

[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! \(39:17-39:8\)](#)

[Chapter 8: Clean-Up Campaign \(39:9-20\)](#)

[Chapter 9: Israel's Purging Results in Final Blessing \(39:21-29\)](#)

Verse 9 Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years.

In the aftermath of any war, there follows a clean-up campaign. Modern warfare features the use of deadly explosives that leave behind a landscape full of unexploded mines, missiles, and bombs. So the clearing of weapons in the aftermath of Earth's final war will surely be a difficult and time-consuming process, one that will take a whole seven years to complete. Whether this "seven" is a symbolic number to indicate the thoroughness of the clean-up, or if it is to be taken literally, is not too clear. At any rate the number does show that it will take a long time.

And that will be the main task for Earth's surviving inhabitants during those early years of the Age to come known as the Millennium. And not just in Israel, but we can presume that, throughout the earth, on all the different battlefields of this worldwide war, massive cleanup projects will be going on.

A well known passage that seems to tie in with this one may be found in Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 - *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."* This will be a major activity for Earth's inhabitants, especially in the early years of the Age to

come - to ***“set on fire and burn the weapons”***. And then we could add to this, ***“melt those weapons down and make farming implements out of them.”***

The original Hebrew uses an intensive verb form to describe how the weapons will be burned... for it will take intense heat to burn or melt the weapons, which are made mostly out of metal. The companion phrase ***“they will make fires with them”*** goes along with this idea... or a better translation that makes the point more clearly: ***“they shall burn them with fire seven years.”*** (KJV)

“Both the shields and bucklers [larger shields], the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears.” Again we have the mention of these weapons (as in 38:4) that are not in use now, which, since Ezekiel had no words to use for modern weaponry, could be understood as referring symbolically to whatever weapons are to be used in this future battle.

The passage suggests the idea of a thorough purging of the weapons: ***“shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, javelins and spears.”*** Nothing is left. All vestiges of warfare are to be destroyed. For as the Scripture above about the plowshares and pruning hooks goes on to say, ***“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*** (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3)

Anything to do with the past era and its vile practice of warfare is to be purged away. The word used in this and the next verse for ***“set on fire”*** and ***“burn”*** was also used in the Old Testament in a religious sense to ***“put away evil”*** - to eradicate all vestiges of abominable objects and practices. This suggests that the Age to come will bring a thorough purge of all these implements of destruction, these abominations, these demonically inspired instruments that are such a prominent feature of life in our present era; they will be swept away.

Some of the weapons mentioned in verse 9 were made out of wood and therefore could be burned easily, except for the metal parts which could be made into plowshares and pruning hooks and so on. But then, as mentioned earlier, the words for these old-style weapons were probably stand-ins for modern weapons. Wooden ***“shields and bucklers”*** have been replaced by metal coverings as we see in armored tanks, war planes, and

so on. Wooden “*bows and arrows... javelins and spears*” have been replaced by metal guns and bullets/missiles of all different kinds.

Knowing that the future weapons-destruction program will be thorough; that is, the weapons will not just be thrown on a scrap heap, but will be destroyed - to prevent them from being used again - then it should be safe to assume that whatever is made of metal will have to be melted.

And with so much of it to dispose of, that will require a lot of heat. So where does the fuel for that come from? The next verse tells us the answer. At least it tells us where the fuel won't come from, which is a clue to suggest where it will come from.

Verse 10 They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them, says the Lord GOD.

It has been customary to interpret this verse to mean that the inhabitants of the land would use the discarded weapons for their firewood. The weapons would be combustible enough and used for that purpose; presumably, the heat would be sufficient also to melt metal-made weapons. But it's difficult to understand how modern weapons could ever be used as firewood for the local population, much less as fuel for the melting of the weapons. Even in olden days, it seems unlikely that weapons could be disposed of in this way.

Perhaps then, we should explore an alternative interpretation of these verses 9-10.

One thing the passage seems to make clear in the ancient Hebrew: the weapons are to be set on fire and burned, and burned rather intensely. This peculiar prediction about the future weapons disposal program starts right off the bat by stating that the people will “*set on fire and burn the weapons.*” (39:9) Apparently, this is the meaning of the Hebrew *ba'ar esh ba*. (See [Footnote 1.](#))

Since the same Hebrew wording is repeated in the next verse, then

probably it should also be translated in the same way. However, the translation found in most Bible versions changes at this point, even though, for the sake of accuracy, it probably would be better to stick to the same wording.

Thus, the phrase *“make fires with them”* could be changed to *“set them on fire”*; and the phrase *“make fires with the weapons”* changed to *“set the weapons on fire”* (or *“burn the weapons with fire”* - KJV). The emphasis in these two verses lies on the fact that the weapons will be burned with fire, rather than on them being a source of firewood (an unlikely possibility, considering that weapons are made mostly of metal nowadays).

In fact, the particular sense of the Hebrew used here expresses intensive force: *“They shall consume the weapons violently with fire.”* If metals from the weapons are being melted down to make peaceful farming implements and what have you, that would require intense heat, as in a blast furnace - a strong (violent) fire in other words.

So that may well be what the passage here is trying to convey: the fact that in a future day and age the weapons (most of which are made of metal) will be burned with fire, but they won't use wood out of the forests to do it since other, better sources of fuel will be available. It pre-visions a peculiar feature of this future Age (our modern times) - like the *“land of unwalled villages”* feature, mentioned earlier (38:11).

Yet, according to the wording in verse 10 - *“because they will make fires with the weapons”* - it still sounds as if the weapons themselves provide fuel for the local population, as well as for the burning of the weapons.

A great deal hinges on the word *“because”*. This word in ancient Hebrew (*ki*) was a catch-all word that could take on several different meanings. In particular, after negative statements (as in the previous *“not take wood... nor cut down”* phrases), the Hebrew word *ki* is often translated as *“but”*, *“yet”*, or *“although”*. (See [Footnote 2.](#)) And this would change the meaning quite a bit - saying something to the effect that in spite of not using wood from the forest, they will still be able to burn the weapons.

So here is a proposal as to how this passage (39:9-10) could be translated:

Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons [the modern versions of shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, javelins and spears]; and they will set them on fire for seven years.

They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, yet they will set the weapons on fire; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them, says the Lord GOD.

One thing to keep in mind: The ancient Hebrew language had a limited vocabulary, and words often had to do double-duty, triple-duty, and more, taking on several shades of meaning. So to get the precise understanding of an ancient Hebrew text often requires an accurate knowledge of the context.

In 1611 when the King James Version of the Bible was translated, weapons to some extent were made of wood, and it seemed plausible in those days to translate the Hebrew in such a way that the people spoken of in this verse would use the discarded weaponry for firewood, and for this reason would not need to cut down trees from the forest.

(This, by the way, was an issue in those days: forests were steadily diminishing in the British Isles, and there was much concern, before the advent of coal-mining, about what would become of the forests and about the possibility of running out of wood fuel.)

But now, what about modern times? We have many other sources of fuel besides firewood that were quite unknown to the translators of the KJV in 1611. Even coal, although it had been discovered, was not a commonly used fuel at the time; no one thought then it could be widely used. So it's quite possible the passage can be taken to mean that, in the distant future, weapons would be burned without using wood as fuel; there would be some other type of fuel available.

Unknown to the KJV translators, other sources of fuel would come into

existence, suitable for this huge task in the early days of the Millennium. Without this knowledge, however, it would have been easy to think that the weapons themselves could serve as fuel. Considering their concern in those days about their disappearing forests and where fuel was going to come from, the translators may have felt it necessary to imply that there would be a source of wood fuel available, from the weapons themselves, and not from the forests.

To think in this way would have been quite natural in 1611, the year the King James Bible was translated, a time when wood was thought to be the only type of fuel that people could use in any great quantity.

It can be difficult to translate ancient Hebrew without a knowledge of the context, or the future circumstances about which certain passages are dealing. And this is often the crucial element in translation, especially in prophetic passages about future events.

Older translations tend to reflect the cultural milieu of yesteryear. But since we live in the Modern Age (when it is obvious that the predicted scenarios in these two chapters of Ezekiel are starting to come to pass), then we could probably adjust the translation of this passage to accord better with our knowledge of modern conditions.

In the Millennial Age, to make the task of melting down the weapons easier, heat can be supplied from, let's say, hydroelectric power or natural gas, sources of fuel that supply more energy and contribute less to environmental pollution than wood. Although we can imagine that life in the Age to come will get back to basics and simple living, not all inventions of modern times are going to be discarded. It's not as if we're going to revert completely back to the days of blacksmiths and wood fires and no electricity.

We are told that in the Age to come, *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."* (Isaiah 11:9, 65:25) Obviously, many modern inventions will have to be done away with - the ones that hurt and destroy, like the weapons of war or those that cause pollution. A world without petrol-powered vehicles may be a hard saying for some motoring enthusiasts, but that doesn't mean there won't be many other useful, non-

polluting inventions that, most likely, will continue to be used in those future days.

So, besides not using wood from the forests, neither will the people use wood from the weapons themselves, since weapons nowadays are not even made of wood. However, unknown to the KJV translators, there will be other sources of fuel available for this huge task of weapons disposal in the early years of the Millennium.

Well, that is a lot of hair-splitting on this one small issue about the weapons-burning, but hopefully, it has been worth the effort of checking into it. There are other opinions too about what these verses mean. One opinion suggests that maybe there will be enough fuel in the weapons themselves that could be used to burn them. Another suggests that, because of all the alternative energy sources being utilized in the weapons disposal program, there is plenty of that (non-wood) energy available for the local people to use also for their heating and cooking needs.

Finally, in the second part of the verse, we have the phrase, “*and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them.*” The rulers of the earth have plundered and pillaged their people throughout history in order to splurge extravagantly on their weapons arsenals.

But after the glorious Second Coming of Christ, “*the meek shall inherit the earth*”, and then it will be the turn of the meek and the poor to plunder and pillage their former oppressors - by confiscating all this great wealth of metal and converting it into farm implements and many other useful things that will serve peaceful purposes. (Psalm 37:11, Matthew 6:5)

Verses 11-16 It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog.

For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land.

Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain

renown for it on the day that I am glorified, says the Lord GOD.

They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search.

The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog.

The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land.

What a mess to clean up, all those dead bodies, thousands and thousands of dead soldiers! Jeremiah says, *"They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground"* ... for awhile at least, because it's too much to take care of all at once. (Jeremiah 25:33) That will be one of our biggest jobs then: just mopping-up after the Battle of Armageddon at the start of the Millennium - seven years to burn up all the weapons and seven months to bury the bodies. That's a dirty and huge job the Israelites will have to do in Israel, and in other parts of the world different nationalities will be occupied with whatever clean-up is needed in their territories.



“The valley of those who pass by east of the sea.” “East of the sea” means east of the Mediterranean Sea. Here lies the Valley of Megiddo (battleground for the Battle of Armageddon according to Revelation 16:16). As part of the Jezreel Valley, it stretches southeastwards from the Bay of Haifa, where Israel’s main port city Haifa is located, under the shadow of Mount Carmel, and marks the beginning of the important travel route between Haifa and Jerusalem to the south.

Having become the ***“burial place”*** for Gog and his hordes, the route will be blocked - ***“will obstruct travelers”*** - because of the mess left in the aftermath of the battle. Even the stench from the great number of dead bodies will be enough to prevent travelers from passing through. Imagine how so many corpses will stink! Within three or four days a dead body

**starts to stink like mad. So this is one hell of a mess, and Hell made it too!
- the Antichrist and his mob!**

“There they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog.” That literally means “the multitude of Gog,” or Gog’s army. They’re all slaughtered there, and Gog, the Antichrist, is sent straight from this Battle to the Lake of Fire, along with the False Prophet. ([Revelation 19:20.](#))

“For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. Indeed all the people of the land will be burying.” It is such a big job that just about everybody who’s left after this terrible war will be busy burying all these dead, piles and piles of dead!

“And they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified, says the Lord GOD.” A more accurate translation for this might be the following: ***“and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them.”*** (NIV) And the memory of this great Battle will live on because of this great ***“burial place”*** in a valley that is to be re-named in commemoration of that Battle.

Even nowadays we have such memorials: millions of graves in huge cemeteries all over Europe, which serve as silent, but powerful and sobering reminders of the battles of the 20th Century’s World Wars. And this great cemetery in Israel will also serve as a powerful reminder of the terrible struggles that human society endured in this last great World War when the Messiah came to the rescue and ushered in the great Era of Peace - an era described in the Sacred Book as a time when ***“nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*** (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3)

“On the day that I am glorified.” How is God ***“glorified”*** by this? Because they know He’s the Messiah and He did it. Is God ***“glorified”*** in all these dead, stinking bodies? Yes, because they were His enemies! It shows God’s judgment upon the wicked, upon the Antichrist forces that are slaughtered here, those anti-Christ forces that caused so much trouble: persecuting the poor, persecuting peace-loving and God-honoring folks throughout the world, and wreaking havoc on the earth. And here they are lying rotting in the fields of Israel - a fitting end to these agents of the Dark forces.

It should be mentioned, however, that a distinction exists between the main guilty ones amongst the forces of Gog - the *“princes of the earth”*, *“mighty men”*, and *“men of war”* - and the common foot-soldiers, those who allowed themselves, innocently perhaps or in ignorance, to get roped into fighting Gog’s battles. (39:18, 20)

“They will set apart men regularly employed.” By the end of seven months after the main task of burying all the obvious and piled-up corpses, then they will begin to look for whatever is left, using special teams of search parties and buriers. Once the beasts of the field have eaten what they want and the fowls of the air have cleaned off what they can get at, there’s nothing left except the bones. These birds and beasts will have been quite busy because the Lord will invite them (in the next few verses) to scavenge the corpses left from the Battle. Because the quicker they eat as much as they can eat, then the quicker the bugs and worms can finish the rest, leaving nothing except bones, which will be more difficult to find. But even these have to be buried *“in order to cleanse”* the land.

“When anyone sees a man’s bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it.” This has been a common practice in times of war. After the battle is over, special teams go out searching for the different dead ones, and when they find them, stick a little sign or flag up over them to attract attention; then the teams that come out later with trucks to gather the dead can easily locate them.

“In the Valley of Hamon Gog. The name of the city will also be Hamonah.” Besides renaming the Valley of Megiddo to *“Hamon Gog”*, the city nearby will be named *“Hamonah”* which means *“city of the multitude”*.

“Thus shall they cleanse the land.” What a mess! No doubt the Israelis are going to be thankful when that job is over!

Verses 17-20 And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: assemble yourselves and come; gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood.

You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you.

You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war, says the Lord GOD.

God hasn't forbidden the beasts of the field or the vultures of the air to drink blood and eat flesh; that's their job. They're the garbage men who clean up the garbage. They get at it first because there aren't going to be enough people around right off the bat to get everybody buried in a hurry. So these garbage men of God, God's garbage men, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, are going to start cleaning up the mess by picking the bones clean.

Well, this is certainly one dirty, stinking portion of Scripture! God is just telling it like it is, no frills or window-dressing, just the plain, ugly facts of the matter, that's all. It's a dirty, gory story, but that's the end of the wicked, a sickening sight!

So God, after the Battle of Armageddon, invites the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to come and have a feast! This feast is described again in the 19th Chapter of Revelation, Verses 17-18: *"Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather together for the supper of the great God!..."*

This repetition of God's invitation to the carrion-eaters is a common thread that helps to tie the two passages together, Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 19, and therefore to know that they both are describing the same thing. The former passage provides much information about the earthly political developments, leading up to this great final Battle - who the nations involved are, and so on - while the latter provides much information about the supernatural aspects of the Battle.

These *"mighty princes of the earth"*, who lie dead on the battlefield, are compared to sacrificial offerings. Normally, animals are used as sacrifices to God or to idols. Now it is the animals who are receiving the

sacrifice, and it's humans they get to feed on. It's as if God is mocking His enemies, especially the leaders and warmongers who are responsible for bringing about all this havoc and carnage in the earth:

“Look what high profile delicacies I’m giving you to eat - princes and mighty men!” These are the ones who have been sacrificing people’s lives to propitiate their gods of war, greed, and lust for power. Now they are the sacrifices, not to God or even the Devil, but just to satisfy the appetite of birds and beasts. In the end that is all their lives have been worth.

Usually, it's the young foot-soldiers who must suffer on the fields of battle, while the warmongers, the leaders, the generals find ways to escape retribution. But as the passage emphasizes here, they will not escape. The returning Messiah and his angelic forces will see to it that “*the princes of the earth, mighty men and all the men of war*” receive their just reward during this last great battle for the salvation of planet Earth.

Footnote 1: Definitions for the Hebrew words translated as “*set on fire*” and “*burn*”

“*[Ba’ar esh bah]* to set fire to anything, Eze. 39:9, 10.”

“*[Nasaq]* TO KINDLE, Isa 44:15; Eze 49:9.”

[from Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, pgs 132 and 569, published 1879]

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Footnote 2:

“From the causal power [of *ki*] there arises - (6) its varied use in *adversative* sentences. For often - (a) after a negation, it is i.q. [the same as] *sed, but... but truly, yet... although...*” [from Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, pg 393, published 1879]

Ezekiel 38-39: Ancient Prophet Glimpses Modern World! (8)

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Continue to **[Chapter 9: Israel's Purging Results in Final Blessing \(39:21-29\)](#)**