog* and his armies will go too far in their slaughter, mayhem, and persecution. Then God's *"fury"* is kindled against them also. He says, *"In My jealousy… I have spoken."* (verse 19). God is jealously concerned over any people or nation that is getting trampled on. Add to this the fact that the Antichrist has been speaking great blasphemies against God and *"showing himself that he is God"*, then here is all the more reason for God to be *"jealous"*. (2Thessalonians 2:4)

God's fury on Gog, we then learn, takes the form of a *"great earthquake".* Although it starts in Israel, apparently it will affect the whole earth: *"all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence."* It is most likely the same as what is described in Revelation 16: *"there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth… and the cities of the*

***nations fell"*. (16:18-19). Such a grand cataclysm will surely bring to an end the murderous rampage of the Antichrist Gog and his armies.**

In fact, it will bring an end to the whole present social order as we know it. Although it seems horribly calamitous, God must know, in His great wisdom, that this will be the only way to get human society back on track. The civilizations of our present order must be swept away in order to start again from scratch, re-building and re-inhabiting the earth, but this time on a new and better foundation – not unlike what happened in the Great Flood era. (See posts in "Has the Earth Already Had an 'End Time'? Cataclysm of the Great Flood" and "Transition from One Environment to Another.")

So more than just putting an end to the regime of a brutal demagogue, the Almighty will be putting a stop to an entire era of history, an era dominated by the forces of Darkness attempting to establish their kingdom in the Earth and in the hearts of mankind through their proxy agents: various emperors and false prophets, Caesars, dictators, and of course, the final Antichrist Gog figure and his False Prophet.

> ***"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken your great power and reigned… and Your wrath has come… And that you should… destroy those who destroy the earth."* (Revelation 11:17-18)**

The Antichrist is just the final demagogue in a long succession of demagogues whom Satan has used in hopes of destroying God's creation: the natural environment and those who inhabit it. Regarding the natural environment, it is worth noting that the passage here exhibits a kind of awareness of it that doesn't exist so much nowadays.

Because of living so closely to it, those in olden time were much more conscious of the natural world, and this is evident in the above passage: *"the fish… birds… beasts… and all creeping things"* are included with human beings as those who *"shall shake at My presence".* Because of our more urbanized environments and technological mastery over nature, we in modern times have lost some of this connectivity with the natural world about us.

This mastery over nature that we have nowadays is a knowledge that could be used for humankind's benefit – to feed large populations, to de-pollute and clean up the environment, and on and on the list can go – and to some extent those purposes are being achieved. But as long as the Dark forces remain in control, our "knowledge" will always pose too much of a danger to ourselves and the environment we live in.

It will take the Second Coming of Christ to throw off the hindering influences of the Dark Legions. In that day the many useful, beneficial plans and programs that conscientious people have introduced already for society's benefit can at last be fully implemented in the earth.

"The mountains shall be thrown down." **This word *"mountains"* could be symbolic language for cities or kingdoms that get *"thrown down"*, and the word *"steep places"* for modern high-rise buildings that *"fall"*.**

There are many other references to this *"great earthquake"* that will come at the time of Christ's return to re-claim the world for the Kingdom of God: Isaiah 2:19,21, 6:13, 24:19-20, Jeremiah 4:23-29, Haggai 2:6-7, Joel 2:10, Revelation 6:14, 16:18-19.

<u>Verse 21</u> I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains, says the Lord GOD. Every man's sword will be against his brother.

The word *"mountains"* in the Scriptures often symbolizes governments:

> **Daniel 2:35 – *"The stone that struck the image* [symbolic of man's governments] *became a great mountain* [symbolic of God's government] *and filled the whole earth."***
>
> **Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1 – *"The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."* [That is to say, God's government in the Age to come will supersede all other governments.]**
>
> **Revelation 17:9-10 – *"The seven heads are seven mountains… There are also seven kings"* [*"Mountains"* refers here to seven powerful worldly empires that have, or will have, dominated the Mideast and Israel.]**

Very likely then, *"all My mountains"* was meant to symbolize the host of nations who will rise up in rebellion against the new world order of the Antichrist Gog figure; we could call these the anti-Antichrist nations of the world. With this kind of scenario developing in this nuclear age, Earth's future looks rather grim. But this is merely the plan of the Dark Legions who are bent on destroying what God has created by unleashing another horrible, chaotic World War.

Such a war nowadays, but for the Second Coming of Christ, would leave planet Earth almost uninhabitable.

But rather than allow the Dark Legions to succeed in carrying out their dreadful design, the Lord has promised that *"those days will be shortened".* (Matthew 24:22) And after those final convulsions at the end of our present age of history, Earth will enter into the great golden Age of Peace promised in several places in the Scriptures (Isaiah 11:6-12, Micah 4:1-5, Revelation 20:4 to name just a few).

This is the plan that God has in mind, and the plan that will come to pass in spite of all the foolish attempts of Satan and his dark forces to do otherwise.

Verse 22 And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

The passage here and in the preceding verses provides a sort of brief overview of what the Revelation Book describes in much greater detail – what are known as the Trumpet judgments of the Great Tribulation followed by the judgments of the Wrath of God.

***"Bring to judgment."* The King James Version of the Bible uses the word *"plead"*, a term often heard in court cases. The idea here seems to be that God will enter into judgment with the Antichrist Gog, and this could bear similarity to how He entered into judgment with the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh. At that time God used Moses and Aaron to plead with him, to explain their case and to warn Pharaoh of what was about to happen if he continued to refuse to grant freedom to the Israelites.**

Thus, the plagues on Pharaoh's kingdom were not arbitrary judgments done without any fair warning. There are indications (especially in Revelation 11) that two of God's prophets will, in similar fashion, confront the Antichrist during the time of the *Great Tribulation*. (Revelation 11:3-12)

This future historical situation – the warmongering of Gog the Antichrist – bears some comparison to what happened in Hitler Germany. On the way to achieving his ambitious plan to establish the Third Reich empire in Europe, Hitler had gone way overboard with his genocidal persecutions and caused much mayhem in the earth. Finally, he was stopped by the Allied invasion of Europe.

In the case of the Antichrist, he too will encounter much resistance from other nations. The main difference, however, would seem to be that no power or coalition will be strong enough to stop him from his murderous campaign to establish his "Third Reich" – his "brave new world" without God – no power except that of the Messiah.

Or perhaps it would be better to say, no power can stop him in time to prevent the destruction of humanity and the environment. Even though there will be much opposition to the Antichrist, it seems that, without the Lord's intervention, human society will, with all our mega-destructive weapons, find itself on an inescapable downward spiral to self-extermination. That likely is why Jesus said, *"Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved."* (Matthew 24:22)

As God pleaded with Pharaoh through Moses and brought plagues on the Egyptians, so also will He do in the End Time. These plagues will include *"pestilence and bloodshed… flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone"*. Some of this sounds much like volcanic activity unleashed against the armies of Gog – very likely an offshoot of the earthquake activity also going on at this time.

At any rate, whatever it means exactly is difficult to determine right now with any great degree of accuracy. But obviously, as the plagues in Egypt were disastrous for that ancient society, so these future plagues will be disastrous for the welfare of Gog's armies and for the empire over which he rules.

<u>Verse 23</u> Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

In the wake of the Antichrist's foolish attempts to magnify himself before God and mankind, it will be the Lord's turn to *"magnify Himself",* to show the world and its modern demagogue Who's really in charge. Up to this time, the Antichrist demagogue was having his own way, wallowing in an obscene display of self-deification:

> ***"He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper…"* (Daniel 11:36)**
>
> ***"The man of sin… the son of perdition… opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* (2Thessalonians 2:3-4)**

According to the above passage, the world then *"shall know that I am the LORD."* So how is the world going to know this? Well, for one thing they'll know that only God could have done such things in such magnitude, in such a magnificent manner, to have the whole Earth shake and the skies rain down fire and brimstone and hailstones and red-hot rocks upon the forces of the Antichrist!

Furthermore, God is going to manifest His justice, His righteousness to humankind. For by this time the world will know that the Antichrist has gone too far, and if there is a God in Heaven, then he ought to be stopped. Just as the Israelis had gone too far and God used the Antichrist and Russian invasion to stop them, so now when the Antichrist and his forces in their turn have gone too far, then God is going to have to judge them also and punish them.

In all this, God is not showing favoritism to one side or the other. As a result the whole World will know then that they are seeing the true, just, righteous, fair judgments of God: *"I will be known in the eyes of many nations."*

Unlike what much of mainstream Christianity thinks, God doesn't say to

the Israelis, "Well, you have a big reputation as the so-called people of God, so you can just get off scot-free." Nor does he say to Gog, "Well, I used you as My *'hired razor'*, so it doesn't matter if you let it all go to your head now and try to grab everything for yourself."

The prophecy said, *"I will sanctify Myself."* God has His own yardstick, and He will apply it according to what He knows people need or deserve in true fairness and justice.

That is something, by the way, that applies on a personal level too, just as much as it does to the conduct of whole nations and civilizations. It should be mentioned too that, although this passage deals mostly with God's chastisements, God is not only in the business of dealing out punishments and judgment, but is a merciful God and very much in the business of handing out wonderful blessings and rewards to those people and nations who seek to do what is right in His sight.

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EZEKIEL 39

We don't know exactly the cause of the interruption here, but it looks as though Ezekiel had to stop his first session (chapter 38); then, since the message was incomplete, the Lord spoke further during this second session (chapter 39). The first session dwelt heavily on Gog's (the Antichrist's) role in causing the great Mideast debacle.

This second session tries to balance the picture somewhat by turning more attention towards Israel and her role in causing hostilities; it also moves ahead into the future and the aftermath of this great final war that will mark the end of our present age of history.

Verse 1 **And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;**

Chapter 39 starts off with a review of what was said in the beginning of chapter 38 – which makes it clear that this is supposed to be a

continuation of the previous message. This particular verse highlights once more the fact that it is God speaking here, it's direct prophecy, and therefore, it must be true.

<u>Verse 2</u> And I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel.

Again, the passage reviews the first session which said, *"I will turn you around… and lead you out."* (38:4) It almost sounds as if the Lord is enticing Gog to fight it out with Him, similar to what He did in ancient times with the Egyptian Pharaoh. The bully is being challenged by God, the Defender of His children; and of course, that's one fight where the bully won't come out on top.

***"Far north."* Extreme north. This is the third time the distant *"north"* is mentioned, pinpointing once more the land of Russia as the invader. (38:6,15) *"Against the mountains of Israel."* Again this reviews what was said in the previous session. (38:6)**

<u>Verses 3-5</u> When I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand.
You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.
You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD.

In this passage we read about the legendary Battle of Armageddon. Revelation 19 describes it also – but in more detail with more emphasis on the personage of the Messiah in His role as great supernatural Conqueror:

> ***Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.***
> ***His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.***
> ***He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.***
> ***And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.***

> ***Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.***
>
> ***And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***
>
> ***And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.***
>
> **(Revelation 19:11-16,19)**

The *"beast"* here in the Revelation Book represents the Antichrist who is the same as the *"Gog"* personage in the Book of Ezekiel – just as the grisly aftermath of birds and beasts feasting on the dead carcasses of Gog's army is the same as what is featured in Revelation:

> ***"An angel… cried… to all the birds… 'Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings… captains… of all people, free and slave, both small and great'."* (Revelation 19: 17-18)**

So what is it, we may ask, that leads up to this great Battle of Armageddon? What is the background to this great final conflict? By piecing together the bits of information given in the Bible and learning what we can from history, we could surmise the following scenario: There will be much opposition to the Antichrist, as was mentioned in chapter 38: *"I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains."* (verse 21) As a result the world is embroiled in a World War – the armies of the Antichrist versus those who oppose him.

Although wars are usually fought for reasons of greed and hunger for power, there can often be an underlying religious element. For example, prior to World War 2, Hitler had risen to power and fostered worship of himself, while persecuting those religious groups who refused such an allegiance but desired to continue worshiping God. Some allied leaders, especially Winston Churchill, were convinced they were engaged in a holy war to defeat the forces of spiritual Darkness that were threatening to engulf Europe. He even felt that the survival of Christendom was at stake.

Prior to Armageddon, it will be much the same thing: a charismatic leader fostering worship of himself, persecution of religious groups, war campaigns designed to grab new territory and wealth, a world on the brink of capitulation to an anti-God world order. These things we can gather from the many Scriptures that outline the near future of world history. Here are just a few:

> ***"The man of sin… the son of perdition… opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*** **(2Thessalonians 2:4-5)**
>
> ***"And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'"*** **(Revelation 13:3-4)**
>
> ***"It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them."*** **(Revelation 13:7)**
>
> ***"He causes all… to receive a mark… that no one may buy or sell."*** **(Revelation 13:16-17)**

Now what more can we learn from history? If we backtrack all the way to the days of the Exodus, there is an interesting account of what the Israelites under Moses experienced when they found themselves in a dire predicament that threatened to bring a quick end to their would-be exodus from Egyptian slavery. The armies of Pharaoh had pursued the unarmed Israelites into the wilderness and were about to pounce on them.

But God saved them. How did He do it? By raising up an army from Egypt's enemies? No. There were no "allied forces" to do that job as in World War 2. Instead, it was a totally unexpected supernatural deliverance. When it looked as if the Egyptian army would overrun them, the Red Sea miraculously parted, and the children of Israel crossed over it while their enemies, trying to do the same, were drowned. It was a magnificent supernatural deliverance that was recorded and preserved in the history of the Jewish people for about 3,500 years. (Read the full story in Exodus 14.)

In this last great Battle of Armageddon, the situation will be so terrible, the odds so uneven, the consequences so dire – the near-destruction of

planet Earth – that there will be no other recourse but for the Almighty to step in with a great supernatural deliverance, as quoted above in the passage from Revelation 19, and as described here in Ezekiel 39.

Presumably, this last great war starts off as a war between the forces of Gog and the earthly forces opposing him, then somehow transforms into a war between the armies of Gog and the armies of Heaven. How this happens is a mystery, but, as time marches on towards those final days, things will become clearer. Perhaps it is safe to say that the beleaguered anti-Antichrist forces in those future days will, in the face of certain defeat, need supernatural reinforcements.

The intervention of the Messiah and His heavenly forces at some critical juncture during the Battle of Armageddon will rescue the world from the Antichrist Gog's brutal dominion and wars. He saves the day, not only for the forces opposing the Antichrist, but also for the survival of planet Earth's population and environment. As Matthew 24:22 states, *"Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved."*

(At this point in time, some of these proposed scenarios, it should be noted, fall into the realm of speculation… but it is interesting to indulge in a bit of speculation sometimes.)

Verse 6 And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

As we learned above, a World War is going on; the Antichrist is having all kinds of trouble, especially since God had called for *"a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains".* (38:21) God will send fire on Russia, and it sounds quite severe. Whether He will send it by way of volcanoes or just fire straight out of the sky or the fire of war (atomic bombs) or what, we don't know. But whatever it is, it's of God for the passage says, *"Then they shall know that I am the LORD."*

***"Those who live in security in the coastlands."* In those ancient times, *"the coastlands"* referred to places on the Mediterranean Sea where merchant ships would travel. So possibly, it refers to the self-satisfied and comfortable nations of the European Union, many of which will likely be collaborators with Russia and accomplices to the Antichrist's wars and**

persecution against God's children.

"Coastlands" **could also have a broader meaning to include far away places that could only be reached after crossing the seas. So it could easily include nations from all over the world. As in the previous World Wars, battles were fought on many different fronts throughout the world. The next one will see the Mideast and Israel as the main theater of war – as Germany and Europe were in World War 2. But the War will not be confined to that area alone.**

There is an ominous passage in the Book of Jeremiah that foretells clearly the onset of these terrible times to come at the end of the Last Days:

> ***"For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city*** **[Jerusalem]** ***which is called by My name… I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the LORD of hosts… For the LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword… Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And at that day*** **[the End of the Age as we know it]** ***the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth."*** **(Jeremiah 25:29,31-33)**

Not a pretty picture. It helps to keep in mind, though, as the Revelation Book makes very clear in chapter 20, that this horrible scene of destruction at the end of our present historical age will be followed by the most glorious, wonderful Age of Peace that the earth has not known since the days of the Garden of Eden. It will be Heaven on Earth. The splendor and magnificence of those days to come will more than outweigh the difficulties and desolations that mankind is having to experience now and in the near future.

Verse 7 So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

Up to this point the prophecy has focused on the wrongdoings of Gog

and consequent judgments on him and his hordes. But lest Ezekiel's perspective should become too one-sided, the Lord shifts the spotlight briefly on to *"My people Israel".* Ezekiel was, after all, a Jew living as a captive in the foreign, Gentile nation of Babylon, and we can understand that he was more open to receiving a message about the wrongdoings of their enemy Gog and his armies and of the judgments to be heaped upon them. As a result, the prophetic message given through Ezekiel's channel has focused so far on that side of the issue. But as the old saying goes, there are usually two sides to every story.

Now the Jewish people, and Ezekiel, did understand that their conquest by and captivity in ancient Babylon had been allowed by God for a reason – namely, their own unfaithfulness to adhere to the worship and principles of their God. So now, in this future scenario that God is telling Ezekiel about, the pendulum swings from what was easy for Ezekiel to receive – the wrongdoings and judgments on Gog – over to the other side and starts speaking, for a moment at least, about those aspects of the issue that were not so easy to receive:

God says, *"I will not let them profane My holy name anymore."* We have already explored in Chapter 3 how the modern Israelis have "profaned God's holy name" and how this will cause the removal of His blessing of protection and will result in their chastisement at the hands of the Antichrist Gog, so there is no need to elaborate further on that.

As mentioned before, through all of this God demonstrates His fairness and justice to the world, which causes *"the nations"* to *"know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel."* If He is the *"Holy One"* in Israel, and if the Israelis are supposed to be His people, or at least have that reputation, then it is only right that He would seek to purge from them the wrong attitudes, injustices, and cruelties that they have inflicted on those whose lands they have stolen.

Verse 8 Surely it is coming, and it shall be done, says the Lord GOD. This is the day of which I have spoken.

Quite a resounding statement here: *"It shall be done,"* meaning there is no question that these events will come to pass. And then the statement, *"This is the day of which I have spoken."* Which seems to tie in with a

statement in Revelation 10: *"In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets* [such as Ezekiel]*."* (10:7)

There are many references in the various Books of the Prophets to the *"day of the Lord"* – the climactic ending of man's present age of history. God's final judgments on the Antichrist and his hordes mark that end. But they also mark the beginning of a glorious new age in man's history when *"the mystery of God would be finished".*

The reality of God and the marvelous blessings of His presence in the earth, which are somewhat hidden right now, will shine forth in great glory and splendor. It is impossible for us in this present time to grasp the full extent of what this means. But certainly, it is something to look forward to.

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Continue to Chapter 8: Clean-Up Campaign (39:9-20)