

The Prophecy that Is Shaping History

New Research on
Ezekiel's Vision of the End

Jon Mark Ruthven, PhD
with
Thab Griess

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Jon Mark Ruthven, PhD

Ihab Griess, PhD

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In memoriam

**Pamela Jessie Ruthven
PhD, LCSW**



**26 March 1952 – 9 April 2001
Wife, mother, and faithful friend**

Preface

Great events in history often gather momentum and power long before they are recognized by the experts and commentators on world affairs. Easily one of the most neglected but powerfully galvanizing forces shaping history in the world today is the prophecy of Gog and Magog from the 38th and 39th chapters of the book of Ezekiel. This prophecy from the Jewish-Christian Bible has molded geo-politics, not only within the United States and the West but also, to an amazing degree, in the Muslim world as well. It seems that, millennia ago, Ezekiel's vision actually named the nation which millions today believe plays the major role in this prophecy: the nation of Russia.

Many modern scholars have dismissed Ezekiel's Gog and Magog prophecy as a mystical apocalypse written to vindicate the ancient claims of a minor country's deity. The very notion of such a prediction—that semi-mythical and unrelated nations that dwelt on the fringes of Israel's geographical consciousness 2,500 years ago would, "in the latter days," suddenly coalesce into a tidal wave of opposition to a newly regathered state of Jews—seems utterly incredible to a modern mentality. Such a scenario, the experts say, belongs only to the fundamentalist "pop religion" of *The Late, Great Planet Earth* and of TV evangelists.

But are the experts missing something? Why is *Planet Earth* the single best-selling book in English ever, beside the Bible? Why is this theme well received by a huge proportion of the American people? Why is Ezekiel's prophecy the basis for many best-selling books in the Muslim world today? Could it be that this impossibly odd apocalypse in fact resonates with the deep spiritual instincts of the masses worldwide? Is Ezekiel's prophecy not only *predicting* history, but *shaping* it?

A thorough, scholarly investigation into both the locations and the foretold destinies of the key nations in Ezekiel's Gog prophecy has never heretofore been produced at this level of detail. Hence, this work is a fairly technical essay intended primarily for the advanced reader and scholar, who have become so because they can judiciously follow evidence wherever it leads. We trust that this present study will lead the discussion to a significantly higher level of discourse on this controversial subject.

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Overview of Contents

While the prophetic vision recorded in Ezekiel's chapters 36-39—particularly chapters 38 and 39—is having a considerable and world-wide impact on human affairs, the focus of my efforts draws attention to the important problem of correctly identifying the nations involved in that prophecy. These nations had a date with prophetic destiny in the late 6th century BCE, when they were foretold to someday demolish international security. As the time of this prophetic fulfillment draws near we need to be able to identify these nations with some certainty. *The Prophecy That Is Shaping History* is arranged in the following sections.

Introduction. The Impact of Ezekiel's Prophecy on Contemporary Events outlines the significance and impact of the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel mentioned in Ezekiel's prophecy. This prophecy underlies the two best-selling books in the English- and Arabic-speaking worlds today, and is shaping geo-politics in profound ways generally overlooked both by historians and by the news media. This chapter also outlines the flow of biblical and historical scholarship regarding the identity of the nations within the Gog prophecy.

Chapter 1. The Interpretations of Ezekiel 38-39 examines two key interpretive issues that have bedeviled expositors since the first interpretation of the Gog prophecy. First, the chapter examines a problem in translation of the name of a key player in world events: Do these verses refer only to a prince who is a “rosh” or “chief”? Or is a prince of a nation named Rosh to be understood in 38:2-3 and 39:1? Second, Chapter 1 evaluates the major interpretive options of the Gog prophecy and demonstrates that a fairly literal interpretation best fits the evidence, *viz.*, that in the future a coalition of identifiable nations from all points of the compass—though principally from the “farthest parts of the north”—will invade a Land of Israel to which the people of Israel have been recently regathered.

Chapter 2. Ezekiel's Northern Nations: Ancient Near Eastern Texts records the results of a thorough search of topographical texts from six empires of the Ancient Near East. This chapter and the next break new ground in locating plausible candidates for the invading nations of Ezekiel's vision. The data show that, apart from Magog, all nations on Ezekiel's list have clear referents in the area—particularly Rosh.

Chapter 3. Ezekiel's Northern Nations and Russia traces the migrations and destinies of these nations from Ezekiel's time to the present. The conclusions may be considered controversial by some, but the evidence represents a significant advance in the scholarship on this topic. One important finding is that Ezekiel's *Rosh* clearly lent its name to the modern state of Russia.

Chapter 4. What Is, and What Is to Come, based on the foregoing material, highlights a number of key themes in the eerily contemporary Gog prophecy of Ezekiel. This chapter also offers a checklist that allows the reader to see more clearly the application of the key elements of the Gog prophecy.

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Introduction

The Impact of Ezekiel's Prophecy on Contemporary Events

As the world moved into the new millennium, it did so accompanied by a strong resurgence of Christian apocalyptic fervor. In the English-speaking world, particularly in America, scores of books, movies, videos, and television programs portrayed a fairly consistent view of the coming End Times.¹ This view involved the prophetically significant reestablishment of the Land of Israel and its subsequent invasion, both described in the Book of Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. The invaders are pictured as coming from the four corners of the known world,² but principally from “the uttermost parts of the north.” This prophecy is understood by apocalypticists to apply to the immediate future, and to involve a coalition of Muslim nations along with Russia in an attack on the modern State of Israel.³

During the period of millennial transition (roughly 1999-2001), a number of apocalyptic religious groups gathered in Israel, but were expelled by the Israeli government because of the danger they were thought to pose in provoking conflict with the Arabs.⁴ It was mistakenly believed that some of these groups hoped somehow to aid in precipitating the Second Coming of Christ by creating conditions for the “Battle of Armageddon,” prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel. Even the FBI—confusing peaceful fundamentalists with terrorists—warned that such groups posed a “serious threat,” not only to the United States but also, more urgently, to Israel.⁵

In 1999, a *Newsweek* cover story detailed American preoccupation with End Time events.⁶ For example, it claimed that 40% of all Americans, including 71% of evangelical Protestants, believe that the world will end as the Bible predicts. This belief shows no sign of abating. Three years later, a *TIME* magazine poll showed that 59% of Americans “believe that the prophecies in the Book of Revelation will come true” and that, since the terrorist

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attacks of 11 September 2001, 35% are “paying closer attention to news events and how they relate to the coming end of the world.”⁷

Amazingly, this Christian apocalyptic fervor has been mirrored in the Arab world. Since the mid-1980s, there has been an explosion of Muslim books that read like koranic versions of *The Late Great Planet Earth*—the wildly successful 1970’s book and film that described “future history,” including the building of the Third Temple in Jerusalem, the betrayal of the Jews by the Antichrist, the cataclysmic Battle of Armageddon, and the return of Jesus. The Arabic versions, of course, offer a decidedly Islamic spin.

For instance, in the best-selling book of this kind, the author, Sa’id Ayyub, describes the *Al-Masih al-Dajjal* (the Antichrist), who manipulates the world through Jewish plots. He claims that Catholicism is one such plot because, he says, all the popes were Jews!

In time, Ayyub predicts, this evil man will destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque, now claimed as Islam’s third-most-holy site. Then he will replace the mosque with a Jewish temple, from which he will rule his evil followers: Christians, Jews and the West generally. At this, the prophet Issa (Jesus) will mobilize all true Muslims into an overwhelming Jihad which will slaughter this Anti-Christ and his supporters at the Battle of Armageddon.⁸

I. Historical Roots

In contrast to relatively recent Arab works, American apocalypticism is much older and has deeper roots. Over time, it has had a significant impact on theological thought, and, remarkably, on American foreign policy at its highest levels. This development can be described in three phases:

Phase 1. Christian apologists often appealed to a “proof from prophecy” to commend their faith to the unbeliever.⁹ This approach—contained in Christianity’s founding documents, as well as in the earliest Church apologists’ works—had a certain *cachet* during the Enlightenment, and was popularized in the work of William Paley, whose *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794) was the primary apologetics textbook in English for over a century.¹⁰

Earlier, Sir Isaac Newton insisted that rejection of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation concerning the End Times (which he believed to be the times in which he lived) was essentially rejection of the Christian religion itself.¹¹ This fascination with the evidential nature of Bible prophecy became a staple in popular Christianity, in England and in North America. These views were expressed principally in the writings of the apocalypticists J. N. Darby and Clarence Larkin, who mapped out the entire span of divine

salvation history in elaborate charts.¹² The works of these men shaped much of the later theological agenda for North American fundamentalists.

Phase 2. In American religious life, 1868 ushered in a new phenomenon: The first of the annual “Bible-prophecy conferences” convened in Niagara, New York.¹³ These conferences both reflected and stimulated a greater movement of theological thought that emphasized the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy, and gave it a contemporaneous application. The Bible prophecy conferences spread premillennial views, especially those which fit into the dispensational framework of J. N. Darby—views expressed later in the extremely popular *Scofield Reference Bible*, which sold over two-million copies in its first printing in 1909. This reference Bible popularized dispensationalism, premillennialism, and pretribulationalism; it also popularized the recognition of the northern nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39 as Russia.¹⁴

Subsequent events served to accelerate the influence of these views. For example, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia which led to an anti-Semitic regime of atheistic Communism, the Nazi murder of six million Jews, the declaration of the new State of Israel, the Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons, and the success of Communism’s world-wide advance as one nation after another fell into its orbit all led to the development of an apocalyptic mind-set in mid-Twentieth-Century America. Even the prestigious and oft-quoted *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* set the doomsday clock on the journal’s cover to only minutes before an apocalyptic midnight.¹⁵

As they surveyed current events, Christian fundamentalists found compelling evidence for the identification of Ezekiel’s Rosh with Russia, as well as reason to expect a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning the eschatological Russian invasion of Israel.

Another highly significant event for fundamentalists was the Six-Day War. In June of 1967, the armies of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan had surrounded Israel and were poised to attack. Then Israel learned that Egyptian President Abdul Nasser—who had already massed his troops on Israel’s southern border—had demanded, *and obtained*, the withdrawal of the UN “peace-keeping” troops blocking his army’s way to Israel.

Since Israel is smaller than San Bernardino county in California, it had to act quickly if it wanted to survive. So, upon confirming the UN’s withdrawal, the Israeli air force disabled Egypt’s air force as it sat on the ground. Then Israel single-handedly repelled the five invading Arab armies that had entered Israel all along its borders. All in six days.

In the process, Israel recaptured the formerly Jewish regions of Judea, Samaria, and Bashan (the Golan Heights). Most importantly, they regained their ancient capital, the Old City of Jerusalem. During the 1948 War for

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Independence, many civilian Jews caught by Arabs in the Old City were murdered, 58 synagogues destroyed, and for the next 19 years (1948-1967), this area—which included the Temple Mount and the Western Wall—was inaccessible to Israelis.

Many Christians saw the return of Jerusalem to the Jews as a fulfillment of Luke 21:24b, “Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”—and as a clear sign of the End Times.

It was in response to these events that Hal Lindsey produced *The Late, Great Planet Earth*—which further popularized dispensational eschatology, both as a book and as a feature film shown in theatres in the United States and around the world. By 1988, the book had sold over 34-million copies—the largest number to that date in English, surpassed only by the Bible. This, and Lindsey’s subsequent books, as well as a flurry of similar works by other authors, reflected and promoted the enormously widespread influence of fundamentalist apocalyptic theology among Americans, and greatly increased the popular association of Ezekiel’s Rosh with Russia.

This trend accelerated during the millennial transition period, precipitating a sizeable outpouring of prophetic, apocalyptic, dispensational writings—virtually all of which affirmed that the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 involved an invasion of modern Russia into Israel.¹⁶ The influence of this eschatological view, however, was not limited to the culture of American pop-theology. Rather, the contemporization of Ezekiel’s prophecy about Rosh influenced the highest levels of geo-politics.

Phase 3. In 1976, the persistently influential identification of Ezekiel’s Rosh with Russia gained added significance with the election of “born-again Christian,” Jimmy Carter, as president of the United States. This event coincided with the New Christian Right’s growing influence on American public policy toward nations believed to be End Time “players” in scriptural prophecies.¹⁷ The belief in Russia’s central role in prophecy assumed an even more explicit character during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. This was evidenced not only by his statements, but also, more significantly, by his international diplomacy and his military decisions.¹⁸

Even before his presidential terms, California’s Governor Ronald Reagan showed a strong interest in the prophecies of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

It was the “fierce Old Testament prophet Ezekiel,” Reagan said, who had best “foreseen the carnage that would destroy our age.” At that point Reagan spoke with “firelit intensity” about Libya having gone Communist and insisted, “that’s a sign that the day of Armageddon isn’t far off.”¹⁹

At the 1982 National Religious Broadcasters convention, Reagan said Armageddon would usher in the Second Coming of Christ.²⁰ Halsell specu-

lates that this perspective may be what led Reagan to spend about two trillion dollars for military defense. The President was clear as to whom he saw as the key player in this great End Time threat to the free world.

Biblical scholars had been saying for generations that [the prophet Ezekiel's] Gog must be Russia, for no other powerful nation lay to the north of Israel. But that didn't seem to make sense before the Russian revolution, when Russia was a Christian country of farmers. However, now that Russia had become Communist—warlike, atheistic, and set against God and God's people—it fit the description of Gog perfectly.²¹

The same year, in response to this Russian challenge, Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Its purpose was to deflect incoming missiles away from the United States, and destroy them harmlessly in space. The press dubbed this system, "Star Wars,"²² giving it a falsely aggressive and fanciful image. The next year, on 11 October 1983, Reagan spoke to the National Association of Evangelicals, where he used Scofield's term, the "Evil Empire," to describe the Soviet Union—a term that reached far beyond Cold War rhetoric, reflecting his conviction that the Russian confederation was to play the major role in Ezekiel's apocalyptic war—a final world holocaust that could come to pass shortly.²³

One year later, the influence of Christian fundamentalist apocalyptic thinking in shaping both American foreign policy and military decisions reached a peak when President Reagan arranged for the Reverend Jerry Falwell to brief the National Security Council, and for Christian author Hal Lindsey to address Pentagon strategists on the prophetic likelihood of a nuclear war with Russia.²⁴

President Reagan's view of Ezekiel's prophecy was not limited, however, to shaping America's relations with Russia; it also influenced his relationship with other nations. He believed, for example, that the Arab nations of the Middle East would participate in the End Time invasion of Israel. On this basis he also correctly predicted the fall of Ethiopia²⁵ into the orbit of Communism.

Moreover, the same prophecy may have shaped the President's relations with Libya—a nation he saw (in Ezekiel 38:5, under the name "Put") allied with Ezekiel's Rosh against Israel. In April, 1986, American and British aircraft attacked Benghazi and Tripoli (almost killing Libyan President Ghadaffi) in retaliation for the deaths of several American military personnel killed in the bombing of a discotheque in Germany by Libyan terrorists.²⁶

Following the Reagan era, the 1988 presidential candidacy of the well-known evangelist and philanthropist, Pat Robertson, further typified the impact of Ezekiel's prophecy on American foreign policy. In contrast to aca-

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demic “conventional wisdom,” Robertson clearly warned of the danger of the Soviet²⁷ (and, more recently, the Russian) threat, and spoke strongly of his unwavering support for Israel.²⁸ Robertson remains convinced that Ezekiel 38-39 will be fulfilled by the invasion of Israel by Russia.²⁹

Through the following decade-and-a-half—from the presidency of George Bush, Sr., through that of Bill Clinton,³⁰ to that of George W. Bush—American support for Israel remained strong.³¹ However, even before evangelical Christian George W. Bush entered the White House, American foreign policy continued to be shaped by a Congress with many strong conservatives whose identifications with evangelicals (and dispensationalists) are well known. For example, the now-retired Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) chaired the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee; Trent Lott (R-MS) became Senate Majority Leader; and Dick Armey (R-TX) and Tom DeLay (R-TX) both took leading positions in the House of Representatives.³² Thus, congressional support for Israel against her enemies remained strong—though almost alone in world opinion, and despite the apparent economic and geo-political disadvantages this may have created for the U.S.

American support for Israel did not derive from current economic and political “realities,” or even, principally from the decreasing influence of the vaunted “American Jewish lobby,” but rather from strong conservative Christian tradition,³³ based on the Bible and history, and colored by an apocalyptic understanding of current events based in large part on the prophecies of Ezekiel.

Hence, neither the supposed fall of Communism in the late 1980s and 90s, nor the tenuous alliance between key Arab states and the West in the wake of the Gulf War, nor the loss of Soviet military support to its client states in the Middle East, nor the imagined prospects for peace between the “Palestinians” and the Israelis had, at the approach of the new millennium, seriously modified North American apocalyptic expectations of an invasion of Israel from the North.³⁴

II. Review of Scholarship on the Identification of Ezekiel's Rosh

Two major areas of study will have an impact on the present investigation: biblical theology, and Russian historiography. We must consider how biblical theology has long wrestled, with both the key issue of the *identity* of Ezekiel's Rosh, and with the correct *interpretation* of his prophecy.

The reason for delving into Russian historiography is that it began with a medieval document, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*,³⁵ which traces the origin of Russia to the lineage of Noah's son, Japheth (Genesis 10). Subse-

quently, it appears that even the people and land, “Russia,” or “Rossia” were actually named from Ezekiel’s Gog prophecy! We now offer a quick overview of each in turn.

A. Biblical Theology

Despite the popular American acceptance of Russia’s End Time destiny as they believed Ezekiel foretold it, most modern biblical scholarship generally views this scenario as an absurdity.³⁶ Even evangelical commentators often reject the idea without offering reasons or alternate explanations. They echo the prominent Old Testament scholar John Bright, who wrote, “We have an early example [of misapplied prophecies] in Ezekiel 38-39, a prophecy which some (quite wrongly!) believe will be fulfilled by present-day Soviet Russia.”³⁷ One evangelical specialist in the history of Late Antiquity also wrote:

Even if one were to transliterate the Hebrew *ro’sh* as a proper name . . . rather than translate it as “chief,” it can have nothing to do with modern “Russia.” This would be a gross anachronism, for the modern name is based upon the name *Rus'*, which was brought into the region of Kiev, north of the Black Sea, by the Vikings only in the Middle Ages.³⁸

Historically, the trend in scholarship has generally moved from optimism to pessimism about the likelihood of ever identifying Ezekiel’s Rosh, to say nothing of finding any nation contemporary with Ezekiel that answers to that name. In the latter 1800s, an unsigned article in McClintock and Strong’s *Cyclopedia*³⁹ enthusiastically supported the identification of Ezekiel’s Rosh with Russia, citing the work of a number of historians and ethnographers.⁴⁰ At about the same time, Friedrich Delitzsch, while in favor of identifying Russia as Ezekiel’s *Ros*, shifted the focus of his identification to a people more contemporaneous with Ezekiel, the *Raši*, who were then located on the northwest border of Elam.⁴¹

Even this latter identification eventually fell into disfavor, particularly among less conservative scholars,⁴² on the argument that the location of the *Raši* on the northwest border of Elam, some 600 kilometers from the tribes of Meshech and Tubal, was simply too distant to reflect the association described by Ezekiel.⁴³

Many recent commentaries, lexica, and Bible dictionaries think attempts to identify Rosh are a dead end⁴⁴—though they sometimes, simultaneously and without offering evidence, list the alternate possibility that Rosh is the name of a people.⁴⁵ This skepticism had an impact, not only on biblical commentaries, but also on translations of the biblical text itself, which

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tended to interpret the word, “*rosh*” as an adjective, “chief,” rather than as a proper name, “Rosh,” which the grammar clearly seems to require.⁴⁶

However, recent developments in the historiography of the Ancient Near East—of the early Greeks and Byzantines—as well as Russian historiography, now make it possible to reopen the question of the identity of Ezekiel’s enigmatic Rosh.

B. Russian Historiography

For over 250 years, the question of identifying the origin of the name of “Russia,”⁴⁷ or the ethnicity of the tribal name, “Rus’,” has been fiercely debated at the highest level of academic scholarship, principally between Western scholars and Russian or Ukrainian nationalists.⁴⁸

Until recently, Western scholars generally supported the so-called “Normanist Theory,” which asserts that the name and the identity of “Rus’” was derived from Scandinavians (“Normans”—Northmen) who invaded the area around Kiev in the 9th century CE, and came to dominate the local culture, comprised mainly of Slavs.⁴⁹

In contrast, the Anti-Normanists, or the Nationalists, insist that the name “Rus’” was extant either among the Slavs or among other indigenous peoples who lived in the vicinity of Kiev *long before* the Norsemen arrived.⁵⁰ In any case, Magocsi, even as late as 1994, concludes his summary of the Normanist/anti-Normanist controversy: “Despite the seemingly persuasive arguments of each side, there still is no definitive answer to the question of the origin of Rus’, and the debate goes on.”⁵¹

Few on either side of this debate claim any identification of the early Rus’ with the Rosh of Ezekiel 38 and 39⁵²—a connection that is now usually mentioned only in passing within serious scholarship.⁵³ For example, Jacques Bačić, in a major new work on Russian pre-history, suggested that Ezekiel’s Rosh referred to the Rusas dynasty of Urartian kings who were the prophet’s early contemporaries,⁵⁴ but he does not offer any connection beyond that.

Recently, however, important work by Håkon Stang defends an alternative thesis, which allows for the Scandinavian origin of the Rus’ but claims, in conscious application of the prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39, that the 9th-century Byzantines introduced the Septuagint version of Ezekiel’s “Ρωσ” (*Rōs*) to the civilized world as the name of the peoples who would evolve into the modern nation of Russia.⁵⁵

Thus, the present state of the question is one of disarray. The absence of clear primary written sources, as well as the presence of nationalist tensions,

have rendered it rare to find scholars in this field who can agree on even a single hypothesis regarding the precise origin of the Rus¹.

On the bright side, this lack of consensus on the identity of Ezekiel's Rosh affords an opportunity for further contributions. Indeed, we shall show that the discussion may be further advanced—though its direction may be reversed—by the presentation here of material from the Ancient Near East that has previously not been taken into account, as well as by the re-examination of later historical data. Thus it can be stated with some confidence that the Rosh of Ezekiel 38:2,3 and 39:1 may find its original identity among a number of candidates in recently published Ancient Near Eastern literature, and that, via its identification with the “Rus”² by the 9th-century Byzantines, Ezekiel's Rosh ultimately lent its name to modern Russia. Moreover, the other northern nations of Ezekiel—Gog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah—also may indirectly but ultimately refer to the territory of modern Russia, or to areas until recently under her control.

In order to understand Ezekiel's prophecy better, we must first work through some prior issues of interpretation—our task in the next chapter.

Introduction Notes

¹This millennial fervor clearly appeared in the catalogs of well-known Christian book distributors; many of their items—books, audio-cassettes, video-tapes, T-shirts—were Millennium-related:

From John Hagee: *Beginning of the End* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996) (book and audiocassette); *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998) (book and audiocassette); *From Daniel to Doomsday* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999). From Jack Van Impe: *2001: On the Edge of Eternity* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1996); *Last Days Video* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries International, 1997); *The Great Escape* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998). From Hal Lindsey: *Blood Moon* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front Pub., 1996); *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter* (Palos Verdes, CA, 1998); *Facing Millennial Midnight* (Palos Verdes, CA, 1999); *There's a New World Coming: An In-Depth Analysis of the Book of Revelation* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975). John F. Walvoord, *Armageddon: Oil and the Middle East Crisis* (Richardson, TX: Lapsley/Brooks Foundations, 1995) (book and audiocassette).

A prominent example was Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins' apocalyptic *Left Behind* series that appeared as books, videos, and T-shirts. Other videos included “Revelation,” “The Omega Code,” “Vanished,” “Visitation,” and “Tribulation Force.” *Newsweek*, 10 November 1999, offered a cover story, “Millennium Madness: Nearing 2000, Jerusalem is swept by unearthly hopes—and hellish visions of doomsday cults trying to kick-start the Apocalypse.”

²Apparently represented by the nations of “Paras, Cush and Put” (Ezekiel 38:5). J. Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), *ad loc.*

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³Ezekiel 38:6 and 39:2. Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 51: “For centuries, long before the current events could have influenced the interpreter’s idea, men have recognized that Ezekiel’s prophecy about the northern commander referred to Russia.” Twenty years later, the message remained the same in Lindsey’s *The Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, Ltd, 1997), 150-153. John Hagee, *From Daniel to Doomsday* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), in a chapter titled, “11:54 P.M. Russia Invades Israel,” writes, “Make no mistake—at some moment in the countdown to doomsday, Russia, together with her Arab allies, will lead a massive attack upon the nation of Israel that probably will involve nuclear weapons. The prophet Ezekiel clearly describes the coming battle.” In the same chapter (135) Hagee adds, “I believe ‘Rosh’ of Ezekiel 38 is a combination of Russian states.”

Another prominent figure in the modern “Bible prophecy” movement, Jack van Impe, notes, “Eighteen times in Ezekiel 38-39, the prophet says that Russia will wage war against Israel.” *The Great Escape: Preparing for the Rapture, the Next Event on God’s Prophetic Clock* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998), 113. Van Impe summarizes the “consensus” opinion as to this reality: “It is no secret that the majority of prophetic speakers and writers identify the prime mover among these nations named by Ezekiel as Russia,” 131; and that, historically, “Rosh was the name of the tribe dwelling in the area of the Volga.” *Israel’s Final Holocaust* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1979), 133.

⁴CNN reported, 29 October 1999, that the Israeli police had been on the alert for religious fanatics who may believe they can facilitate the Second Coming of Christ in the millennium year through violent acts or mass suicide. That resulted in three deportations for doomsday groups in one year, as Israel attempted to prevent provocative acts by fanatics during the year 2000 celebrations.

The influence of “Armageddon theology” is reflected in an FBI report that certain individuals have acquired weapons, stored food and clothing, raised funds, procured safe houses, prepared compounds, and recruited converts to their cause, all in preparation for foreign attacks on the United States in the new millennium. *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 November 1999, 4, reported, “Israeli officials are extremely concerned that the Temple Mount, an area already seething with tension and distrust among Moslems and Jews, will be the stage for violent encounters between religious zealots … Several religious cults have already made inroads into Israel, apparently in preparation for what they believe to be the End Times.” These groups say they merely want to be there to see these events rather than precipitate them, as the FBI and the media portray it.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the counterpart to the American CIA, has made a similar report. [Canadian] *National Post* Online for Saturday, 18 December 1999: “CSIS Warns of Millennial Cult Attacks—400 Groups Worldwide: Believers may try to hasten Apocalypse with mass violence,” by Steward Bell. <<http://www.nationalpost.com/home.asp?f=991218/155564>>

⁵*The Jerusalem Post*, 1 November 1999, on page four, under the headline, “FBI: Millennium Violence Threat ‘Very Real’,” describes the FBI as insisting that certain apocalyptic sects may produce violent actions aimed at precipitating the end of the world as prophesied in the Bible. The focal point of this violence, they say, is the Temple Mount, an exceptionally holy—and volatile—place for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

The apocalyptic extremists may aim, they believe, at provoking confrontation between Israelis and the Arabs.

It is noteworthy that the FBI named their research report “Megiddo.” This is the Hebrew name of the place near which, according to the New Testament (Revelation 16:16), the apocalyptic invasion of the northern nations and the Battle of Armageddon will occur. (“Armageddon” is a compound word formed from the Hebrew words “har” = “mountain”, and “Megiddo” = the town near which the battle takes place; in its present form “Armageddon” is Anglicized from the Greek.) “So far this year Israel has expelled some 60 Christian [sic] cultists, concerned that a minority of them with messianic delusions might try to trigger violence.” Reuters News Service, 19 December 1999. <<http://news.excite.com/news/r/991219/08/millennium-mideast-israel>>

⁶The poll is part of the cover package, “Prophecy: What the Bible Says About the End of the World,” *Newsweek*, 1 November 1999.

⁷*TIME* 160:1 (1 July 2002), 43-45.

⁸Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York; London: The Free Press, 2000), 185-96. Though his book is extremely popular, Ayyub has been criticized for using Jewish/Christian prophetic sources for his novel. In “Jordan Warns of ‘Dangerous Escalation’ over Jewish Temple Cornerstone,” (Agence France Presse, Amman, 28 July 2001) we read of a Jewish group that attempted to place the cornerstone for the Third Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount, where the First and Second Temples were located. In their follow-up, “Israel, Palestinians brace for showdown at Jerusalem holy site,” (AFP, 29 July 2001), the story heated up: “The Arab League, several Arab governments, and militant Muslim groups have warned of the potential tinderbox effect of plans by a group of Israeli rabbis [sic] to lay a first stone for a new Temple in Jerusalem.”

⁹Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*. Theological Resources (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 36-37 (Origen), 66-67 (Augustine), 137 (Sir Isaac Newton), 145 (Wm. Paley’s famous *Evidences*), 170 (R. Whately), 192, 208 (Vatican I), 226 (H. Schell).

¹⁰Dulles, *History of Apologetics*, 144.

¹¹*Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Darby and T. Browne, 1733), 25, cited in Dulles, 137. Many fundamentalist Bible colleges and institutes have traditionally offered a course on the combination, “Daniel and Revelation,” emphasizing prophecies which will have their fulfillment in modern events.

¹²Darby, John Nelson (1800-1882), *The Hopes of the Church of God: In Connection with the Destiny of the Jews and the Nations as Revealed in Prophecy* (Addison, IL: Bible Truth Publishers, [1889] 1991), also, *Full Indexes to the Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, Vols. 1-34 (Kingston-on-Thames: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, [1950] 1959). Clarence Larkin (1850-1924), *Charts from the Book of Dispensational Truth* (Philadelphia: C. Larkin, Enl. and rev. ed., 1920).

¹³T. Weber, “Niagara Conferences,” *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 773-74.

¹⁴Scofield wrote that Ezekiel specified key cities within Russia: “The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification.” *The Scofield Reference Bible*, ed. C. I. Scofield (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1909), 883.

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This may have been derived from an influential Bible prophecy writer, A. C. Gaebelein, *The Harmony of the Prophetic Word* (New York: Francis E. Fitch, Pub., 1903), 59. Gaebelein wrote, “‘Rosh’ certainly reminds one of ‘Russia’” Gog and Magog occupied the territory of Russia of today.” The Foreword was written by C. I. Scofield. “Rosh, Meshech and Tubal [are identified] with the powers now represented by Russia.” R. B. Girdlestone, *The Grammar of Prophecy: A Systematic Guide to Bible Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1955), 52. John F. Walvoord, *Russia: King of the North* [2 parts, reprinted from *The Nations in Prophecy*, 1967] *Fundamentalist Journal* 3/1 (January 1984), 34-38; No 2 (February 1984), 23-27, and a host of other literature from the so-called “Bible Prophecy” movement.

W. N. Kerr, “Scofield, Cyrus Ingerson,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 988, notes that Scofield read widely in J. N. Darby and other Plymouth Brethren writers who popularized the early Church Father’s beliefs along these lines—accepting pre-millennialism and dispensationalism immediately. He said that Scofield’s preaching and teaching were shaped by these beliefs and, of course, have influenced many through Scofield’s popular reference Bible. For a history of the identification of *Rosh* with Russia, see Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1992), 154-57, and Dwight Wilson, *Armageddon Now! The Premillennarian Response to Russia and Israel since 1917* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, c1977).

¹⁵For a history of this clock and its significance, see “The History of the Doomsday Clock,” as presented by *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. <<http://www.bulletin.org/clock/nd95moore1.html>>.

¹⁶More than a generation ago, J. D. Pentecost summarized the consensus of Bible prophecy writers: “Thus the identification of *Rosh* as modern Russia would seem to be well authenticated and generally accepted.” *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, [1958] 1979), 328.

¹⁷See especially, Michael Lieb, *Children of Ezekiel: Aliens, UFOs, The Crisis of Race and the Advent of the End Time* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Pr., 1998), esp. 74-125. Michael Barkun, “Politics and Apocalypticism,” *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol. 3, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 444.

For studies of earlier influences of this theology on American foreign policy, see Yaakov S. Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Pub., 1991), *idem.*, *American Premillennialism and Its Attitudes Towards the Jewish People, Judaism and Zionism, 1875-1925*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1986 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Dept. of Photoduplication, 1987). Douglas J. Culver, *Albion and Ariel: British Puritanism and the Birth of Political Zionism*. (New York: Lang, 1995). James A. Saddington. *Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948*. Ph.D. dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1996 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1997). Paul C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism* (London; Portland, OR: F. Cass, 1998).

¹⁸Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1986), 45, notes Governor Reagan’s early

interest in the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39, *i.e.*, that the Soviet Union is Ezekiel's Gog, now preparing for its eschatological invasion of Israel (Armageddon).

¹⁹"The leading proponent of Armageddon theology in Reagan's Administration is ... Ronald Reagan. As governor of California, as a private citizen, as a presidential candidate, and as commander-in-chief, he publicly and privately speculated that 'Armageddon' may happen in this generation." Andrew Lang, "*The Politics of Armageddon: Reagan Links Bible Prophecy with Nuclear War*," <http://prop1.org/inaugur/85reagan/85rrarm.htm>

²⁰Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 48.

²¹Lang, *The Politics of Armageddon*, 4.

²²Lang in *The Politics of Armageddon*, 1, claims "Dr. Falwell's support for President Reagan's 'Star Wars' program as 'our last and final hope' is predicated on the belief that the U. S. and the Soviet 'Evil Empire' are destined to collide."

²³It is perhaps more than coincidence that Scofield uses the term, "Evil Empire" to refer to Russia in his notes on Ezekiel 38. Reagan characterized the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil in the modern world," and Communism as "another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written." In *People* magazine, 6 December 1983, the President described Armageddon as "the end of the world." Elsewhere he said: "[T]heologians have been studying the ancient prophecies—what would portend the coming of Armageddon—and have said that never, in the time between the prophecies up until now, has there ever been a time in which so many of the prophecies are coming together. There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming, and so forth, but never anything like this." Cited in Lang, *The Politics of Armageddon*, <http://prop1.org/inaugur/85reagan/85rrarm.htm>.

²⁴Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, 47.

²⁵Though the "Ethiopia" which the King James translation of the Bible translates from the name, "Cush," is not thought to be the modern state, but a land now occupied by northern Sudan. J. Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), *ad loc.*

²⁶The Lockerbie Pan American 747 bombing in 1988 is also attributed to Libya. Later, in 1992, strict sanctions were imposed on Libya by the U. N.

²⁷Mark G. Toulouse, "Pat Robertson: Apocalyptic Theology and American Foreign Policy," *Journal of Church and State* 31:1 (Winter 1989), 73-99, refers to Robertson's use of Ezekiel's 38 and 39 prophecies to support his belief that a nuclear war with Russia is imminent (92), citing Robertson's newsletter, *Perspective* (December 1977), 1; (May-June 1978), 2; (September-October 1978), 2-3; (June 1979), 2; (November-December 1978), 3; (July 1979), 2; (January 1980), 4; (June-July 1980), 3; and cassette tape, "Pat Robertson Teaches: Biblical Prophecy," side 1B. More recently, Robertson's eschatology appears effectively in his best-selling novel, *The End of the Age* (Dallas: Word, 1995). The Battle of Armageddon appears in the last chapter, 365-74.

Countering the Left's minimization of the Communist threat, see the recent book by Harvard professor, Mark Kramer, *et al.*, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror and Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1999), which documents the *essential nature* of Communism as brutal and murderous.

²⁸Toulouse, "Robertson," *JCS*, 88-90, accused Robertson of being more concerned about the national interests of Israel than the national interest of the U. S. According to

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Robertson, the welfare of the U. S. depends upon its relationship to, and support of, Israel. Robertson's concern with Israel's security is largely based on Ezekiel's prophecies in chapters 38 and 39.

²⁹"Power, Glory, and Politics: Right-Wing Preachers Dominate the Dial," *Time*, 127 (17 February 1986), 66.

³⁰Though Clinton declared himself to be an evangelical, he evoked a visceral rejection by most evangelicals, who viewed him as a liberal and as a compromiser on many key social and foreign policy issues—notably, homosexuality and abortion—and as a poor personal example of "family values." William Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, 114 (Spring 1999), 74. On the influence of the end time theology on the politics of George W. Bush, see, "Apocalyptic Politics—Ties that Bind: Bush and LaHay have a history, and share a sense of mission." *Newsweek*, May 24, 2004, 55. This article was part of the cover story: "The New Prophets of Revelation, Why Their Biblical 'Left Behind' Novels Have Sold 62 Million Copies—And Counting."

³¹Donald Wagner, "Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry: The Theo-Political Alliance of the Likud Party with the American Christian 'Right'." *Arab Studies Quarterly* (Fall 1998): 33-51. "Wagner explores the recent history of the Likud-Christian 'Right' relationship in the U.S. and examines one case that illustrates the effects of this alliance on [America's] Middle East policy" [from Abstract].

³²Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy," 69. Cf. *Idem*, 73: "As the Religious Right has matured and gained strength, particularly with a Republican majority in both houses of Congress, it has pursued its domestic agenda with renewed vigor and somewhat greater success. And taking advantage of a Congress that has proved itself to be extremely assertive in its efforts to shape U. S. foreign policy, religious conservatives have also sought to widen the scope of their international agenda." The immediate context of this quotation is a discussion of the impact of biblical prophecy on the United States' protective policy toward Israel—a policy which frequently causes it to stand alone against the world in U. N. votes on resolutions condemning Israel.

Arab writers are apparently more aware of the impact of Ezekiel's prophecy on American foreign policy than are the American media. Muhammad Ma'ruf Dawaiibi, *America and Israel: A Study of the Tradition behind American Religious Support of Israel up through the Iranian Airliner Event* [Arabic] (Damascus and Beirut: Dar al-Qalam; al-Dar al-Shamiyah, 1990). Rafiq Habib, *Al-Masihiya wa-l-harb: qissat al-usuliya al-sahuniya al-Amrikiya wa-s-sira' 'ala sh-Sharq al-Awsat* (Cairo: Yafa lil-Dirasat wa-al-Abhath, 1991). Yusuf Hassan, *Al-Bu'd al-dini fi al-siyasa al-Amrikiya tijaha al-sira' al-'Arabi-al-Sihuni: Dirasa fi al-haraka al-Masihiya al-usuliya al-Amrikiya* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al'Arabiya, 1990). Ahmad T. Sultan, *Christian Zionist Organizations and Their Danger to Muslims* [Arabic] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, 1994). Jurji Kan'an, *Christian Fundamentalism in the Western Hemisphere* [Arabic] (Beirut: Bisan lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi', 1995).

³³Al Gore maintains a strong, even unconditional, stand for American support of Israel. On 18 May 2000, the Democrat presidential candidate delivered an unpublicized speech at the 39th Annual Policy Conference of AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. One may hear echoes of his (and his wife's) evangelical heritage concerning Israel in his remarks.

"I must tell you—on a personal note for my wife Tipper and me—three weeks ago, the celebration of that jubilee was among the most moving moments of our lives. To sit with Prime Minister [Binyamin] Netanyahu and his wife Sara, with President [Ezer] Weizman ... to see the house of Israel gathered ... in Jerusalem....

"One century ago, Israel was a dream. Half a century ago, Israel became a reality. Today, Israel is a miracle. We in America believed in Israel and loved Israel from the beginning. We are intensely proud that 11 minutes after David Ben-Gurion declared the new State of Israel, the United States, under the wise leadership of President Harry S. Truman, became the first nation in the world to recognize Israel. And on that auspicious day was born not only one of the most enduring nations in history but also the most enduring friendship between nations in history.

"Our admiration for Israel has never been greater; our commitment to Israel has never been stronger; our friendship with Israel has never been deeper; America stands by Israel now and forever. Our special relationship with Israel is unshakable; it is ironclad, eternal and absolute. It does not depend on the peace process; it transcends the peace process. Our differences are momentary, not permanent. They are about means and not ends. And let me say to my fellow citizens here in the United States, to our friends in Israel, and let me say especially to the citizens of any nation who may wish Israel ill: Don't you even think for one minute that any differences about this or that between the governments of the United States and Israel belie even the slightest weakening in our underlying unity of purpose, or will shake our relationship in any way, shape, or form."

For a review of the historic American commitment to Israel, see, James A. Sadington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948." Ph.D. dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1996.

³⁴Contra Barkun, "Politics and Apocalypticism," *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol. 3, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 445.

³⁵The *Russian Primary Chronicle* (tr. by S. H. Cross, 1953, repr. 1968. "A monk in a Kiev monastery (Nestor, Russian chronicler, d. 1115?) wrote a life of Saints Boris and Gleb, and of the prior of his monastery, St. Feodosi. Until recently, the authorship of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, also known as *The Tale of the Bygone Years* and as the *Chronicle of Nestor*, was attributed to him. It is now believed that he was the author of one of its versions." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th Edition (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 2002), *ad loc.*

³⁶G. A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), II, 406-24. For a brief discussion, Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalypse*, 31-32. Also, "They [these two chapters of Ezekiel] have become prey for Christian fundamentalist commentators who have interpreted them as dealing with an invasion of the modern State of Israel by Russia. The basis for this improbable interpretation is the LXX's misreading of the Hebrew word *ro'sh* in 38:2 as a proper name, 'Rōs.' Popularized by the *Scofield Reference Bible*, fundamentalist belief holds that the prophet was speaking about the modern state of Russia. Besides the geography (Russia is north of Israel), this interpretation has nothing to commend it." Bruce Vawter and Leslie Hoppe, *Ezekiel: A New Heart*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 173. So, Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 434. "The popular identi-

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fication of Rosh with Russia is impossibly anachronistic and based on a faulty etymology, the assonantal similarities between Russia and Rosh being purely accidental.”

³⁷John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), 164.

³⁸Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 20. He makes a similar point in an earlier article, “Meshech, Tubal and Company,” *JETS* 19 (Summer 1976), 239-47.

³⁹“Rosh,” *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1867-87, repr. 1981) IX: 134-35. The author favorably cites Gesenius, who wrote, “Without much doubt *Rosh* designates the *Russians*, who are described by the Byzantine writers of the 10th century, under the name of *the Roos* [sic], as inhabiting the northern parts of Taurus; and also by Ibn-Fosslan, an Arabic writer of the same period, under the name *Rus*, as dwelling upon the river Volga.” The author concludes his article, “This early Biblical notice of so great an empire is doubly interesting from its being a solitary instance. No other name of any modern nation occurs in the Scriptures, and the obliteration of it by the A. V. is one of the many remarkable variations of our version from the meaning of the sacred text of the Old Test[ament].”

⁴⁰E.g., Joseph F. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Sur les origines russes; extraits de manuscrits orientaux, adressés à mgr. Le comte N. de Romanzoff, chancelier de l'empire de Russie, dans une suite de lettres depuis l'an 1816 jusqu'à l'an 1825*. (St. Pétersbourg, Impr. de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1827), 24-29. Von Hammer suggests that the Koran offers a reference to the Rus based on Ezekiel’s prophecy in Sura 25:40 [sic, actually 25:38] and possibly 50:12. For similar conjectures: Johann G. von Stritter, 1740-1801. *Memoriae popvlorum olim ad Danvbim, Pontvm Evxinvm, palvdem Maeotidem, Cavcasvm, Mare Caspivm, et inde magis ad septentriones incolentivm* (Petropoli: Impensis Academiae scientiarvm, 1771 1779) II:957ff. Johann D. Michaelis, 1717-1791, *Supplementa ad lexica Hebraica* (Gottingae: J. G. Rosenbusch, 1792), VI:2224ff. Johannes Schulthess, 1763-1836. *Das Paradies, das irdische und überirdische, historische, mythische und mystische: nebst einer critischen Revision der allgemeinen biblischen Geographie*. (Zürich: Joh. Kaspar Näf, 1816), 193. Barthélemy d’ Herbelot, 1625-1695. *Bibliothèque orientale, ou Dictionnaire universel, contenant tout ce qui fait connoître les peuples de l'Orient; leurs histoires & traditions, tant fabuleuses que véritables; leurs religions & leurs sectes; leurs gouvernements, loix, politique, mœurs, coutumes; & les révolutions de leurs empires, &c.* (Paris, Poinçot, 1789) III:137f.

⁴¹Friedrich Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?: Eine biblisch-assyriologische Studie; mit zahlreichen assyriologischen Beiträgen zur biblischen Länder- und Völkerkunde und einer Karte Babylonien* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1881), 322. “**Râsch** Note that simply because *rosh* appears in Ezekiel 38:2,3; 39:1, it is no embarrassment to compare the name with that of the Russians; see Sarg. 12: Sargon conquers the countries *ištu mât ra-a-ši mi-sir mât É-lam-tê* (‘from the land of Râsch, [on] the Elamite border) to the brook of Egypt.’ Kors. 18: *mât ra-a-ši ša itê É-lam-di ša âh Diklat* (‘the land of Râsch at the boundary Elam at the banks of the Tigris.’) V R 5, 67.70: *mât r-a-ši* (conquered by Assurbanipal), cf. also Assurb. 108, I: *nišu mât ra-ša-a-a* (‘people of [the land of] Râsch’).”

In his commentary on Ezekiel, Delitzsch offers perhaps the most extended argument on the identity of *Rosh* of any commentary: “Gog, in the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, will invade the restored land of Israel from the far distant northern

land by the appointment of God in the last times, and with a powerful army of numerous nations, with the intention of plundering Israel, now dwelling in security, that the Lord may sanctify Himself upon him before all the world.” 157. “The argument used in support of this explanation (chief prince), namely, that there is no people of the name of *Rosh* mentioned either in the Old Testament or by Josephus, is a very weak one; whilst, on the other hand, the appellative rendering, though possible, no doubt, after the analogy of ‘the priest, as chief’ (1 Chronicles 27:5), is by no means probable, for the simple reason that the ‘prince of Rosh’ occurs again in v. 3 and in 39:1, and in such repetition circumstantial titles are generally abbreviated. The Byzantines and the Arabic writers frequently mention a people called (*Poç* or *Rus*), dwelling in the country of Taurus, and reckoned among the Scythian tribes, so that there is no reason to question the existence of a people known by the name *Rosh*,” 159-160. He concludes, “The name of the Russians is connected with this *Rus*.” 160. *Ezekiel and Daniel*, Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969).

Older commentaries (contemporary with Delitzsch) that make the same connection: Patrick Fairbairn, *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (Wilmington, DE: National Foundation for Christian Education, [1872] rp. 1969), 415. William Kelly, *Notes on Ezekiel* (London: T. Weston, 1876), 192-193; William F. Lofthouse, *Ezekiel Introduction, Revised Version with Notes and Index* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), 277. More recent commentaries include: H. A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on Ezekiel the Prophet* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979), 266; W. A. Criswell, *Expository Sermons on the Book of Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 216. Andrew Blackwood, *Ezekiel: Prophecy of Hope* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 229.

⁴²E.g., Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs (eds.), *Hebrew and English lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, [c. 1907] repr. 1981, later abbreviated as BDB) fails to list *Rosh* as a name. As early as 1916, A. B. Davidson claims that “*Rosh* is impossible to identify. Of course any connexion between the name and Russia is to be rejected.” *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Cambridge: The Univ. Pr., 1916), 300.

⁴³Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*. Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament, Bd. 13 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1969), 305. Michael C. Astour, “Ezekiel’s Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95 (December 1976), 567, n. 4. “The only known ancient geographical name that would resemble the alleged *Ro’s* is *Râši* (or *Arâši*) of Neo-Assyrian records, a district on the border of Babylonia and Elam ... which had nothing in common with Meshech and Tubal.” Leslie Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 29 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 199.

⁴⁴E.g., the authoritative J. Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), *ad loc.* and Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 199. For instance, R. Alexander, *Ezekiel*, Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 930, claims, “There is no evidence from the Ancient Near East that a country named ‘*Rosh*’ ever existed.” Also J. W. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, New Century Bible (London: T. Nelson, 1969), 202: “The word for head is misunderstood as a proper name, ‘*Roš*,’ leading to a bizarre identification by the misinformed with Russia!” Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2, A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25-48* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 305, “Certainly *Rosh* ‘Chief,’ is to be connected with

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'Prince' and is not to be interpreted as a geographical indication." Daniel I. Block. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 434-35. James Coffman and Thelma Coffman, *Commentary on Ezekiel of the Major Prophets*, Vol. 3 (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian Univ. Pr., 1991), 394, "There is no evidence that a country named Rosh ever existed." G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Ezekiel*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 409, "The name of a people or a country called Rosh is not known, and the identifications so far suggested are not convincing." Keith Carley, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1974), 255, "Rosh is certainly not a cryptic allusion to Russia, as has sometimes been supposed." Charles Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 220, "There have been many writers who connected the name *Rosh* with the Russians, but this is not generally accepted today."

On the other hand, because of the complexity of the problem of identifying Ezekiel's *Rosh* with a contemporary nation, many commentaries avoided even referring to the problem, e.g., John Skinner, *The Book of Ezekiel*, The Expositor's Bible (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900); James Smith, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: A New Interpretation* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930); Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976). Keith Carley, *Ezekiel Among the Prophets, Studies in Biblical Theology* (London: SCM, 1975); James Mays, *Ezekiel, Second Isaiah*, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Ralph Klein, *Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); Henry McKeating, *Ezekiel*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

⁴⁵ TWzAT "rosh," Band 6, *ad loc.* Köhler, Ludwig and Baumgartner, Walter. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* 4th ed. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1994), *ad loc.* H. Müller, "rosh/head," *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* edited by Jenni and Westermann; E.t. Mark Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), III, 1185.

⁴⁶Bible translations that list the first reading "Rosh" as an adjective ("chief"), with the alternate reading as a proper name are: KJV, ASV, RSV, and NIV.

⁴⁷The Latinate "ia" ending to "Rus," the original name, was added in the 17th century CE. Jacques Bačić, *Red Sea-Black Russia: Prolegomena to the History of North Central Eurasia in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, East European Monographs (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 1995), 17.

⁴⁸Håkon Stang, *The Naming of Russia*, Meddelelser, Nr. 77, (Oslo: University of Oslo Slavisk-baltisk avelding, 1996), 9. For an exhaustive survey of the early secondary literature on this problem, see Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, *The History of Ukraine-Rus' Vol 1: From Prehistory to the Eleventh Century* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, [1913] 1997), 472-92.

⁴⁹Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 109. Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 54. So also H. Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1963), 18: "There can be but little expectation that the problems discussed will ever be solved to the satisfaction of all the scholars."

⁵⁰See the arguments of this debate summarized in Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, Vol 1, 4. Anton A. Gorskii, "The Problem of the Origin of the Name 'Rus' in Con-

temporary Soviet Historiography,” [Russian] *Istoriya SSSR*. N. 3 (1989), 131-137, echoed the prevailing view within Soviet historiography, summarizing its recent attempts to show the origin of the name, Rus, to be indigenous, as opposed to the Normanist theory. A more contemporary but less documented account is Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto; Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

Paszkiewicz cites earlier examples of Soviet hostility toward the Normanist position. “It is natural that the ‘scholars,’ the lackeys of world reaction [against the Soviet revolution], are at all costs trying to denigrate and to slander the historical past of the Russian nation, to diminish the importance of Russian culture in all the stages of its development. Thus they ‘deny’ to the Russian people the initiative in creating their own state Soviet scholars must energetically combat the ideology of reactionary, bourgeois cosmopolitanism, which endeavours to distort the glorious past of the Russian nation.” W. Mavrodin, *Walkaz “Teoria Normanska” w Rosyjskich Nauce Historycznej* (1951), 3-4. “The Normanist theory falls within the boundaries of ... political pamphleteering. The fascist falsifiers of history in Hitler’s Germany, in the U.S.A, and in other imperialistic countries, made the Normanist theory their battle-cry.” B. Rybakov, “Problema obrazovaniya drevne-russkoi narodnosti v svete trudov I. V. Stalina,” *Voprosy Istorii* 9 (1952), 44, both authors cited in H. Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 418, n.1.

⁵¹Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 54. So also Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1963), 18.

⁵²E.g., Ivar Spector, *Russia: A New History* (Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 3d ed. 1935), 5.

⁵³Vernadsky, *Origins of Rus'* (London: Clarendon Press, 1959), 64. H. Paszkiewicz, *Origin of Russia* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 129, Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 11; Baćić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 279.

⁵⁴Baćić, *Red Sea-Black Russia*, 279. So also, Omeljan Pritsak, Dean of the Ukrainian Institute at Harvard University, and author of *The Origin of Rus'*, Vol 1. (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard Univ. Pr. for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981), in a personal letter, 12 September 1994.

⁵⁵The identification of Ezekiel’s *Rosh* with the Rus has often appeared as a sub-text in Russian and Ukrainian historiography. For example, while the “Russian Primary Chronicle” describes the origins of the Rus against a background of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 generally, some historians have made a connection between Ezekiel’s *Rosh* and the Rus, e.g., Ivor Spector, *Russia: A New History*, 5. J. Neumann, *Über die Wohnsitze der ältesten Russen. Sendschreiben an Gustaw Ewers* (1825).

Chapter 1

The Interpretations of Ezekiel 38 and 39

This chapter is devoted to the question of the hermeneutics (the science of interpreting literature)¹ of Ezekiel 38 and 39—the so-called “Gog passage”—because there are two hermeneutical issues that must be sorted out before the passage can have its fullest contemporary relevance.

First, *translation*: Did Ezekiel intend the term, *Rosh*, in his listing of “*Rosh*, Meshech, and Tubal,” (38:2, 3 and 39:1) to be a noun serving as an adjective (“chief”), or a name of a country or people (“*Rosh*”)? Second, *interpretation*: Is this prophecy to be understood as a visionary parable about the conflict of good and evil, or as a prediction of literal events to be fulfilled in some point in human history or in the future?

I. *Rosh*: An Adjective or a Proper Noun?

A significant claim of this book rests upon whether or not רֹשׁ (*Rosh*) is an adjective or a proper name.² In other words, should the text of Ezekiel 38:2, 3 and 39:1 (נְשֵׁר אֶרְאָשׁ מִשְׁׁכָּח וַתְּבָל – *n̄š̄r er̄'as̄ m̄ish̄ch v̄t̄bal*) read: “*the chief* prince of Meshech and Tubal . . .” (where “*rosh*” = a noun serving as an adjective, “chief”)?³ Or should it read: “. . . *the prince [of] Rosh*, Meshech and Tubal . . .” (as a proper name)?

Two arguments seek to deny that (*Rosh*) is a proper (place) name: a grammatical argument and a philological argument. Let us examine these arguments.

A. The Grammatical Argument

The *grammatical argument* against *Rosh* as the name of a place or people loses its force when it suggests that one may, in fact, *ignore the usual “absolute state” of Rosh* and translate it as a noun functioning as an adjective, “chief,” rather than transliterate it as a name, *Rosh*. The issue here may appear complicated—especially to those unfamiliar with Hebrew grammar—but is worth pursuing.

In Hebrew, nouns change to “construct form” to indicate a qualifying relationship with what follows. For example, the word “house” is pronounced “*bayit*,” but “house of,” as in “house of Israel,” is “*bēt*.” Similarly, the plural word, “days” is “*yāmīm*,” but “days of,” as in “days of King Josiah,” is “*yēmē*.”

In our Ezekiel passage, the noun “prince” (*n̄śī*) appears in construct form—a simple and understandable reading of which is “prince of.” Without the unfamiliar *Rosh* as the next word, the translation would be obvious: “prince of Meshech and Tubal.” But here the debate revolves around whether or not the word that follows the construct form of *n̄śī* is *able*, in good grammar, to break up the “construct chain.” That is, can *Rosh* suddenly become an adjective modifying “prince of,” to form “prince chief (*rosh*) of Meshech and Tubal”? Or can it *not* break the construct chain, leading to the translation: “prince of *Rosh*, Meshech, and Tubal”? In this latter case, the construct *n̄śī* is supported by the series of proper nouns, *Rosh*, Meshech and Tubal, in accordance with normative Biblical Hebrew grammars.

James Price, a Hebrew scholar,⁴ discusses a variety of possible objections to this latter (“*Rosh*-as-a-name”) reading in fifteen closely written pages in the article cited below.⁵ But the overall case Price makes is that the “chief prince” translation fails grammatically. The correct translation following the Hebrew grammar is necessarily “... prince of *Rosh*, Meshech and Tubal.”

The translation “chief prince” (rather than “prince of *Rosh*”) violates the syntax of a construct chain, both in Hebrew and Arabic. The argument against *Rosh* as an adjective-equivalent meaning “chief” (“prince chief”=“chief prince”) is that such would put a *compound* substantive phrase in the pre-genitive position of a construct chain, and the rule of a construct chain, in both Hebrew and Arabic, states that there must be *one* pre-genitive (and anarthrous, *i.e.*, without an article, “the” or “a/an”) substantive in the construct state, which must be followed by one or more genitive (arthrous or anarthrous) substantives to complete the construct phrase.

What this means is that the *one pre-genitive substantive* would be the נֶשִׁיָּה + (*n̄śī* “prince of”), followed by one or more genitive substantives, in this case, רֹשׁ מֵשֶׁכְ וְתָבָל (*Rosh, Meshech and Tubal*). Under this rule, *Rosh* would necessarily be a name—a substantive modifying *n̄śī* (“prince”). The translation, “chief prince,” then, violates the normative syntax of a construct state.

Price develops his paper by first showing that Hebrew uses four other patterns when applying nouns serving as adjectives to the construct state—any of which Ezekiel could have used for clarity had he wanted to say, “chief prince” instead of “prince of *Rosh*, Meshech and Tubal.”⁶ Price then goes on through three major Hebrew grammars to meet all the exceptional

constructions which might conceivably serve as a precedent for the translation, “chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” Each of these constructions, which cannot be reproduced here, are examined in detail and in each case found to be irrelevant or, at best, ambiguous as an application to the syntax of our passage. Price further argues that errors of translation by Jerome in the Vulgate shaped subsequent translations of this passage in Hebrew, until some modern translations (*ASV, NASB, NEB, NKJV, Harkavy*) and standard lexica⁷ corrected the error.

The main argument against *Rosh* as a proper name was stated by J. Simons who claimed that the absence of a conjunction between *Rosh* and “Meshech” precludes *Rosh* from being a noun is based on the grammatical rule of the Hebrew usage of *polysyndeton*—the usage of a number of conjunctions in close succession (“x AND y AND z”). Thus, the reading **רֹשׁ מֵשֶׁכּ** (*meshech*) lacking an “and” (Hebrew: “u,” ו), rather than **וְרֹשׁ מֵשֶׁכּ** (*u-meshech*) with the “and” (ו) in both texts, he says, argues against a three-element list of peoples or countries which would include *Rosh* as a country name.⁸ Simons’ objection is far from conclusive, however, since Gesenius notes exceptions to the *polysyndeton* rule.⁹

Far more serious for Simons’ objection is the fact that one exception occurs in the immediate context, where Ezekiel himself ignores this “rule.” Just two verses after the passage being debated, Ezekiel lists three nations, and the list follows the same pattern as “*Rosh* [no AND] Meshech AND Tubal,” above: “Paras, [no AND] Cush, AND Put” (**פָּרָס כּוֹשׁ וְפֻתּ**, 38:5).

Moreover, in a similar list (27:13), Ezekiel again ignores Simons’ *polysyndeton* rule: “Greece [no AND], Tubal AND Meshech (**גְּרוּסָה תְּבַל מֵשֶׁכּ**).” When related nations appear in a list in Isaiah 66:19, the same pattern occurs: “Tarshish [no AND], Pul AND Lud” (**תָּרְשִׁישׁ פָּל לָוד**).

Clearly, then, it is no real argument to say that Ezekiel’s *Rosh* must be translated as “chief” because it lacks an “AND” (*vav*, ו) that connects it, in a series, with the nations Meshech and Tubal. In fact, the context demands, against Simons, that the *opposite* be the case: that *Rosh* must be counted as a nation in Ezekiel 38:2, 3 and 39:1. It is the interpretation of *Rosh* as an adjective equivalent, “chief,” that leads to a serious deviation from normative Biblical Hebrew grammar.

We must also note that the pointing and accentuation of the Hebrew text here is a very late phenomenon, reflecting the *interpretation* of these editors, rather than proof for the original meaning of the text. Pointing and accentuation of this passage, therefore, which produces ambiguous results as to the determination of our question, is not determinative.

A second—philological—argument against considering *Rosh* as a nation can be shown to be equally specious.

B. The Philological Argument

The philological argument states that the primary meaning of **רֹשֶׁת** (*rosh*) is “head” as a noun, and “chief” as a noun serving as an adjective, and further, that *the word is unknown as a place name* in the Bible.¹⁰

While the philological argument for *Rosh* as a noun-adjective or common noun applies to most of its appearances in the Old Testament, the word rarely appears after a “noun + of” (*i.e.*, construct) form.¹¹ The easiest way to *disprove* a philological argument from silence is simply to break the “silence,” and provide credible cases of *Rosh* appearing *as a name*, and in fact a name to which our Ezekiel passage would likely refer. This will be shown in detail in Chapter 2.

In fact, there are several philological reasons for understanding *Rosh* as the proper name of a nation. First, it appears in various contexts in the Septuagint (LXX). Here the proper name, *Rosh* (Ρως in the LXX) appears not in one, but in two different contexts. One might argue that Ρως might reflect the Septuagint’s mistranslation of the Ezekiel passages, but when the name appears in a list of other national names in Jeremiah 25:23–26, one cannot assume the translators of the LXX simply misunderstood the grammar of Ezekiel, as claimed above, and “mistranslated” *Rosh* as a proper national name. It is clear that the LXX knew of a nation called Ρως.

Moreover, the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis 46:21) use *Rosh* as a proper name—a son of Benjamin. Of course, the existence of a name of an *individual* is hardly grounds for establishing the existence of a *country* by the same name, but the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 lays out a complete geography of the world on the basis of individuals who gave their name to their descendants, *i.e.*, “eponymous ancestors.” Interestingly, several of these nations listed in Genesis 10—*e.g.*, Gomer, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, and Togarmah—are also listed in Ezekiel’s prophecy.

Most emphatically, we are *not* suggesting that Ezekiel’s *Rosh* is a country named after the son of Benjamin, but one must note that the distinction between individual names and tribal and national names was much narrower in the biblical culture than in our own. Hence, we could expect to see the names of both persons and nations appearing together—as indeed, we do today, for example, in such family names as Israel, Ireland, Scott, Dane, Saxon, England, France, Frank, German, and Switzer, as well as in a host of names identical with those of various geographical regions.

Even today in the Middle East we see the official names of nations *derived from the names of individuals*, e.g., “The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,” and “Saudi Arabia.” The point is that the Hebrew scripture does allow us, in at least one other case, to see the word *Rosh* as a proper name.

Second, the failure to identify possible referents to Ezekiel’s *Rosh* among place names in the Ancient Near East may in some small part result from a failure to appreciate a phenomenon known as “phonetic shift” that occurs in the Semitic languages. According to this fact, the Hebrew *roš* (š = sh) is pronounced as *ra’su* in Arabic, *rēš* in Aramaic, *riš* (pronounced *ra’šu*) in Ugaritic, and *rēšu* in Akkadian.¹²

Third, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, there are, in fact, *many* candidates for Ezekiel’s *Rosh* among most of the major Ancient Near Eastern empires of the 1st and 2nd millennia BCE, as offered by advanced topographical research during the 1980s and 1990s.¹³ However, the location of any of the nations Ezekiel mentions will not be of much use until a larger interpretive framework is spelled out. It is to that problem we now turn.

II. The “Fulfillment” of the Gog Prophecy: Symbolic, Literal, or Irrelevant?

The second interpretive issue in this chapter is the nature of the intended “fulfillment” of Ezekiel’s prophecy about these nations. Prophetically, it has been one of the most difficult texts of Hebrew Scripture to interpret.¹⁴ This difficulty may have led some commentators to avoid significant exegesis of the issue, and sometimes to avoid any reference to the problem at all.¹⁵ It is surprising that even many significant texts on biblical hermeneutics fail to offer any suggestion towards interpreting this most difficult passage.¹⁶

As a preliminary matter, therefore, we should examine the genre of our text in order to clarify the background of the various interpretive hypotheses. Ezekiel 38 and 39 are basically a prophetic oracle about foreign nations. More particularly, they describe the uprising of foreign powers against God’s people after their restoration to the Land of their Fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). In the Hebrew Scripture’s prophetic books there are abundant oracles mentioning or condemning foreign nations.¹⁷

Among these prophetic oracles against nations, there are “war oracles,” a genre that goes back to Israel’s ancient tradition of holy war.¹⁸ The importance of these speeches must be sought not only in what they “said” to the enemy, but also in the function they performed within the context of Israel’s society¹⁹ as part of the preparation for and execution of warfare. They took the form of a judgment that denounced the enemy.²⁰

The Gog passage is often singled out as unique, however, in that it portrays an invasion *after* Israel's restoration to the Land. The assumption, of course, is that this restoration occurs immediately after the Babylonian exile, 6th century BCE, and not from "many nations" at a much later time.

With respect to this assumption, however, the interpretation of the Gog passage is problematic for at least four reasons:

1) It addresses nations on the farthest periphery of Israel's geographic consciousness, which contributes to the difficulty of identifying some of them, *e.g.*, Gog, Magog, and Rosh.

2) As far as we know, these nations had not traditionally been enemies of Israel.

3) The language of the prophecy seems extreme or hyperbolic. For example, the enormous number of soldiers involved; the descriptions of massive destruction; the huge hailstones and fire; the amount of blood shed.

4) The passage is cast as an event in the distant future ("after many days" or "in years to come").

These points complicate the task of identifying these nations. One must determine their identity at the time of the *writing*, with the added difficulty of establishing their identity at the time of the *fulfillment* of the prophecy.

Further, since the passage explicitly derives its full significance only in the distant future, a complication arises as to the motivation for writing the passage. Was it intended merely as a personal diary of Ezekiel's relationship with God, or was it intended to be read by his contemporaries? And if it was intended to be read by others at the time, in what sense would this information be useful or instructive to them in their historical and spiritual context?

Interpreters have responded to these problems with a variety of hermeneutical approaches—each with its own theological and philosophical starting points. These various approaches in interpreting this passage may be classified as follows: A: The Critical Hermeneutic; B: The Mythical/Symbolic Hermeneutic; C. The Contemporary/Literal Hermeneutic; and, D. The Futurist/Literal Hermeneutic.

Some or all of these approaches may share certain features, but they are distinguished here on the basis of how they view the *fulfillment* of the prophecy.

A. The Critical Hermeneutic

The critical hermeneutic tends to focus on *form or redaction* criticism, which practically excludes serious discussion of the author's intended message even to his contemporaries. And while much space may be devoted to matters of authorship, sources of prophecy, parallels to prophecy, and

speculation as to emendations to the text, the ultimate message to the readers may well be lost.

The critical hermeneutic is based largely on naturalistic assumptions that deny the possibility of ultimate and literal fulfillment in history. Often the assumption is that this oracle originates from a politically motivated religious enthusiast who sought to enhance the stature of Yahweh by apocalyptic rhetoric.

The critical hermeneutic fails to address the possibility that God could reveal his intentions to a prophet beyond a purely human “prophetic imagination,” much less that He could predict events far in the future. Some proponents of this hermeneutic assume that the frustration that accompanied the return of the exiles left them with a promise unfulfilled, because God’s glory had not been manifested to the nations, and because He had not given them dominion over the nations. In an effort to do justice to these unfulfilled promises, the critical approach suggests that the Gog passage was inserted by someone much later than Ezekiel,²¹ to offer hope by means of a prophecy that was largely fantastic and out of touch with the geographic realities of the day.²²

Although the critical hermeneutic assigns, in most cases, at least a vague historicity to the nations listed in Ezekiel 38 and 39, its proponents deny Ezekiel’s authorship of this passage altogether, arguing that it was an insertion introduced into the book long after Ezekiel’s time.

They do this by attempting to show that these passages interrupt the flow of Ezekiel’s text and are comprised of a jumble of contradictory elements. One such element is the chronology of the passage. Cataclysmic war follows the restoration of Israel, during a time of Messianic peace—a notion that seems to contradict other witnesses in the Hebrew Scriptures.²³ To many critics, then, such confusion over the authorship, date, and purpose of the Gog passage renders any interpretation or fulfillment “incomprehensible.”²⁴

On the other hand, some have defended the received order.²⁵ For example, one could argue: 1) The introductory formula of the apocalypse is Ezekielian in nature, and a stereotype of judgment oracles.²⁶ 2) The prophecy four times employs the expression “mountains of Israel.” 3) It also employs the expression, “hailstones” (38:22), which occurs *only* in the Book of Ezekiel. 4) The expression “I will put hooks in your jaws,” (38:4), occurs in Ezekiel 29:4 as well.

As is so often the case, a hypercritical approach requires one to abandon the search for relevance in favor of diverse speculation as to sources and authorship.²⁷ Such criticism usually offers no consistently plausible reasons for its speculation nor support for its view of the passage as sort of a temporary anaesthetic to its contemporary readers, without any real antici-

pation of future fulfillment of the passage in terms of observable world events.

B. The Mythical/Symbolic Hermeneutic

Those who adopt the mythical/symbolic approach reject any literal application of Ezekiel 30-39. They see the prophetic passage in terms of myth or apocalyptic language that either expresses little or no connection to historical events, or suggests that the prophecy could apply equally to any struggle between good and evil. For example, Gog can be seen as the “leader and representative of the [spiritual] powers hostile to God.”²⁸

In some cases, it appears that the writers’ naturalistic assumptions lead them to deny the possibility of a literal fulfillment of prophecy in a distant future. Hence, to them, reference to actual nations in the prophecy simply represent a rhetorical or apocalyptic device to illustrate some aspect of Yahweh’s relation to Israel or its enemies, *e.g.*, the conflict of Yahweh with those who oppose Him.

Certainly, the traditional Christian doctrine of “replacement theology” fits this interpretive pattern well.²⁹ “Replacement theology” holds generally that the Church has replaced Israel entirely in God’s plan, and, accordingly, future prophecies about Israel are fulfilled in some sense in the Church. In this case, at least implicitly, the prophecy can be seen figuratively in the same sense that the New Testament views the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan: It is primarily fought out in the spiritual realm—though necessarily with physical implications, as in exorcisms and healings (*cf.* Eph 6:12).³⁰

This spiritual dimension is especially clear in Revelation 20:7-9, which is probably the only unambiguous reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 in the New Testament.³¹ It is clear that since Revelation 20 is dependent on our passage, and since the Book of Revelation is highly symbolic, we must take care to read the application of the prophecy judiciously.

However, we can respond to a purely “parabolic” interpretation of this prophecy by noting that the *theological* interpretation of a *historical* event need not negate its appearance in tangible history. Certainly the records of Jesus’ miracles contain derivative, parabolic significance, but even that is lost if, in fact, these events never occurred. Even Fairbairn, who interprets the Gog passage “symbolically,” does not rule out a literal, historical fulfillment: We see here a “both/and” rather than an “either/or.”³²

Rueben Ahroni, as a representative of the mythical/symbolic hermeneutic, makes the following arguments:

1) The word “north” as the location from which the invasion comes should not be understood as a specific geographical location, since—he claims—no one from the north was a historical enemy of Israel.³³

2) The list of nations that would help Gog in his war against Israel is fictitious, derived merely from a compilation of names already familiar elsewhere in the Bible³⁴ and motivated by general feelings of hostility toward the nations.³⁵

3) The prophet has no physical invasion in mind, since Pre-Exilic and Exilic oracles are void of any anticipation of post-restoration hostility against Israel,³⁶ and a far-distant fulfillment is out of the question. As for literature identifying Rosh as a name of a future nation—say, Russia—Ahroni suggests it makes for delightful reading, but cannot be taken seriously.³⁷ This metaphorical, ahistorical hermeneutic sees the cluster of northern nations and Gog as merely a personification of Israel’s enemies.

The arguments above are not convincing for the following reasons:

1) Saying that a nation far to the north of Israel, and hostile to it, has never existed *in the past* (though it *has* existed historically, as we shall see in the next section) is no argument against such a nation arising in the *future*. The prophecy itself insists that its own fulfillment is reflecting an entirely different set of circumstances “in the *latter years*” (38:8,16), and in Ezekiel’s day. This also seems to be true for the prophet Jeremiah who earlier had seen that “*all* the families of the kingdoms of the north” (the language would seem to include Ezekiel’s northern nations) will one day besiege Jerusalem (1:14-15). Moreover, Ezekiel’s prophecy actually seems to have given the reader the very name of this future invader from the far north, as we shall see.

In any case, the Post-Exilic period was followed by a number of invasions, including those by the Greeks, the Syrians, the Romans, the Muslims, the Crusaders, the Turks, the British, and the recent string of invasions by Arab nations in recent years.³⁸ Even today, the modern nation of Russia, together with its client nations of the Muslim world, represent a significant “enemy” of Israel—particularly in view of their long legacy of anti-Semitism.³⁹ In these pages, we will argue that even though these nations may never have been enemies of Israel *before* the writing of the prophecy, they quite credibly can be viewed as enemies *today*.

2) Ahroni’s statement that the alignment of nations with Gog in Ezekiel’s prophecy was more or less random and irrelevant to any actual, physical invasion, seems starkly contradicted by the unprecedented present-day alignment against Israel of the very nations mentioned by Ezekiel. It is apparent that Ezekiel’s “fantastic” list of allies against Israel is now one of

the strongest arguments in *favor* of a future literal fulfillment of that prophecy.

Moreover, contrary to Ahroni's view, the prophecy itself states that these northern nations will be driven *not* by a history of previous hostilities, but by a very contemporary greed (Ezekiel 38:12,13) and by a sovereign act of God ("I will put hooks in your jaws").

3) Ezekiel 27 substantiates the fact that these names were real nations whose identity could be traced far into the future—that is, toward the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. This list, which portrays commercial activity in the 6th century BCE, includes five of the names on the war list in Ezekiel 38 (Paras, Put, Meshech, Tubal, and Beth Togarmah). In this context, these nations are quite real and identifiable. Furthermore, their fascination with trade and materialism seems unchanged in the Gog passage eleven chapters later.

The "mythical" understanding of these nations and the prophecy that involves them fails to convey to us, then, the sense of a concrete, literal event that seems justified by what is described in Ezekiel—especially in chapters 38-39. This leads us to examine another popular interpretive option for our passage.

C. The Contemporary/Literal Hermeneutic

This approach focuses only on the relevance of the Gog prophecy to readers more or less contemporary with the prophet himself, believing that the events and nations described applied primarily to the time, or near future, in which the prophecies were given.

As in the mythical/symbolic hermeneutic, in this view there remains a sense that the mechanism of "predictive prophecy" would involve a fairly naturalistic "prophetic imagination" consisting of "educated guesses" or extrapolations from existing geo-political alignments to the events in the prophecy.

By contrast, scholars who adopt the contemporary/literal interpretive approach tend to prefer the historical over the mythological solutions to the puzzle of Gog's identity. This position was held mainly by more conservative scholars writing around the end of the 19th century. For example, scholars have pointed out that—because of the forms of address⁴⁰ in the Gog passage, because elsewhere Ezekiel was very much interested in concrete historical events,⁴¹ and because he was tied to a specific geographical area⁴²—Gog is portrayed by Ezekiel as a real person.

Odell follows Wellhausen's suggestion that Pre-Exilic and Exilic prophecies (which would include Ezekiel's) were largely concerned with

historical events, while the Post-Exilic prophecies were preoccupied with the theological reflections on their prophetic ideas.⁴³

One of these more-or-less contemporary historical events that may have shaped Ezekiel's Gog prophecy was, they say, the vast military expedition of the Skythians, who swept from the steppes of Asia, far to the north of Israel, through the Caucasus Mountains, over eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia, and down into Egypt, *circa* 625 BCE.⁴⁴ The Skythians were ruthless and tenacious, and for almost three decades all attempts to drive them out met with failure.⁴⁵ Delitzsch was more specific; he said Gog may have been the sons of Gagi, the warlike people and rulers of the land of Sahi, identified with Skythia.⁴⁶ Wellhausen follows Josephus,⁴⁷ who also offered this identification.

Albright, in an influential article, suggested that Ezekiel's "Gog" represents a blending of "Gyges" (Gugu in Assyrian texts),⁴⁸ a prominent king of Lydia (near Meshech and Tubal), who reigned a century before Ezekiel, and "Gašga" (Hittite, Gašgaš), a "wild, mountainous district" near the Caucasus Mountains—from which this mountain range may have derived its name.⁴⁹

Others have suggested that Ezekiel—somewhat subversively, since his residence at the time was located close to the very heart of the Babylonian Empire—made Gog a cipher for Babylon.⁵⁰ Some went so far as to identify the biblical Gog with Alexander the Great—a view that was influenced by verse 39:6, "I will send a fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the isles/coastlands," the latter being associated with Greece and her Aegean island possessions.⁵¹

While we may accept the *premise* of this "contemporary/literal" hermeneutic that Ezekiel was addressing the issues of contemporary readers, even *primarily* so, nevertheless such a reading ought not to rule out the possibility that the prophecy has an ultimate *eschatological* fulfillment, some time in our future, that better satisfies the description of the conditions, nations, and time frame.

However, the contemporary/literal hermeneutic does have its weaknesses:

1) Neither contemporary events, nor those for a long time afterwards, fulfilled the specifics of Ezekiel's prophecy, e.g., the alignment of nations against a restored Israel, which had returned from the "four corners of the earth" to a land that had been "a continual waste."

2) This approach has failed to treat the phrases "in the latter years" (38:8) and "in the last days" (38:16) from the standpoint of the present. In other words, this hermeneutic does not test actual or potential fulfillment against history up to the present time. Historically, such a sizeable invasion involving the specific nations listed by Ezekiel not only has never occurred,

but there has never—until recently—even been the potential for such an invasion. These objections lead us to offer an alternative proposal.

D. The Futurist/Literal Hermeneutic

The futurist/literal approach simply proposes that the events of the Gog passage will come to pass in a fairly literal sense at some point in the future.⁵²

The underlying premises of this approach are basically a belief in the divine inspiration of the passage, as well as a belief that God inspired prophets not only to address issues contemporaneous with themselves, but also to include a portrayal of God’s work in the future.

This hermeneutic also presupposes a belief in Israel’s divine election, and in her consequent divine protection. Further, the logic would hold that, since the characteristic features of the Gog prophecy have not been fully realized, and since the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy is placed eschatologically “in the latter years,” the ultimate fulfillment *cannot* have occurred before this present time.

As the Introduction demonstrated, the parallels with contemporary historical events have influenced many conservative Christians to adopt the futurist/literal hermeneutic of this passage. Admittedly, there are differing views within this position, but only as to the *time* of the invasion.⁵³ This study will prescind from examining all of these options as to the timing of the invasion, and will concentrate instead on its essential characteristics. It should become clear that, by examining these characteristics, a time for the fulfillment of the prophecy may be determined. Before we move on to this examination, let us review several *objections* to a futurist/literal interpretation to this prophecy.

1) A central objection to the literal future fulfillment of this passage is the apparent *mythical character of the nations* listed. Gog and Magog seem to have no coherent referent in Ezekiel’s time nor in later history—though many candidates have been proffered.⁵⁴ Moreover, in the Christian tradition (Revelation 20:8), the names of Gog and Magog seem to be general titles for the antagonists of the people of God, with little else to identify them.⁵⁵

One may find an analogous title in the “Anti-Christ,” which, based on the hostility toward God and His people, applied to many historical candidates, *e.g.*, Antiochus Epiphanes. These recurring “types” do not preclude a prime fulfillment by an ultimate expression when the time comes. The same biblical interpretive principle is applicable to Gog and Magog. Even today, the final expression of Gog and Magog is still future and anticipated “in the

latter years” (38:8) and “in the last days” (38:16). The next two chapters will attempt to show the continuity of specific modern nations with the invading nations listed in Ezekiel’s Gog prophecy.

2) The conservative commentator Feinberg offers a variation of the above view. He argues that a literal interpretation of the prophecy is unlikely since some of *the nations listed in this passage would be unlikely to act together*, such as Persia (Iran) and Libya.⁵⁶

This argument was valid until very recent times, when geo-political realities nullified this objection. The astonishing rise of pandemic Islamic fundamentalism, with its anti-Semitism and a hatred of the restored Land of Israel as central tenets, has already linked remote countries in coordinated action, as the Muslim invasions and attempted invasions of Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 2000 to the present, demonstrate.

Today, the nations occupying the territories of Ezekiel’s prophecy (Paras, Cush, and Put) are, respectively, Iran,⁵⁷ Sudan, and Libya—precisely the “peripheral” nations that commentators insisted could not be associated.⁵⁸ Point 4, below, discusses these nations in more detail.

3) A third argument against a futurist/literal fulfillment is *the description of the weapons used in the battle, e.g., swords, shields, bucklers, and horses.*⁵⁹ In the last century, particularly since the advent of mechanized warfare, the response to this argument has run in two directions: It interprets this language both literally *and* figuratively.

On the one hand, at least in terms of the use of horses, the Russians were said to be accumulating huge numbers of them in preparation for an invasion.⁶⁰ Others, however, have suggested that Ezekiel’s description of military equipment should all be taken figuratively. For example, “horses” are a way of talking about the troops being “carried,” irrespective of physical means, while the other equipment represents the only way in his time Ezekiel could communicate the powerful and well-equipped nature of the invaders.⁶¹

4) A fourth objection, based on the extended burial process described in the prophecy, involves *the huge number of invaders*. The number of invaders perceived here by some commentators may reflect the 200 million mentioned in Revelation 9:16; 16:12.⁶² One commentator calculated that if “*all Israel*” [italics his] were to take all the working days within the seven months described in the prophecy to bury the dead invaders, assuming one million Israelites taking one day to bury two corpses, then one could calculate the number of invaders at about 360 million!⁶³

Of course, this highly contrived, labor-intensive, and artificial description of the burial process seems much more industrious than that described in the prophecy itself, *e.g.*, only teams of picked men survey the land, and identify and mark individual bones for burial (39:14-16).⁶⁴ Defenders of the

futurist/literal position could argue, however, that the manpower fit for military service among the present enemies of Israel—Russia, the Muslim nations, and the “Kings of the East”—surpasses even these startling figures.⁶⁵

5) A fifth objection to a futurist/literal fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy is related to the above: *The extreme and apocalyptic terms describing the destruction of the invaders.* For example, Ezekiel 38:4-6, 9 and 15-16 emphasize two characteristics of the invaders: 1) their enormous numbers, and 2) their intimidating military equipment.

This sets the stage for the great magnitude of the slaughter to come. The text (38:19-20) describes in elaborate detail the great earthquake that greets the invaders, followed by “every kind of terror” (38:21)—specifically, either confusion in the ranks, or the invaders turning on each other in mutual aggression,⁶⁶ plague/disease (*dever*), blood(shed) (*dam*), then a separate statement: “I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones, fire, and sulfur.”

Those who take a futurist/literal view of this can see a prescient characterization of a modern war: Chemical and biological weapons (“plague/disease”), conventional weapons (“blood”), and especially nuclear weapons which produce the paradoxical characteristics of “torrents of rain, hailstones,”⁶⁷ as well as an unquenchable fire (Hebrew: *esh v e-gafrit*).⁶⁸

6) *The language of retribution and extreme violence* against the invaders (whom God, in other prophetic contexts, uses as “servants” to punish Israel’s unfaithfulness to the covenant), is seen here as crass “carnality” and out of step with the Hebrew prophetic tradition.⁶⁹

The answer might be two-fold: First, while the description of the carnage may seem extreme, it does illustrate the principle that sin is ultimately self-destructive, and that the more extreme the sin, the more extreme the self-destruction. Second, the prophecy itself actually does express the traditional prophetic reasons for the conflagration:

The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword (Ezekiel 39:23-24).

This principle, accordingly, applies to all nations. The recurring theme in the Gog prophecy is that, because of the horrific evil of the nations and the consequences of their actions, they will only thus—through great destruction, during this climax of “the time of the Gentiles”—come to understand the power and holiness of the Lord.⁷⁰

7) Finally, one might argue that the fulfillment of the Gog prophecy in the immediate future violates the very conditions of the prophecy itself, in

that the invasion seems to come at the end of a peaceful period—some say the “Messianic peace.” The key passages appear in chapter 38.

8 After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. 9 You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land. 10 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. 11 You will say, ‘I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.’

.....
14c In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?”

The “peaceful” conditions outlined here need not describe a long period of the Messianic era,⁷¹ but rather may reflect a time when Israel’s guard is let down, perhaps due to a lull in the hostilities, a peace treaty, or, as happened just before the 1973 Yom Kippur War, a sense of overconfidence. This passage can remind us of the *Jerusalem Post* headline on the occasion of the Sadat-Begin peace treaty in September of 1978: “Peace and Security?”—the phrase employed in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 (“For when they shall say, ‘Peace and security,’ then sudden destruction comes upon them...”) warning of impending calamity. Far from serving as an argument against the fulfillment of the prophecy in our time, the author portrays these “peaceful” and “secure” conditions as an ironic contrast to the enormity and horror of the invasion—a warning against lack of vigilance, lack of faith in God, and against trust in a false peace.

Now let us offer the arguments *in favor* of a futurist/literal interpretation of our passage.

In the following points, the first seven give the essential arguments for claiming a futurist/literal hermeneutic fulfillment for Ezekiel 38 and 39, precisely describing the characteristics that only a *modern* Israel can supply. Item 8 discusses the *nature* of national names and that nature’s relevance for identifying the nations listed in Ezekiel’s prophecy.

1. The fact of the modern State of Israel—We would submit that the sudden establishment of Israel as a sovereign state in 1948 is the ultimate fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:24, which, in turn, opens the way for the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37, 38 and 39—a fulfillment that was only partially realized at the end of the Babylonian exile. The conditions of the return of

Israel at that point were “less than ideal,”⁷² and lacked some of the characteristics—e.g., lack of walled cities, and the return from “many nations”—that Ezekiel described in this passage.

2. Cities without walls—The text describes a scene that is regarded as virtually impossible in Ezekiel’s time: “I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, *all of them* living without walls, and having no bars or gates” (38:11). This has been interpreted as reflecting a time of Messianic peace. The idea that cities could continue to exist without defensive walls seemed quite remarkable—though only in more recent times, walls would provide no meaningful defense against modern weapons.

3. Israel re-gathered from “many nations”—The text twice mentions that Israel would be, “gathered from *many nations*” (38:8 and 12). Long before the time of Ezekiel, Israel had been gathered from bondage in Egypt and led to establish themselves in the Promised Land. Later, the kingdom of Israel was dispersed by Assyria to “many nations,” but was not regathered. Then Judah was exiled to Babylon, and was regathered.⁷³ But in cases where they had been exiled to only one nation—Egypt or Babylon—their return could not be “from many nations.” And in the case where they went into “many nations,” they were not again gathered.

In 135 CE, however, after the second Jewish revolt against Rome, the Jews experienced a great dispersion among “many nations.” That dispersal lasted until 1948—over eighteen centuries. Never before had there been a mass “restoration” of the Jews to their Land “from many nations.” It’s interesting to note that this mass, *world-wide* dispersion of Jews began *after* the Exilic period (Ezekiel’s time). This criterion, then—of Israel being “gathered from many nations”—could only apply to a modern State of Israel.

4. Israel re-gathered to a “land that had been a waste”—The emptiness of the Land of Israel before its resettlement by Jews is both a criterion for a modern fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy, and a documented fact of recent history, as we shall show.

Modern Arabs who call themselves “Palestinians” claim they are—for the most part—descendants of the Philistines who lived in the area from before the Exodus (Genesis 21:34; 26), or were descended from the Canaanites, who also lived in this land. This ancestral claim does not bear scrutiny. First, neither the Philistines nor the Canaanites were Arabs; the Bible, and history, speak of them distinctively: Arabs lived in Arabia, not along the Mediterranean seacoast.

Second, according to numerous contemporary accounts,⁷⁴ the Land was relatively empty of inhabitants before recent Jewish immigration, though there was always a Jewish presence in the Land and a Jewish majority as early as 1900. Arab and English records indicate that, overwhelmingly, “Palestinians” are Arabs who migrated into Israel mostly in the 20th century—long after Israel was called “Palestine” in 135 CE.

These recent immigrants came from the many Arab countries that surround Israel, drawn into the Land by the jobs created by Jewish endeavors to build a modern country—e.g., roads, telegraph and mail service, newspapers, schools, hospitals, businesses, civic organizations, farms and orchards—from almost nothing. This is why the U.N. had to create a new definition of “refugee” for these Arabs in 1948: In Israel, “refugees” are “those Arabs who had lived in Palestine (pre-State Israel) for at least *two years*.” Hardly an indigenous people.

In 1835, Alphonse de Lamartine visited the area. He remarked in his work, *Recollections of the East*, “Outside the gates of Jerusalem we saw no living object, heard no living sound.” In 1857, the British Consul in Palestine reported: “The country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is that of a body of population.”

A decade later, the famous American author, Samuel Clemens, known as Mark Twain, wrote in *Innocents Abroad*, “A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We reached Tabor safely. We never saw a human being on the whole journey.”⁷⁵

The official Ottoman Turk census of 1882 found only 141,000 Muslims of any kind in the whole extent of the Land. About then, Jews—always a presence in the Land—also began to come from abroad in great numbers, bringing agricultural and business employment opportunities with them.

By 1922, the number of Arabs had increased more than four-fold, to 650,000, in just 40 years, and leaped another 350,000 in the next 16 years to over a million by 1938. To claim that this increase came from the Arabs’ natural fertility would be to claim a birthrate of 334 per 1000—almost four times greater than Egypt’s, one of the highest birthrates in the world today.

Contemporary records show that Arabs from outside Palestine continued to enter the Land to take the available jobs—and more than that. In 1922, the British Governor of the Sinai reported that “illegal immigration was not only going on through the Sinai [from Egypt], but also from Transjordan and Syria.” Eight years later, the Hope-Simpson Report, sponsored by the British Mandate, noted that “unemployment lists are being swollen by immigrants from Trans-Jordania” and “illicit immigration through Syria and across the northern frontier of Palestine is material.”⁷⁶

At about the same time, even the Syrian governor of Hauran, Tewfik Bey el Hurani, counted over 30,000 Syrians who had moved to Israel in just a few months. Winston Churchill, who had served in the British Mandate of Palestine in its early stages noted that, “far from being persecuted, the Arabs have crowded into the country and multiplied.” In this sense, even Yasser Arafat is a typical “Palestinian”: he was born and raised outside of the area he once led—in Egypt, not in “Palestine” as he claimed.⁷⁷ Even today some 40% of “Palestinians” find their employment in Israel,⁷⁸ which, in turn generates a spin-off economy in the Arab areas of Israel.

The counter argument to all of this is that, whatever the origins of the present people who began calling themselves “Palestinian” in the 1960s, they live in the Land *now*, and have for some time. Hebrew tradition makes allowances even for “sojourners in the Land” and even for them in the future.⁷⁹ But whatever the origins of the “Palestinians” or their disposition, solid evidence indicates that the Land was a “continual waste” for a substantial period before the “regathering” of the Jews and the subsequent and dependent influx of the Arabs—a unique situation until the present era.

5. The unique alignment of nations against Israel—In addition, the alignment of the nations mentioned in 38:5 “Persia, Cush, and Put” cannot be disregarded simply because of their diverse geographical locations.⁸⁰ This very reality strongly argues *in favor* of a modern application of Ezekiel’s prophecy. During the past 50 years, it has been Russia—the contemporary candidate for the Rosh of Ezekiel—who armed nations hostile to Israel with weapons and military experts, their geographic distance being at that time irrelevant. On the other hand, in the early 1980s, after the Islamic/socialist revolutions in Libya (Ezekiel’s Put), Iran (Paras), and Sudan (the biblical Cush)—and the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism that swept over all the Middle East—cooperation and coordination between the Islamic regimes in Libya, Iran, and Sudan was not at all problematic.⁸¹

Significantly, these three Arab nations are on record as being the most vociferously anti-Zionist of the Arab world. They also represent the most aggressive Islamic states in their training and export of terrorism worldwide. Iran (Ezekiel’s Paras/Persia) underwent an Islamic revolution at the end of the 1970s that reoriented the country against the West—whom Arabs call “the Crusaders”—and against Israel.⁸² Libya (Ezekiel’s Put) follows the radical Islamic agenda of its leader, Mu’ammar Qadhafi, and represents a major player within Islamic extremism.⁸³ These days, the Islamic government of (northern) Sudan (Ezekiel’s Cush) is waging a brutal war against the Christian and animist Sudanese in the southern part of the country, killing them by the tens and hundreds of thousands a year, selling prisoners into

slavery, and compelling young girls to marry Muslim men, thereby forcing their conversion and genital mutilation. So we now see a remarkable and intimate association of three radical Islamic states which are committed to one goal: the annihilation of Israel, and are the very countries Ezekiel said would ultimately strive mightily toward this purpose (*cf.* Psalm 83:1-8a).

Ezekiel, of course, may have had another reason for listing these three nations along with those from the “uttermost parts of the north.” He may have intended to suggest a universal and coordinated attack from the “four corners” of the then-known world. This sense of a universal attack on Israel is enhanced by the far-flung locations of the countries he named: Tarshish (extreme West), and Sheba and Dedan (far Southeast), who seem to exhibit, at the very least, passivity toward, if not agreement with, the attack. In mentioning these nations, it appears that Ezekiel affirms the very point that some commentators wish to deny: That Israel will be attacked from every point of the compass—perhaps by those representing every nation on earth. This very situation described by Ezekiel seems to be Israel’s lot today. She is involuntarily isolated in world affairs like no other nation is. For example, Israel is the only nation in the United Nations that is *not* permitted to serve on its Security Council. Many times Israel has been on the receiving end of hostile U.N. votes that are unanimous or nearly so—often with only the U.S. voting with her.⁸⁴ This picture conforms well with the tone of a number of other biblical prophecies that portray Israel standing alone against the onslaught of “all nations.”⁸⁵

A favorable comparison, then, exists between Ezekiel’s characterization of the re-gathered Israel and the peculiar alignment of her enemies with present events and developments, confirming only the futurist/literal approach of interpreting the Gog passage.

6. The location of the northern nations as being from the “farthest part of the north”—Ezekiel 38:6 and 15 describe the invaders as countries from the “far north” (NIV) or the “uttermost parts of the north” (AV). The Hebrew is unambiguous about the extent of this northward direction (*yarch’tey tsaphon*).⁸⁶ It is debatable whether or not this term would describe Ezekiel’s northern nations at that time, or whether he foresaw these nations one day dwelling in a location much farther to the north. It is intriguing that a tribe of “Mescherians,” whose territory included the area of the modern city of Moscow, the capital of the traditional “Rus,” lies due north of Israel, on a line through the North Pole.⁸⁷

Even if the alternate, “Normanist,” theory on the origin of the “Rus” is accepted, these “North-men” (Norsemen/Normanists) originally occupied an area at the northernmost reaches of human habitation, which is directly north

of Israel, around the lakes of Ladoga and Onega. Even in this unlikely though popular claim, the very name, “North-men,” echoes the location of the invaders in the prophecy of Ezekiel. The location of Ezekiel’s Rosh, of course, rests upon whether or not the nation existed at all.

7. The historicity of Ezekiel’s Rosh and the other northern invaders—The first part of this chapter has already shown that philologically, Ezekiel’s Rosh (**וֹשֶׁה**) must be interpreted as the name of a nation, rather than as the noun-adjective, “chief.” The following chapters will offer substantial evidence for both Ancient Near Eastern and more recent candidates for this name and for those of the other northern peoples involved in the attack.

At this point, it is worthwhile to explore the very nature of nations and of their names as it applies to this study.

8. The nature of national names and the problem of applying Ezekiel’s Rosh to possible candidates—It is important to remember that one may approach the identification of a people group over time in a variety of ways: by genetic relationship to ancestors, as the citizens of a particular nation, or simply by a name designated by outsiders.

An example of the first might be the Jews, who have taken their identity through the millennia as “the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” (Not just “of Abraham,” because Abraham had many sons who were not Jews. He gave them gifts, and sent them all away from the Promised Land, in order to keep the Land free for the descendants of Isaac.)

However, though these genetic links have become diluted and diminished—by the rape of oppressors, occasional intermarriage, converts to Judaism, and assimilation out into Gentile populations—those who remain Jews today are the descendants of people who stubbornly *stayed* Jewish throughout the millennia. The children of those who married out or assimilated were as lost to the Jewish gene pool as they were to the Jewish identity. Religion has been the unifying factor that kept the Jewish people genetically Jewish. When Jews married people of other beliefs or gene pools who *did not* convert to Judaism, then, because they did not practice Judaism, their children were not raised as Jews and were lost to their people.

The tradition of identifying a Jew as one whose *mother* was a Jew may represent an attempt to preserve the genetic identity of Jews in the Diaspora. Before that, Jews were those whose *fathers* were Jews. During the dispersion, oppression of the Jews made it difficult to know who someone’s father was, due to the frequent rape of Jewish women by their oppressors, in times of war and peace. Conversions to Judaism, of course, complicate this purely genetic model somewhat.⁸⁸ But the children of these converts will marry

Jews and raise their children to do the same. So Jewish genes soon predominate. This is why it was long the custom for converts to take the last name “convert,” or *gēr*. Many common last names attest to this practice: Gair, Gere, Geary, Gear, Gare, and so on. The biblical idea of nations descending from eponymous ancestors falls into this category—*e.g.*, Edom and Moab, as well as those listed in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10.⁸⁹

Examples of the second method of naming a people—as being simply the citizens of a particular nation—might be seen in many modern nations, notably Russia and especially the United States, which is somewhat proudly multicultural, and where identification as an American is largely territorial, and has nothing at all to do with genetics.⁹⁰

“America” would additionally fall into the third category—that of being named by others—since the name was stamped on it by a German clergyman and scholar, Martin Waldseemüller,⁹¹ who had read of the adventures of Americus Vespucci, a merchant and explorer who discovered that the Western Hemisphere was not, in fact, the Far East. Waldseemüller called the new lands “America” in Vespucci’s honor.

Another example of the third case would be the American “Indians,” who, of course, never called themselves “Indians,” and were never “Indian” in the sense of being inhabitants of India at all, but were given their name through an error in geography.

It is likely that the name, Rosh—in Ezekiel and in much later history—involved a mixture of these types of ethnic, national, or local designations, whether self-described or named by outsiders. Accordingly, we must also be careful not to limit the identification of tribes by Ezekiel 38-39 only to a time contemporary with him, or too narrowly in terms of ethnic identification. Ezekiel’s nations may be fairly elastic over both time and ethnic composition.

Thus, given the fluidity of populations in the empires of the ancient Near East—and certainly just as Ezekiel, a Jew, was a constituent part of Babylon during his lifetime—we cannot assume the legitimacy of purely genetic descriptions of nations. The peoples or lands that Ezekiel describes far into the future may, in fact, share only a name, with the possibility that even that name was given to them by outsiders. This study hopes to show that in the cases of Ezekiel’s other northern tribes—*e.g.*, Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah—the names may have disappeared, but the people, even though largely assimilated, have persisted in some identifiable way.

On the other hand, as in the case of Rosh, though the people and areas may change, an identity can be retained via its name. As a model for our studies of the historical development of the nations listed in our Ezekiel

passage, we must recall the extreme case of Israel with the continuity and discontinuity of identity in locality and in genetics that it has undergone—from 70 and 135 CE, when it was dispersed throughout the world under Roman subjection, enslavement, and expulsion, to 1948, and the reassertion of its identity as the State of Israel almost two thousand years later.

It is to the problem of offering candidates for Ezekiel’s northern nations in his contemporary world that we now turn.

Chapter 1 Notes

¹For the reader interested in this subject, but unfamiliar with the formal study of Scripture, “hermeneutics” is defined as “the study of the methodological principles of the interpretation” of something written—in this case, the Bible.

²I owe most of the argument and data for this section on *Rosh* as a proper name to James D. Price, “*Rosh: An Ancient Land Known to Ezekiel*,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6:1 (Spring 1985), 67-89.

³“That in one or more of these texts a people of that name whose home was in Asia Minor, is indeed mentioned, is not entirely disproved, but it is at any rate rendered improbable by the fact that the same name can be discerned only very doubtfully in other (Assyrian) documents.” J. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), 81. On this dubious assertion, see Ch. 3, below.

Simons may have been dependent on W. F. Albright, in an influential article, “Gog and Magog,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 43 (1924), 380, who noted: “Following G[esenius] most commentators have regarded **רֹשֶׁת** as a proper name, *Rôš*, but this desperate assumption does not make any better sense out of our text, besides introducing us to a proper name nowhere else mentioned in our sources, which happen to be very full for this period of unrest in the North.

“As so often elsewhere in awkward passages, there has been a transposition, due to accidental omission of a phrase, which was inserted on revision in the margin, and later put into the text in the wrong place. We should naturally read the longer formula in the following order: ... Gog, prince of the land of Magog, chief [*Rosh*] of Meshech and Tubal. The shorter formula, which is repeated, then means, ‘Prince Gog, chief of Meshech and Tubal.’” Albright was a child of his times: When confronted with a historical problem, emend the text.

⁴James D. Price (Ph.D., Dropsie) is Academic Dean and Chairman of the Department of Biblical Studies, Temple Baptist Seminary, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

⁵Price, “*Rosh: A Land Known to Ezekiel*,” 74-88.

⁶Price, 75-76.

⁷BDB, 912; William Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, E.t., E. Robinson (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849), 955. Wm. L. Holladay, *A Con-*

cise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 329. Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* 4th ed. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1994), *ad loc.*

⁸Simons, 81.

⁹Price, 74.

¹⁰Daniel R. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 434-35. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1983), 305. Michael S. Heiser, “Gog and Magog, the (Chief Prince): The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls Toward an Identification,” (paper read at the Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting, November, 1999) summarizes modern scholarship in five fairly familiar arguments that *Rosh* as a toponym [place-name] is without exegetical foundation: (1) There is no such place-name known in the ancient world. (2) The place-name would have had no meaning to an ancient Hebrew audience, since the name *Rus* was first brought into the region of Kiev by the Vikings in the Middle Ages. (3) *Rus* and the longer *Russia* are Indo-European words, while Hebrew is Semitic. There is no linguistic relationship between these two language groups. As a result, the “*Rosh* -Russia” equation is based on false etymology. (4) The place-names of Meshech, Tubal, Magog, and Gomer belong to the geographical region of the northern Mediterranean and of eastern Anatolia, as evidenced by their presence in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, as well as in Ezekiel’s own description in 27:12-15. These place-names are not Russian cities, but ancient ethnic groups firmly situated in the ancient Near Eastern geographical reality of the Hebrew Bible. (5) The pointing and the accentuation of the Hebrew text rules out the interpretation of *Rosh* as a place-name. On these arguments, see above, and Chs. 3 and 4, below.

¹¹ 2 Kg 25:18; 1 Chr 24:31; Jer 52:24.

¹²BDB, 910, 1112.

¹³For example, the *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes* series published in Weisbaden (Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag). Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients. Publications from the Institut für Orientalische Archäologie, Halle-Saale, Germany. Simo Parpola and Michael Porter, *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*. Neo Assyrian Text Corpus Project (Chebeague Island, ME and [Helsinki]: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2001), esp. 11.

¹⁴“Chapters 38 and 39 have proved to be one of the most mysterious and most contested parts of the Book of Ezekiel,” Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 170. “One of the perennial enigmas of Biblical prophecy has been the Gog and Magog event described in Ezekiel 38 and 39,” Ralph H. Alexander, “A Fresh Look At Ezekiel 38 and 39,” *JETS*, 17 (Summer, 1974), 157.

¹⁵Representative commentaries that fail to treat this problem: James Mays, *Ezekiel, Second Isaiah*, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Ralph Klein, *Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); Henry McKeating, *Ezekiel*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Keith Carley, *Ezekiel Among the Prophets, Studies in Biblical Theology* (London: SCM, 1975); James Smith, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: A New Interpretation* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930); John Skinner, *The Book of Ezekiel*, The Expositor’s Bible (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900); and, Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976).

Moreover, Dewey M. Beeagle, *Prophecy and Prediction* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pryor Pettingil, 1978), a book that purports to discuss this area, does not offer any hermeneutical guidance for Ezekiel 38–39.

¹⁶Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996); Bruce Corley, Steve Lemeke, and Grant Lovejoy, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996); Millard Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993); W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1991); and Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1991). Walter C. Kaiser, *Back Toward the Future: Hints for Interpreting Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989) is more helpful in general terms, but does not treat our passage directly.

¹⁷For example, Amos 1–2; Isaiah 13–21, 23, 34; Jeremiah 46–51; Ezekiel 25–32, 35, 38–39; Joel 3:1–16; Obadiah.

¹⁸D. L. Christensen, *Transformations of the War Oracles in Old Testament Prophecy*, HDR 3 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 7.

¹⁹John H. Hayes, “The Usage of Oracles Against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel,” *JBL*, 87:2 (March 1968), 81.

²⁰Hayes, 81–82.

²¹For example, Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 171: “The chapters about Gog of Magog were probably introduced at least two centuries after Ezekiel’s time to show that the full range of the prophet’s vision of hope had still not been fulfilled. They mark a significant stage in the development of the larger prophetic hope.” See also, R. Ahroni, “The Gog Prophecy and the Book of Ezekiel,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 1 (1977), 1–27.

²²Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 320. According to Eichrodt, the Gog passage answers the need of a generation long after the time of the 6th-century-BCE Ezekiel. John Skinner and Frederik W. Farrar, “The Book of Ezekiel,” *The Expositor’s Bible* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), “Chapters 38–39 are the prophet’s response to a certain inconclusiveness and lack of finality in the program of restoration concluding with Ezekiel 37,” 379.

²³G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Ezekiel*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1937), II, 406, summarizes this view: “The previous chapter closes with a promise that God’s sanctuary will be in the midst of Israel forever. All danger from outside is past for the surrounding nations have been put out of action. There is no hint of a future crisis when the new age has dawned.” Cooke suggests that this apocalypse was composed and inserted some time after Ezekiel, 407. Bruce Vawter and Leslie Hoppe, *Ezekiel: A New Heart*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 174, argue that from the perspective of chronology, it appears as if Chapters 38 and 39 are out of place.

²⁴Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 519. “From a purely literary point of view, the disruption of the connection between 37 and 40ff, by the insertion of Chapters 38 and 39 [comprised of disconnected fragments] is contrary to the prophet’s intentions.”

²⁵M. S. Odell, “‘Are You He of Whom I Spoke by My Servants the Prophets’: Ezekiel 38-39 and the Problem of History in the NeoBabylonian Context,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1988), 1-42. Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, The New American Commentary, 17, ed. Ray Clendenen, *et al.* (Broadman and Holman Pub., 1994), 329. William A. Irwin, *The Problem of Ezekiel: An Inductive Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), “They are typical passages of the Book of Ezekiel ... in their united theme they are similar to Chapters 23, 16, 20, and 18,” 172., “The inclusion of the Gog prophecy before Chapters 40-48 is to give the restoration a wider setting, namely, the prospect of the knowledge of God among the nations.” R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 111, 115.

²⁶Millard Lind, *Ezekiel* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 314, also notes, “The expression ‘set your face toward/against’ (cf. KJV), borrowed from Israel’s worship, is used fourteen times in the book; here it occurs for the last time (*e.g.*, 4:3; 13:17; *etc.*).”

²⁷“A new school of interpreters has arisen which avoids, for the most part, any historical discussions and examines the text without any consideration of its location in time and space. This is like repeating the Apostles’ Creed and deleting all historical references such as ‘suffered under Pontius Pilate’ and ‘the third day he arose.’ No, prophecy and history belong together.” W. Kaiser, *Back Toward the Future*, 85-86.

²⁸Ernst Jenni, and Claus Westermann, “*rosh*,” *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Et., Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub, 1997), 2:422. R. E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, c1996), 175. “The lack of clear detail and the exaggerated dramatic elements would seem to imply some form of mythical ‘last battle’.”

²⁹For one of the best surveys of hermeneutics on the underlying issue of Israel in relation to the Church, see Willem Van Gemeren, “Israel as the Interpretive Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy,” *Westminster Journal of Theology*. Part I, 45:1 (Spring 1983), 132-44. Part II, 46:2 (Fall 1984), 254-97.

³⁰As, for example, Patrick Fairbairn, who describes this passage as a “prophetic parable.” *Commentary on Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, [1859] repr., 1989), 438-39. “Every stroke that has been dealt since against the idolatry and corruption of the world, is a part of that great conflict which the prophet in vision saw collected as into a single locality and accomplished in a moment of time At all times the prophecy is proceeding onwards in its accomplishment.

“... while we have no hesitation in regarding the vision respecting Gog and Magog in the Apocalypse to be in substance a re-announcement of the prophecy before us [Ezekiel 38-39], it does not therefore follow that the prophecy in the Apocalypse has exactly the same compass as in Ezekiel. It plainly, indeed, has not. Ezekiel contemplates the great conflict in a more general light, as what was certainly to be connected with the times of Messiah, and should come then to its last decisive issues.

“John, on the other hand, writing from the commencement of the Messiah’s times, breaks up these into distinct portions (how far successive or contemporaneous, we pretend not to say), and giving the vision respecting Gog and his forces the same relative place that it had in the visions of Ezekiel, he describes under it the last struggles and victories of the cause of Christ. In each case alike the vision is appropriated to describe the final workings of the world’s evil, and its results in connection with the kingdom of God: only, the starting point is placed farther in advance in the one case than in the other.

There, as found in Ezekiel, it can throw no light on the chronological arrangement of the Apocalypse).³¹

³¹On this, see the major study by Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as Pre-Text for Revelation 19, 17-21 and 20, 7-10*. English Series: Studiebibliotek for Bibel og Misjon 5 (Oslo, Norway: Fjellhaug Skoler, 1999).

³²So, Vern Poythress, “Genre and Hermeneutics in Revelation 20:1-6,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36:1 (March 1993), 53-54.

³³Reuben Ahroni, *The Gog Apocalypse: Ezekiel 38-39* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1973), II, IV.

³⁴Ahroni, III-V. Millard Lind, *Ezekiel*, adds, “Never successfully identified as a historic person, Gog is probably a *mythic* figure (author’s emphasis) representing empire and military politics which historically threatened Israel,” 315.

³⁵Ahroni, V-VI.

³⁶Ahroni says that the central theme of the Gog apocalypse is “invasion,” which takes place *after* the restoration of Israel. One cannot find in all the pre-exilic, nor the exilic prophecies even the slightest anticipation for the resumption of hostilities after the redemption of Israel, “The Gog Prophecy and the Book of Ezekiel,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 1 (1970), 9.

³⁷Ahroni, 14.

³⁸The contemporary historical evidence demonstrates the pattern of wars after a time of relative peace described in Ezekiel’s apocalypse as illustrated by four Middle Eastern wars throughout four successive decades in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 after the last restoration of Israel in 1948.

³⁹See <<http://www.jpr.org.uk/antisem/countries/russia/index.html>>, 3-4, for the historical survey for Russian anti-Semitism; and 10-12 for contemporary anti-Semitic incidents in Russia. Daniel C. Brecher and J. Kniesmeyer, *Beyond the Pale: The History of Jews in Russia* (1995) Computerized presentation available at <<http://www.friends-partners.org/partners/beyond-the-pale>> *Anti-Semitism in Russia. Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Sixth Congress, first session, February 24, 1999.* (United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on European Affairs. Washington: U. S. G.P.O.: For sale by the U. S. G.P.O., Supt. of Docs., Congressional Sales Office, 1999). Lev Krichevsky, *Russian Jewish Elites and Anti-Semitism* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1999).

⁴⁰Richard Kraetzschar, *Das Buch Ezechiel*, HKAT 3/1 (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1900), 255-56.

⁴¹Johannes Hermann, *Ezechielstudien* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1908), 48.

⁴²Lorenz Durr, *Die Stellung des Propheten Ezechiel in der israelitisch-judischen Apokalyptik*, AA IX 1 (Munster: Aschendorff, 1923), 94-95.

⁴³Odell, 43. One “Contemporary/Literal” suggestion is that Ezekiel’s Gog prophecy is a prediction of a revolt against Nebuchadrezzar, which results in Yahweh’s vindication of him (as Gyges’s revolt against Ashurbanipal had incurred the wrath of Ashur). This does not bear scrutiny because: 1) the relationship between Ashurbanipal and Ashur is not at all similar to Yahweh’s relationship with Nebuchadrezzar. Whereas Ashur was indeed the divine patron of Ashurbanipal and his Assyrians, Yahweh is not Nebuchadrezzar.

zar's defender, but rather, Israel's. 2) These events are placed in the distant future, not even approximately contemporary with Ezekiel. 3) Nebuchadrezzar is never mentioned in Ezekiel's Gog prophecy. 4) Some of the nations, principally Cush and Put, as well as Tarshish and Sheba, have no relation to a revolt against Nebuchadrezzar.

⁴⁴C. von Orelli, "Gog und Magog," *Real Encyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. 6 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, [1877] 1888), 761-62. Similarly, Conrad von Orelli, *The Old Testament Prophecy of the Consummation of God's Kingdom*, trans. J. S. Banks (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889), 370. "The description [in the Gog prophecy] ... shows plainly that the Skythians are in the prophet's mind, those northern barbarians, distinguished by their rage for plunder, whose enormous hordes of horses, especially skilful at the bow [*sic*], had not failed by their attacks to make a deep impression on the Israelites."

⁴⁵Solomon Fisch, *Ezekiel, Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: The Soncino Press, 1950), 253: "It is assumed with a fair degree of probability that Ezekiel had named these supposed enemies of Israel with his eyes on the vast marauding expedition of Skythians, in which they swept over Western Asia about the time of the fall of Nineveh (*i.e.*, 625 BCE) and were not thoroughly driven back short of about 28 years." So also, Henry Cowles, *Ezekiel and Daniel; with Notes* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1887), 218. Gesenius' *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon for the Old Testament Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 162: "There is scarcely a doubt that for the most part those nations were meant here whom the Greeks comprehended under the name Skythians, whose vast expedition against Egypt in the very age of Ezekiel seems to have given the prophet the occasion for this reference, the handle for such a prophecy."

⁴⁶Odell, 9.

⁴⁷*Antiquities* 1.6.1.

⁴⁸Odell, 9. Also, according to Albright, "of all suggestions to explain the name of Gog by modern scholars, only three deserve attention: The identification of Gog with *Gugu* (Gyges) of Lydia, who flourished a century before Ezekiel and made a great impression on his contemporaries. Gog might be the Sumerian *gug*, 'darkness,' and Magog is the 'land of darkness.' It might refer to *Gaga*, a barbarous region in northwestern Syria. This assumption is still a weak one since it is not mentioned elsewhere in identification with the Lydian king called by the Greeks 'Gyges,' who appears as *Gu-gu* on the Assyrian inscriptions. If this is true, Magog should be identified with Lydia. On the other hand, as Meshach and Tubal were nations belonging to Asia Minor, it would seem from the text of Ezekiel that Magog must be in that part of the world." "Gog and Magog," *JBL*, 43 (1924), 381.

⁴⁹Albright, "Gog and Magog," 381, referring to L. A. Mayer, (ed.) with notes by John Garstang, *Index of Hittite Names. Section A. Geographical. Part I*. British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, Supplementary Papers, I (London: [issued by the Council], 1923), 14 and AAA X, 177-79.

⁵⁰Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 301. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 284. Odell, 8.

⁵¹Charles Cutler Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), 95-96.

⁵²Millard Lind, *Ezekiel* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 315. Fisch, *Ezekiel*, 253. Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 221. Moshe Eisemann, *The Book of*

Ezekiel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1988), 580-81. Alexander, “A Fresh Look At Ezekiel 38 and 39,” 159.

⁵³For recent conservative evangelical options for the fulfillment of the prophecy see Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 218. Ralph H. Alexander, “A Fresh Look at Ezekiel 38 and 39,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (Summer 1974), 157-69.

⁵⁴Andrew R. Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: the Medieval Academy of America, 1932), 3-14.

⁵⁵One might detect hints in the fact that angels bound in the River Euphrates will dry it up to provide a roadway for the “kings of the East” (Revelation 16:12), though other demonic forces will be set loose to muster “all the kings of the earth” to gather at Armageddon (16:14-16). Whether or not Revelation 20:7-10 is a replay of this same invasion, the language is similar: Satanic seduction of nations at “the four corners of the earth” to assemble against Israel, only to be destroyed by means far beyond the range of human warfare, at least at the time of this writing.

⁵⁶Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 219.

⁵⁷In ancient and modern Hebrew, the name for Iran (formerly Persia) is “Paras,” as in Ezekiel’s prophecy. The placement of these ancient nations is described in J. Simons, *Topographical Texts of the Old Testament, ad loc.* Though he concedes that elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible *Paras* refers to Persia (e.g., Daniel 10:1; Ezra 1:1-2; Esther 1:3), Block suggests that the identification of the two is “purely coincidental,” referring instead to an unattested country in the south, perhaps based on an Egyptian spelling of Pathros. Block, *Ezekiel*, 440. More on Paras as Persia at note 80, below.

⁵⁸On the “improbable” alliance of Persia and Put (now the areas of Iran and Libya): At a high-level meeting between Iran and Libya, “the Iranian ambassador ... lauded the courageous stances of the Libyan leader towards Palestine and Al Quds [means, “The Holy Place,” and refers to Jerusalem, especially the Temple Mount] and said common stands shared by the Islamic Republics of Iran and of Libya as two important Islamic states . . . can be fruitful.” Islamic Republic [Iranian] News Agency, 16 January 2001. <<http://irna.com>>

In response to the Muslim assault on the United States on 11 September 2001, two of the three countries singled out by the U. S. Department of State as highest on its list of terrorist-supporting states had ostensibly diminished their long-standing support for it. Philip Shenon, “Libya and Sudan Said to Shy a Bit From Terror,” *New York Times*, 22 May 2002. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/22/international/22TERR.html>>?todays-headlines=&pagewanted=print&position=top>. The report went on to say that Iran was still the number one exporter of terrorism. No mention was made of these nations’ continuing rejection of Israel’s right to exist.

⁵⁹See the discussion of this problem among fundamentalists a generation ago in Timothy Dwight, *Armageddon Now! The Premillennarian Response to Russia and Israel Since 1917* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, revised 1991), 183.

⁶⁰“Other nations may put their trust in gasoline for mobile purposes if they wish to do so. But the wily old northern bear scents the possibility of bombs breaking up the oil fields of the earth to such an extent that the great gas-propelled war machines will be

stalled in their tracks—out of gas!” Louis S. Bauman, “The Russian Bear Prowls Forth to His Doom,” *The King’s Business*, XLI (September 1950), 11.

In the 1950s, Russia was said to possess 70 percent of the world’s horseflesh! Merv Resell, “God Pre-Writes the Headlines,” *The King’s Business*, XLIX (July 1958), 3.

⁶¹Wm. L. Hull, *Israel—Key to Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 36.

⁶²An oft-quoted reference among those with an appreciation for Bible prophecy is that from *TIME* (21 May 1965), 35 that refers to Revelation 9:16, (“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand....”) and says: “To back up Lo’s [Chinese Red Army Chief of Staff] bluster, Red China passed the word that its 200 million-man (and woman) militia had gone into serious training.” Wilson, *Armageddon Now!* 159-60. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1992), 167.

⁶³A. R. Fausset, *Ezekiel*, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, eds., Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, Vol. 26 (Glasgow: Collins, 1873), *ad loc.*

⁶⁴Chuck Missler, a former military officer with nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons training says that Ezekiel’s description of Gog’s burial sounds very much like an NBC decontamination manual, in that when someone discovers a bone (of Gog’s forces) “he doesn’t touch it! He sets up a sign by it and lets the professionals deal with it.” *The Magog Invasion* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, Ltd., 1995), 178-79, *cf. Operator’s Manual for Marking Contaminations: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC)* (9905-12-124-5955), Technical Manual 3-9905-10, Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Ezekiel’s concern would probably have been interpreted by his first readers as a reminder to avoid ritual contamination through contact with corpses by passing that job onto those already contaminated, who would be cleansed at the end of their burial duty.

⁶⁵As some indication of modern military manpower levels, the *C.I.A. Fact Book 2002* lists the numbers of males age 15-49 “fit for military service” in Russia as: 30,392,946; Ukraine: 9,616,864; China 203,003,036; India: 167,599,380; Pakistan: 22,606,576; Indonesia: 37,942,329; Iraq: 3,430,819; Iran: 11,192,731; Jordan: 1,073,991; Syria: 2,539,342; Saudi Arabia: 3,359,849; Egypt: 12,320,902; Sudan: 5,380,917; Libya: 890,783; Yemen: 2,397,914. By contrast, Israel has 1,245,757. In each case the *total* available manpower is about 65% above these figures. <<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>>.

These huge numbers are far higher than the actual numbers of these nations’ armed forces. However, the anti-Israel mentality evident (especially among Muslim nations today), argues in favor of the mobilization of huge, overwhelming numbers. Arafat has pledged to send “millions of martyrs” to Jerusalem. “In an interview with the Doha-based Al-Jazeera satellite channel [1 April 2002], Arafat urged Palestinians to participate in what he termed “a mission of martyrdom.” ‘To Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions,’ Arafat said in a chant. ‘To Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions. To Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions’” <http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/breaking_8.html>.

⁶⁶“... every man’s sword against his brother . . .” (38:21) could suggest, that since the sword in its scabbard was usually worn on the right, and since they seem to be colliding “against” each other, then this is a picture of broken ranks with soldiers running in

opposite directions, paralleling the account in Zechariah 12:4. However, we should not rule out revolt in the ranks, in view of the terror they are ordered to endure. It may also reflect the most recent doctrine of warfare, “directed against the cohesion of enemy units rather than exclusively against the physical components that comprise those entities.” Mark Herman, *Entropy Based Warfare: A Unified Theory for Modeling the Revolution in Military Affairs* (McLean, VA: Booz, Allen & Hamilton, 1997), 2.

⁶⁷Possibly caused by the enormous and sudden insertion of hot, moist air high into the atmosphere with unimaginably violent turbulence—the recipe for “torrential rain and hail.”

⁶⁸Boyer, Chapter 4, “The Atomic Bomb and Nuclear War,” *When Time Shall Be No More*, 115-51. He notes that 2 Peter 3:10 has frequently been cited as a description of nuclear explosions in the End Time: “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the *elements* shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

A popular reference point for descriptions of hydrogen-bomb tests and their effects during the 1950s was David Bradley, *No Place to Hide* (Boston: Little, Brown, [1946] rev. 1958). The horrifying effect on humans described in John Hersey’s bestseller, *Hiroshima* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946). Hersey’s work earned first place in “The Top 100 Works of Journalism in the United States in the 20th Century,” <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/journal/Dept_news/News_stories/990301_topjourn.htm>. Hersey’s description seemed similar to that of Zechariah 14:12. “And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they are still on their feet, their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths....”

The effects of this plague sound much like those of a neutron bomb—stockpiles of which exist in the Middle East. A neutron bomb the size of a baseball will instantly, and over a wide range, disintegrate anything softly organic (people, animals, plants) and leaves everything hard (like skeletons or inorganic materials) intact. And there is little fallout. Christopher Ruddy, “Bomb Inventor Says U.S. Defenses Suffer Because of Politics” (*The Tribune Review*, www.manuelsweb.com/sam_cohen.htm, 15 June 1997; accessed 14 July 2002).

Moreover, the 1907 version of Gesenius (Brown, Driver, Briggs) *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London: Oxford Univ. Pr. [1907] repr., 1951) 1071, added fuel to the nuclear component of prophetic speculation by describing the “columns of smoke” (RSV) in Joel’s oft-quoted prophecy of the invasion of Israel as “(palm-like) column (spreading top).” “I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and *columns of smoke*. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood [caused by the massive, airborne dust, characterizing the “nuclear winter”] before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes” (Joel 2:30-31).

⁶⁹Fausset, *Ezekiel, ad loc.* This is not Faussett’s view; he is listing views opposing his own.

⁷⁰“That the nations may know me, when they see me prove my holiness at your expense, O Gog” (38:16). After an outpouring of apocalyptic disaster on the invaders: “Thus will I prove myself great and holy and make myself known to many nations; they shall know that I am the Lord” (38:23). “They shall know that I am the Lord. My holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel and will no longer let it be pro-

faned; the nations shall know that in Israel I, the Lord, am holy” (39:7). “The nations shall know that I the Lord am keeping Israel sacred to myself, because my sanctuary is in the midst of them for ever” (37:28).

⁷¹Unless, of course, one (incomprehensibly) understands the time of “Messianic peace” to be the present era since the first coming of the Christian messiah. Even if one takes this a-millennial position, this would fail to describe the chaotic, violent, and vigilant conditions in modern Israel today, not to mention the last century.

⁷²Clements, *Ezekiel*, 171.

⁷³After the Assyrian invasion of Israel (the ten northern tribes whose capital was Samaria), and their resulting exile and captivity, the people of those tribes were dispersed widely. But while there is no mention of a significant return of them, there was—during the invasion, and before the Exile—a flight of many of its citizens to Judah. In fact, Hezekiah, king of Judah at the time, was forced to expand the city of Jerusalem greatly to accommodate the northern refugees. Thus, the “ten lost tribes” were not “lost” at all but only diminished, since it appears that many, or possibly most, assimilated into the southern kingdom of Judah.

⁷⁴I owe the material in this section to “The Myth of the Palestinian People,” by Yezekel Bin-Nun, 7 January 2002 <http://www.israelinsider.com/views/articles/views_0240.htm>. Bin-Nun is citing research from Samuel Katz, *Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine* (New York: Steimatzky/Shapolsky, new, updated ed., 1985) and Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

⁷⁵Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, Chapter XLIX. <<http://www.easylit.com/mark-twain/twaincomtext/mtinnocents49.htm>>.

For an extensive description of the desolation of Palestine, see the summary of the Palestine tour at the end of Chapter LIV, in the web site above.

⁷⁶Bin Nun, “The Myth of the Palestinian People,” <http://www.Israelinsider.com/views/articles/views_0240.htm>.

⁷⁷Arafat was born and probably raised in Cairo. Christophe Boltanski and Jihan El-Tahri, *Les sept vies de Yasser Arafat* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1997), Chapter 10: Arafat l’Égyptien, 175-87.

⁷⁸Bin-Nun, “The Myth of the Palestinian People,” <http://www.Israelinsider.com/views/articles/views_0240.htm>.

⁷⁹Lev. 23:22; Deut. 10:18; 24:14; Ezek. 47:21-22.

⁸⁰Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 306; Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 287, though see Odell’s response, “Ezekiel 38-39,” 103-06. Simply because *Paras* was an undeveloped power in the Ancient Near East does not mean that Ezekiel could not have prophetically identified this nation as being a player in the invasion much later—even fifty years later when this “undeveloped” power conquered most of the known world. That *Paras* is Persia is clear for four reasons: 1) In both ancient and modern Hebrew, *Paras* is the name of Iran/Persia. This alone should put a stop to argument. However, 2) Ezekiel himself describes an earlier alliance of *Paras*, *Lud* (Lydia) and *Put* (North Africa) in 27:10. Moreover, 3) There is no alternative nation known from this period that could assume the name, “*Paras*,” and, 4) the location of *Paras* as Persia in the east, preserves the image of allied nations attacking Israel from every possible direction.

⁸¹It is important to remember that Islam has been characterized by its highly anti-Semitic attitude—since its creation, and continually, though with greater or lesser intensity, until the present time. Martin Kramer in his article *The Salience of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, <<http://www.ict.org.il/articles/antisemit1.htm>>, “Today [sic] there is Islamic anti-Semitism—a belief among many Muslims that Jews everywhere, in league with Israel, are behind a sinister plot to destroy Islam. Some of these Muslims believe the battleground is anywhere on the globe where Jews are organized to assist and aid in this plot Islam in its very essence is anti-Semitic, and that the roots of the anti-Semitism we see today are authentically Islamic.” In support of this latter, see also Bat Ye’or. *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam*. (New York: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Pr., 1985.)

“The Arab Jihad Against Israel,” Jeff Jacoby, *The Boston Globe*. <<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/isreport/jihad.html>>. “Praise be to God, who revealed the Book, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book, ‘But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war).’” Shaykh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, amir of the Jihad Group in Egypt, Abu-Yasir Rifa’i Ahmad Taha, Egyptian Islamic Group, Shaykh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, Fazlul Rahman, amir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. <<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>> published in Arabic in *Al Quds* [Jerusalem] *Al Arabi*, 23 February 1998.

The HAMAS Charter cites the *Hadith* [official book of Islamic doctrine] on the Day of Judgment in the following terms: “The Last Hour would not come until Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them, and until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree, and a stone or a tree would say, ‘Muslim, oh Servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me—come and kill him!’”

⁸²Douglas Frantz and James Risen, “A Secret Iran-Arafat Connection Is Seen Fueling the Mideast Fire,” *New York Times*, 24 March 2002. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/24/international/middleeast/24IRAN.html?pagewanted=1&todaysheadlines>>

⁸³In an important report on the patterns of global terrorism that was issued in 1997 by the U.S. Secretary of State and titled, “*Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism*,” <<http://www.state.gov/www/globalterrorism/1997Report/sponsored.html>>: “The Secretary of State has designated seven governments as state sponsors of terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria. These governments support international terrorism either by engaging in terrorist activity themselves or by providing arms, training, safe haven, diplomatic facilities, financial backing, logistic and/or other support to terrorists.”

Concerning the activity of Iran the report says, “Iran continued to provide support—in the form of training, money, and weapons—to a variety of terrorist groups, such as Lebanese Hizballah, HAMAS, and the PIJ. The Iranian Government continues to oppose recognition of Israel and to encourage violent rejection of the Middle East peace process. In the fall of 1997, Tehran hosted numerous representatives of terrorist groups—including HAMAS, Lebanese Hizballah [who are largely Syrians sponsored by Iran], the PIJ, and the Egyptian *al-Gama’at al-Islamiya*—at a conference of ‘liberation movements.’”

“Participants reportedly discussed the *jihad* (struggle), establishing greater coordination between certain groups, and an increase in support for some groups.” On the coordi-

nation of terrorist activities between Iran and Sudan, the report adds, “Sudan in 1997 continued to serve as a haven, meeting place, and training hub for a number of international terrorist organizations, primarily of Middle East origin. “The Sudanese Government also condoned many of the objectionable activities of Iran, such as funneling assistance to terrorist and radical Islamic groups operating in and transiting through Sudan.” The report also adds, “Sudan also serves as a transit point and meeting place for several Iranian-backed terrorist groups.” This report was updated regarding state-supported terrorism by Iran, Libya, and Sudan among others, aimed at Israel in the U. S. Department of State publication, “Terrorism: Middle Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 1998,” <<http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/Cterror2.htm>>.

More recently, see “Iran Criticizes Arab League Summit for ‘Procrastinating’” [Reuters]. *Ha’aretz*, a major Israeli newspaper, reports: “Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini said on Friday *the Middle East crisis could only be resolved if Israel was eradicated* [emphasis ours] and told Arab leaders that their decisions at the Summit would be ‘judged by history.’ Iran condemns the peace process as a sellout of Palestinian and Islamic rights” (24 October 2000. <http://www.haaretdaily.com/htmls/kat23_2.asp>).

⁸⁴ John Loftus and Mark Aarons, *The Secret War Against the Jews: How Western Espionage Betrayed the Jewish People* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1997).

⁸⁵ E.g., Ezekiel 36:3,5; 38:9,16,22; Zechariah 12:3-4.

⁸⁶ Block, *Ezekiel*, 440-41; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 285.

⁸⁷ See Map 2 and page 51.

⁸⁸ Seth N. Klayman, *Who Was a Jew, Who Is a Jew? Comparing Kin, Conversion, and Custom in the Second Temple and Modern Periods*. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1998). Charles Selengut, *Jewish Identity in the Postmodern Age: Scholarly and Personal Reflections* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1999).

⁸⁹On the larger question of national identity in the biblical period, see Mario Liverani, “Nationality and Political Identity,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 4: 1031-37.

⁹⁰Certainly one medieval historian refers to the early Rus as πολυνανθρωποτατον (*polyanthropotaton*), i.e., as having “many-peoples”—an echo of Ezekiel 38:6d, 9b, 15b. Michael Attaliates (11th-12th century CE) *Historia* [TLG3079] (Work 001,3. 512. 4).

⁹¹See: <<http://historymedren.about.com/library/who/blwwamerigo.htm>>

Chapter 2

Ezekiel's Northern Nations: Ancient Near-Eastern Texts

For locating Rosh, as well as the other northern nations of Ezekiel 38 and 39—Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah—this chapter offers evidence that appears in the earliest records and that continues to a period roughly contemporaneous with Ezekiel.

This examination shows that Ezekiel had a range of candidates for Rosh, as well as historical confirmation for the other nations he lists. 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.

Rosh, Tubal, and Togarmah, however, are more difficult to trace than say, Meshech or Gomer. The next chapter will pick up the theme of the location of these nations from the standpoint of their post-Ezekiel history and of their ultimate dispositions. The specific problem of identifying Ezekiel’s Rosh from Ancient Near-East literature is fraught with difficulty. It is clear that not all of the candidates described in this literature could be simultaneously valid, since some of the Rosh references appear to derive from different sources and, more importantly, from different locations.

As we shall see, each candidate may be attractive for a number of reasons, such as the following: 1) proximity to the other tribes Ezekiel lists, such as Meshech and Tubal, 2) the abundance of attestation, 3) the recurring attestation for one location through successive sources, and 4) the likelihood that the Rosh in question is in fact describing a significant ethnic group rather than merely a city or relatively small area. We leave it to the reader and subsequent research to determine the suitability of the various candidates below to qualify as Ezekiel’s Rosh. It is possible, of course, that Ezekiel received a revelation of a name that came into being long after his prophecy was first recorded, separated from any immediate historical referent

in the prophet's own time and place. However interesting such a possibility may be, the solution is probably more complicated than that.

In this chapter, we will proceed by examining evidence from the Bible, from ancient Egypt, the Hittites, Urartu, Assyria, Babylonia, and ancient Greece—each in their own section. In each case this chapter examines material under the following two headings: A: Historical Background, and, B: Candidates for Identification as Ezekiel's Nations. Under this latter heading, as applicable, material will be entered that applies to the nations, in this order: Gog and Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah.

I. Biblical Evidence

A. Historical Background

The Prophet Ezekiel lived during the traumatic years of the fall of Judea and Jerusalem, and their subsequent deportation into exile in Babylon. From his new geographic vantage point on the River Chebar (a canal just north of Babylon), he was at the center of the empire and, as we shall see, also within a few kilometers of the areas of (A)Raši and Tūbliaš (=Hittite, Tuhpiliša). We can assume that Ezekiel was exposed to news of dealings with all of the nations he lists in his prophecy.

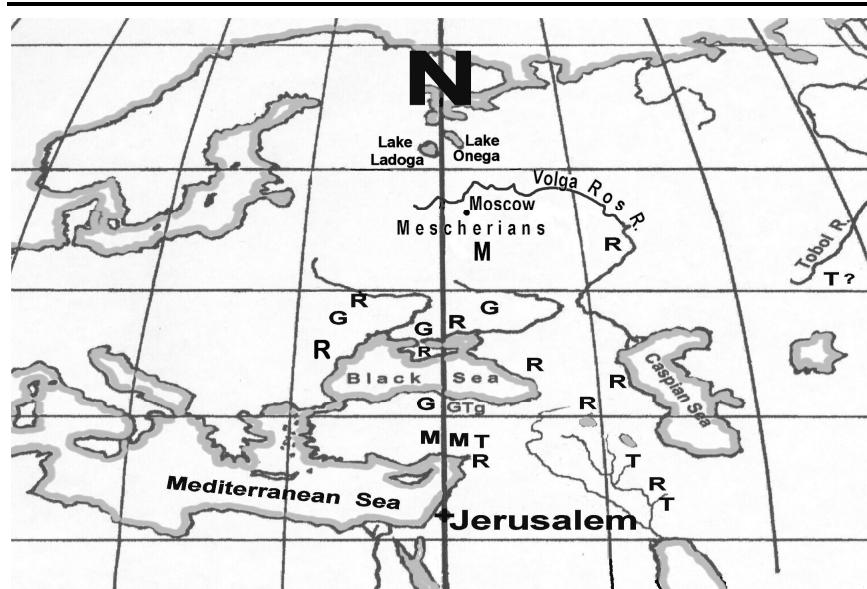
B. Candidates for Identification with Ezekiel's Nations

In the preceding chapter we introduced the reader to the biblical passage of Ezekiel 38-39 (the Gog passage). We have also offered evidence for the word Rosh as a proper name and for the contextual appropriateness of the English nominal translation “prince of Rosh,” in contrast to the awkward adjectival translation, “chief prince.” The examination of the biblical material may be divided into three passages: Ezekiel 38-39; Isaiah 66:19; and Jeremiah 25:23-26.

1. Ezekiel 38-39—The Bible offers limited information about Ezekiel's northern nations. We learn from Ezekiel himself only that these nations, Rosh, Gog, Magog, and others would come from the “uttermost parts of the north.” Just how far north is a matter of speculation.

Certainly, the other invading nations—Paras (today's Iran, whose name in modern Hebrew remains Paras), Cush (now northern, Muslim Sudan, just south of modern Egypt on the Nile), and Put (associated with modern Libya)—represent the other three limited “four corners” of the then-known earth, if, indeed, that was the intent of the passage. In today's small world, these nations are hardly out of Israel's neighborhood.

Accordingly, then, the northern nations—by far the most emphasized element in this invasion—could occupy the “north” somewhere short of the Caucasus. But we can suggest that, under divine revelation, the “north” could, at least theoretically, either lie on a line from Ezekiel’s location near Babylon through the North Pole, or—as is more likely—along a slightly different line extending upward from Israel, since Israel is the focus of the prophesied invasion. If the latter is the case, then a line from Jerusalem ($35^{\circ} 13' E$) to the North Pole passes near the city of Moscow ($37^{\circ} 42' E$), and through the area of the Mescherians—a people-group dwelling in the immediate area of Moscow long before the Christian era.



R = Rosh candidates, **M** = Meshech, **T** = Tubal,
G = Gomer, **Tg** = Togarmah, ● = Moscow

Fig. 1: Locations for Ezekiel’s Northern Nations

2. Jeremiah 25:23-26 — In the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Bible into Greek, Jeremiah utters a prophecy against all the nations, and he includes a Πως in a series with Dedan ($\Delta\alpha\delta\alpha\upsilon$) and Elam ($\Lambda\iota\lambda\alpha\mu$). Dedan (an area included in modern Saudi Arabia), of course, is listed in Ezekiel’s Gog prophecy. Elam is located within what is now western Iran.

Assyrian records also show that Elam bordered an (A)Raši. In the Hebrew Masoretic text, the LXX's Πως is Βυζ (Buz). The difference is striking enough to suggest that the LXX translator knew of a Πως and deliberately inserted it into this sequence—possibly in view of the Ezekiel Gog passage, but more likely because he was aware of just such a nation. (A similar scribal change seems to have appeared in the other direction in Isaiah).

3. Isaiah 66:19 — Isaiah 66 is a majestic and climactic chapter describing God's victory over all the rebellious nations of the world, the final establishment of the Jews as God's own, and the emergence of the “new heavens and the new earth.” Here again, the prophet lists a number of what are, perhaps, representative nations from a great circle (all directions) of the then-known world who bring their “glory” to God as an act of reconciliation.

This passage, however, offers an oddity that may be a clue to another reference to *Rosh*, which lies behind the present text. The disruption in the list of nations is so blatant that some commentators and translators¹ have actually emended the variant-free text into a smoother list. The passage as it now stands in the Masoretic (traditional Hebrew) text lists: “Tarshish, Put, Lud (who draw the bow), to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off.”

The troublesome passage is: מְשֵׁכִי קֶשֶׁת (*moshkey qeshet*)—“who draw the bow”). The Septuagint translates the מְשֵׁכִי (*moshkey*) as Μοσοχ (*Mosoch*), dropping the קֶשֶׁת (*qeshet*) altogether. *Mosoch*, of course, is tied to the “Tubal” resulting in the sequence, “Meshech and Tubal,” found also in Ezekiel 27:13, as well as in 38:2,3 and 39:1. Both latter passages also list Persia and Put, suggesting that the original writer of Isaiah 66 had a different wording in mind. It would appear, then, that the expression “who draw the bow” is out of place in that no other nations in the list are similarly described.²

All this led to a variety of emendations to make more sense of this passage. In some cases, the list is reconstructed as “Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal³ and Javan,” omitting any reference to קֶשֶׁת (*qeshet*).⁴ Others, suggesting that *Rosh* is a nation, translate קֶשֶׁת as *Rosh*, as in the case of Duhm, who suggests reading Rōš,⁵ as do the *NASB*, the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *New American Bible*, the *Revised English Bible*, *The Bible in Basic English*, and the *New English Version*—hence the translation:

And I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: *Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan*, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations.

The plausibility of this reading is enhanced when one considers that in the period before the so-called Hebrew “square” script was developed (in the Babylonian exile), a **ר** (Q as in *qešet*, “bow”) in Hebrew was virtually indistinguishable from a **ר** (R, as in *Rosh*). Moreover, the “א” (aleph), a silent letter carrying the “O” sound in **שָׁרֶשׁ** (*Rosh*) could easily be confused and interposed with the “ת” (“T”) at the end of **תְּשַׁרֵּךְ**. Hence, someone even slightly unfamiliar with the old Hebrew script could easily have confused **מִשְׁׁרֶשׁ** (*Meshech, Rosh*) with **מוֹשְׁׁקֵי קֵשֶׁת** (*moshkey qeshet*) or could have “corrected” the text to make more sense, adding a similar-sounding description of Lud found in Jeremiah 46:9.

Again, as in the preceding chapter, the failure to translate *Rosh* as a national name seems mostly to stem from the unfamiliarity of scholars with its historical geography. Accordingly, our next step is to examine various ancient extra-biblical historical sources in an attempt to solve the problem of *Rosh*.

II. Egyptian Sources

A. Historical Background

The inscriptions on the walls of the great temple of Amon at Karnak, in the south of Egypt, narrate the great conquests of Thutmes III (*circa* 1450 BCE). He launched military campaigns northward, by land and by sea, that extended to Palestine, Syria, and the headwaters of the Euphrates.

The conquest narratives contain some 270 toponyms ranging from Canaan to Carchemesh.⁶ Ramses II (1304-1227) and Ramses III (1194-1163), made similar campaigns, though their lists of conquered cities and regions are somewhat shorter. These lists are valuable in the study of historical geography but do they have relevance to our thesis?

B. Candidate for Identification with Ezekiel’s Nation, Rosh

We have only one of Ezekiel’s nations mentioned in the Egyptian material that we have considered: a possible reference to *Rosh* in the inscriptions of the first-mentioned pharaoh. The latter two pharaohs provide us with a few references to a *roš* or a *raš* in Israel or along the east coast of the Mediterranean, but none seem to qualify as the *Uruššu* of the Hittites or *Rōsos* or *Rōs* of the Greeks (described in following sections), which are located on a promontory just below the NE notch of the Mediterranean Sea.

Among these names are *ru-ša qad-š*⁷ (Hebrew, “*rosh qodesh*,” “holy cape/promontory/headland”) and *r-w-š*⁸ (Hebrew: “*rosh*”), which similarly means “peak,” or “promontory.” Since all of these are *within* Israel, they are necessarily not to the “far north”—the place of which Ezekiel wrote.

These names also represent specific places. We have several listings of a *r-š* (*r-sh*) root in *r-w-š* (*Rosh*, List I: #31a,b, Thutmes III), one of which is slightly corrupted on the cities list, but possibly represents the southern Judean holy city of Laish. Another entry (Thutmes III, List 1: #48a; #48 BCE), *r-š q-d-š* (*ru-’u-ša qad-š*, “Rosh Qodesh”) likely refers to the promontory, Mt. Carmel on the coast of Israel on the south edge of modern Haifa. Still another *r-š q-d-š* (*ru-’u-ša qad-š*, List XXVII: #1 and #108), Ramses II, in inscriptions at Karnak, the Great Temple of Amon, the name, “Holy *Rosh/Head*” refers possibly to a cape west of Qadesh on the Orontes, probably *Ras es-Shaqqa* near Tripoli, Lebanon.⁹ Again, none of these is to the “far north” of Israel.

For our purposes, however, one must investigate entry number 348 in List 1 of Thutmes III, a *ra-š*, which may refer to the promontory associated with our Hittite and Greek references (see Map 1, p. 135). The simple fact that this small mountain jutting into the Mediterranean qualifies as an Egyptian “*ra-š*” may have given its name to this cape, if it were not a coincidence that the term was already extant. The Semitic word for “head” may have become the name of the mountain and area, which historically, at least by Ezekiel’s time, had become so named. Certainly this name, as we shall see, is confirmed among the Hittites, at the southern end of their empire, and among the Greeks for several centuries. Is it significant that immediate ethnic neighbors were Gurgum (one candidate for Gog), Tabal and the Muški? The difficulty here, of course, is that even if the Egyptians initiated or simply reflected a local “*raš*” name, it is a long leap to assume on this basis that a people group were so designated in this area so early.

III. Ugaritic Sources¹⁰

A. Historical Background

Ugarit left records helpful in establishing the identity and location of Ezekiel’s nations. Ugarit, located in what is now Syria, was a significant city-state located about 100 kilometers to the south of our final Egyptian “*ra-š*,” above, and just below the mouth of the Orontes River, on the Mediterranean Sea. Ugarit survived as a vassal—first of Egypt, then of the Hittites—from about 1500 until 1190 BCE, when it was overrun and destroyed by the Sea Peoples (Philistines?). The modern site of ancient Ugarit is Ras Shamrah, a rich source of political and legal documents discovered in the

ruined archives of the royal palace. These valuable documents shed light on the final two centuries of Ugarit's troubled history.

B. Candidate for Identification with Ezekiel's Nation, Rosh

The language of Ugarit is closely related to early Hebrew. Ugaritic has been particularly useful to scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures in clarifying biblical texts and customs.¹¹ More importantly for our study, these documents record numerous place names in the area, including references to a people known as "Rashites." However, we must note here that while the majority of the (mostly Semitic) languages of the Ancient Near East were similar, key changes often occurred in pronunciation. In the case of the Hebrew, *roš* (*Rosh*), the pronunciation would be *rēšu* in Akkadian (Assyrian),¹² *rēš* in Aramaic (Babylonian),¹³ and *ra'šu* in Ugaritic.¹⁴

Price has shown that in the ancient Semitic languages just mentioned, *roš* and its equivalents (above) appear not only as a noun ("head") or an adjective ("chief, main"), but also as a proper noun—a name of persons or places. Just as *Rosh* was the name of a son of Benjamin in Genesis, a similar word is applied to a variety of Akkadian personal names, such as Râšhi-ili,¹⁵ Rêsh-Dumuzi,¹⁶ Rêsh-Ea,¹⁷ and Rêsh-Shamash, a fairly common name.¹⁸ The fact this word occurs as a personal name may have no more significance than, say, the relationship between the name, Russia, and Rush Limbaugh.

A particularly intriguing example of such a coincidence is the association two names similar to tribal names listed in the Gog passage, Rêsh-Beli father of Tubalît-Bini.¹⁹ Tubalît-Bini, however, means, "You (the divinity) have kept my son alive" from the verb, *bulluṭu*, "to keep alive, revive." This etymological derivation, however, with its terminal *teth* (letter f) rules out the possibility that the name could be associated with Ezekiel's Tubal.

On the other hand, as we shall see below, Assyrian documents show extensive references to the nations of *Rašu* or *Raši* adjoining a Tubliaš immediately to the east of the near confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (See Map 1, p. 135). The Ugaritic materials that Price has translated do not indicate, however, such an *eastern* location for a *Roš/Reš-/Raš-* people (that is, east of the Tigris River), but rather, as we will see in a number of sources below, a *western* location, on the northeastern coast of the Mediterranean.

This is shown by the context of Price's examples. In one text,²⁰ a "Motbaal the Rêshite" and "Motan the Rêshite"²¹ appear on lists of debtors. The name, Motbaal, ("man of Baal")²² suggests adherence to the Baal cult which was prominent only along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean,²³ among the Canaanites, Philistines, and especially in Ugarit, where myths concerning Baal comprised a substantial amount of its religious literature. Another

text²⁴ records receipts for large volumes of (olive?) oil for “Abram the Cypriot” (*‘altyy*), for “Abram of Egypt” (*mṣrm*), for “the men of Sardis” (*sbrdm*), and for “Ben Azmot (*bn ‘zmt*) the Rêshite” (*rišy*). The place names listed here—with the exception of “Sardis” which is in western Anatolia, near Ephesus²⁵—are all located on or near the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, far to the west of the (A)Raši on the eastern banks of the lower Tigris River, as Price has suggested.²⁶ The Ugaritic data may indicate a more western location for a *Rosh*, but it is much more likely that these are references to a well-attested port town on the Mediterranean²⁷—not a significant tribe as Meshech or Tubal located to the near north of Ugarit. A somewhat more substantial source for a western site for a people of *Rosh* derives from the Hittites.

IV. Hittite Sources

A. Historical Background

The Hittites were members of the ancient Indo-European peoples who appeared in Anatolia at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE. Historians trace the origin of the Hittites to areas beyond the Black Sea.²⁸ They founded the first major empire that occupied central Anatolia and that also left behind significant written sources of their history. By 1340 BCE, they became one of the most dominant powers in the Middle East. The Hittites originally used the Akkadian (Old Babylonian) script which was transmitted to them by the Hurrians. After the destruction of the Hittite Empire (ca. 1190 BCE), the surviving Neo-Hittite states in Syria, who had been under Hittite control, continued the Hittite tradition, much like Byzantium continued the Roman Empire in the East. As a written language, they used Luwian, which was closely related to Hittite but was written with a pictographic script, *i.e.*, Hieroglyphic Hittite, in the period from the 10th to the 8th centuries BCE.²⁹ Documents left by the Hittites have shed some light on the possible early appearances of two of Ezekiel’s northern nations.

B. Candidates for Identification with Ezekiel’s Nations

1. Rosh – James Mellaart’s thorough revision of scholarship relating to the Late Bronze Age settlements in eastern Anatolia has provided interesting new insights for our study. From Hittite records, he placed an Urušša/Urušum near Carchemish and just east of the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean.³⁰ In this he seems to follow the consensus of scholarship for that period. This name may well reflect the nearby names with the “*ruš*” root attributed to this immediate area by other historical sources. Only one other

northern nation mentioned by Ezekiel seems in any way identified with this early empire. That nation is Tubal.

2. Tubal – At least one Hittite text provides us with the name “Tuh-piliša,” which is, perhaps, indicative of an early presence of one of Ezekiel’s northern tribes, Tubal.³¹ Tuhpiliša may well be identified with Tu(p/b)liaš or a Tublia River, which is attested in Assyrian literature as being located in and around (A)Raši, which, in turn, was located in a fairly large mountainous area to the east of the Tigris River (see Map 2, p. 136). Whether or not Tuhpiliša could be identified with the *traditional* site of Tubal (Assyrian: Tabal), within the southern part of the Hittite empire, must be the subject of further study. While it is possible that the Tuhpiliša could have migrated farther eastward, the Hittite empire did not extend as far east as the Assyrian examples. An empire that followed the Hittites was that of Urartu, an empire that left documents offering additional possibilities for identifying Ezekiel’s nations and their locations.

V. Urartian Sources

A. Historical Background

Urartu was an ancient country in the mountainous region southeast of the Black Sea and southwest of the Caspian Sea. It is mentioned in Assyrian sources, as early as the 13th century BCE, as a people who enjoyed considerable political power in the Middle East in the 9th and 8th centuries.³² The driving force behind the formation of the state of Urartu may have been the vicious aggression of the Assyrians, which precipitated increasing resistance by the threatened smaller tribes at their periphery. Finding themselves in a “do or die” situation, these tribes formed alliances that evolved into larger states. In this context, the state of Urartu emerged in the first half of the 9th century BCE—its name quickly assuming an ethnic connotation.³³ By the middle of the 8th century BCE, Urartu had expanded to its maximum extent—from the north, above the Caucasian Mountains, and in the region around Lake Urmia. The Urartians conquered Hittite territory in the west, which had formerly belonged to the (now defunct) Hittite Empire and subjected northern Syria to tribute.³⁴

The official language of Urartu, which centered on the district of Lake Van, was also used beyond the Transcaucasian regions of what is now modern Russia and into northwestern Iran.³⁵ Urartian texts, which range from the 9th to the 6th centuries BCE, provide a useful source of information on Ezekiel’s northern tribes. Many toponyms are found inscribed on rocks, buildings, stelae, bronze objects, and tablets. These toponyms allow us some

notion of the tribal structure of the countries in question, and of the destiny of their population.³⁶

B. Candidate for Identification with Ezekiel's Nation, Rosh

The Urartian texts mention a variety of sites that contain the root, *ruš*. One such is Kur Rišu (“Kur” = “land/people of”), a region south of Lake Sevan, just west of a Kur Ruišia on the eastern end of the Black Sea at Lake Caldır. Just to the south of the midpoint of the Aras River, a “people of Rusai” dwelled. Another reference, perhaps a variant form of Rusai, is Rusa, appearing in the same area, just to the north of Lake Van, near a Mešchani-nov³⁷ (See Map 2, p. 136).

Excursus: The Urartian Dynasty of Rusas and Ezekiel's Rosh?

Some scholars suggest that Ezekiel's Rosh might have derived from the Rusas dynasty of Urartu,³⁸ consisting of the succession of Rusa I (735-713 BCE), Rusa II (685-645 BCE), and Rusa III (605-590 BCE). The practice of naming nations after their founders or the ruling dynasties has parallels in the contemporary Middle East. For example, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, ruled by King Abdullah of the Hashem tribe, acquired its name from the “Hashem” family, who are the tribal descendants of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam.³⁹ Another Middle Eastern example is the contemporary Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the early years of the 20th century, Ibn Sa'ud—a rebel prince from a former royal family—conquered the existing ruler of al-Riyadh (the present capital of Saudi Arabia), united its two main parts, Hejaz and Najd, and declared himself to be the ultimate monarch. Ever since, his name has been imposed not only on the country itself, which formerly was the Land of Hejaz, but also on its inhabitants.⁴⁰

These Middle Eastern examples reflect a long tradition in which the kings of Urartu may have participated, as reflected in the Bible. “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names” (Psalm 49:11).

A problem with the suggestion above is that, while the Rusas dynasty may well have placed its name on a number of *areas within* the Urartian Empire, the whole empire was not renamed, at least in recorded history. A second problem emerges from this suggestion, *viz.*, that Ezekiel portrays *Rosh* as a nation, not a personality (as in the case of Ezekiel's Gog), as Pritsak, Vernadsky, and others have asserted.

However, many nations or peoples have been named after an ancestor. Romans, and their capital city, were named after Romulus. Israelis and their country are named after their forefather, Israel. The phenomenon of attaching the name of a leader to his people and his empire appears often in Ancient Near Eastern history. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 illustrates this principle,

whereby every land was named after its first successful settler: Canaan and the Canaanites were named after Ham's son, Canaan, and so on.

.....

Thus the peoples and areas designated in northern Urartu whose names are most likely related to the Rusas dynasty may remain as viable candidates for the identification of Ezekiel's Rosh. Urartu eventually came into serious conflict with a growing threat from the southeast: Assyria.

VI. Assyrian Sources

A. Historical Background

Assyrian literature in the first half of the 1st millennium BCE offers the most abundant and significant evidence for our thesis. At its height, the Neo-Assyrian empire, ca. 745-621 BCE, stretched over what is now northern Iraq, and extended its territory through the southeastern part of Turkey and southward into Israel and Egypt. On the east, the empire penetrated to the Zagros mountain range, and southward into Elam.⁴¹ While most of the Assyrian royal annals were more concerned about tribal states and the ongoing conflict with them, this literature often incidentally recorded valuable geographic data. Some of these toponyms referred to areas and city-states containing the expression, "Rus," as well as to most of the other northern nations of Ezekiel.

B. Candidates for Identification with Ezekiel's Nations

1. Rosh — Assyrian literature offers at least three candidates for Ezekiel's Rosh. The three different locales listed below (Eastern, North-Central, and Western) may in fact overlap or be related. Similarly, the Assyrian royal inscriptions abound in evidence for the historical presence of the tribe of Rosh. Many toponyms were recorded in the Assyrian annals that contained the term, "rus'" in different yet closely related forms. These toponyms that carried the root "rus'" were widely scattered geographically. However, despite the imprecision of the Assyrians in mapping out the exact locality of a given place, we can identify three major locations where "rus'" toponyms clustered.

a. The Eastern Locale — This refers primarily to a fairly large area bordering the Tigris River's east bank and the northern regions of Elam (see Map 2, p. 136). The first candidate for Ezekiel's Rosh here is Raši,⁴² which has abundant attestation in Assyrian literature. For example, it appears in the annals of Sargon's twelfth year, where he describes their frightened response to his conquests.⁴³ In another entry in his annals, Sargon described his enor-

mous power in combat, as well as the expansion of his reign to the lands of Mushki (Ezekiel's Meshech), Tabal (Tubal), and that of Raši, which is on the Elamite border on the banks of the Tigris.⁴⁴ Later, in his seventh campaign against Elam, Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) conquered and despoiled the city of Raša, which the Elamites had seized by force during the time of his father. Other cities or areas like Hamanu, Rašu, and Bit-Bunakki were among 35 cities or city-states that had been conquered before Sennacherib launched his greatest offensive against the major rival power, Elam.⁴⁵ In his eighth campaign against Elam, Assurbanipal (668-627 BCE) again attacked the same circle of cities: “This time I captured [together with] the land of Raši, the city of Hamanu.”⁴⁶ The city-states of Rasap and Tubiliaš were located in fairly close proximity to this area.

Surrounding sites and cities offer clues to the location of Raši. (A)Raši, or, alternately, Rasi,⁴⁷ represents a strong candidate linguistically for Ezekiel's Rosh. This name appears in a variety of forms as Kur⁴⁸ A-ra-ši,⁴⁹ Kur-A-ra-su⁵⁰ and Kur Ra-ši.⁵¹ (A)Raši or Rasi is located in context with Bit-Bunakka,⁵² Bit-Imbi,⁵³ and Hamanu,⁵⁴ all cities of (A)Raši which were located on the northwest borders of Elam,⁵⁵ or “near” the Elamite border.⁵⁶

b. The North-Central Locale – A highly unlikely candidate for Ezekiel's Rosh is another Assyrian and Babylonian toponym, Rasappa/ Rusapu—cities or a city-state covering a substantial territory bordering, or near, Gurgum (one candidate for Ezekiel's Gog), Tabal and Muški. The data show Rasappa/Rusapu in context with the province of Arrapha,⁵⁷ and Bit-Zamani,⁵⁸ which were located in northern parts of what is now Iraq,⁵⁹ and the city of Nisibin (modern Nisibiya in Syria) as well as in the fertile area between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers (see Map 2, p.136).⁶⁰ Much earlier, the name of a city-state, Rasap, appears in an Ur III travel document.⁶¹ Just how it is related to the cluster of Rasappa/Rusapu names in the North-Central region is unknown at this point. In any case, the name has little to commend it as shedding light on the identity of Rosh until its “-apu” (Akk.: “nose!”) suffix (if it is a suffix) is clearly explained. *Ras-ap-pa* may be a compound derivation of the root word, *ruš* but its connection to Ezekiel's Rosh has only the vaguest and most tenuous connection.

c. The Western Locale – This area is close to the Mediterranean coast, at about the same latitude as Carchemish. Here the root *ruš* appears in the name of a region—*U-ruš-ša*—which, along with “Urruš in Unqi” of the annals of Tiglath Pileser III,⁶² continues in the well-attested Ρωσσος (*Rhos-sos*), situated above “Ras-al-Khanzir”—a cape just south of the northeastern notch of the Mediterranean Sea. Fales locates *Ras-ap-pa*⁶³ in the same area.

Two main implications may be derived from these numerous “ruš/rus” place names distributed around the northwest section of the Fertile Crescent: First, that the name was definitely a tribal name lent to their locale, wherever they were—albeit with differences in the written form. These differences may possibly be ascribed to different writing styles, to local pronunciations, and to numerous scribes.

Second, the scattered pattern of this tribe to the north does not have to be ascribed solely to continuous tribal migration in search of food and plunder, or to displacement by stronger peoples; it may be due to the well-attested Assyrian wartime strategy of deportation. The Assyrians were notorious in ancient history for their cruel treatment of conquered peoples, including deporting them to regions far from their homes. Populations of a conquered or rebellious region were uprooted and removed to areas completely foreign to them, on the theory that they would be less likely to defend a strange territory than they would to defend their own homeland. At the same time, deportation could provide labor for major building projects or be used to develop uncultivated land that could supply food for the increasing populations of Assyrian cities.⁶⁴ Ashurbanipal (668-612 BCE), perhaps as a measure of desperation, implemented this deportation policy⁶⁵ shortly before the collapse of the Assyrian Empire. This strategy might also explain the phenomenon of numerous scattered places that had the same root name, and sometimes the very name itself, as displaced people groups applied their name to the locations to which they were exiled, where the name stuck—a minor victory for the deported. Many cities in the United States were named this way, as settlers moved westward, replanting the names of their home towns or regions, originally in Great Britain, Europe, or the American East Coast. Certainly, the Assyrian policy of deportation and relocation was not the only cause of multiple attestation of place names across a wide geographical area—indeed this phenomenon was widespread before the Neo-Assyrian period.

2. Meshech — Meshech and Tubal are two of the places mentioned in the list of nations in Ezekiel 38:1,2 and 39:1. Although Ezekiel prophesied about them in approximately 570 BCE, their historicity as ethnic groups and tribes has been confirmed at an even earlier period through the annals of Assyrian kings. Meshech (Genesis 10:2 and Ezekiel 38:2,3; 39:1), which the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions call *Mushki*,⁶⁶ was the most threatening to the Neo-Assyrian Empire since its inception. The *Mushki* seem to have settled in the territory north of Milid (modern Malatiyah) on both sides of the upper waters of the Euphrates.

The first appearance of the Mushki at the northwest frontier of Assyria occurs in the 12th century BCE. Quite importantly for our thesis, *they appear to have migrated into Asia from eastern Europe.*⁶⁷ (See the possible migration route in Map 1, p. 135). Diakonov suggests it is conceivable that the name, “Mus,” both a modern city and district in eastern Turkey, might be connected with the ethnonym of the Mushki, evidence of their existence in the same area in ancient times.⁶⁸

In the year of his accession, the Assyrian monarch, Tiglath-Pileser I, (1114-1076 BCE),⁶⁹ initiated campaigns against Mushki. The reason, one document states, was that the Assyrians felt the impact of the “northerners,” the Indo-Europeans, who had been turned back from Egypt by Ramses III, but who, with the Aramean tribes pushing from the opposite direction, had then shattered the Hittite Empire.⁷⁰ In a subsequent entry, Tiglath-Pileser I described a conflict with 20,000 Mushkians, from the land of Mushki, with their five kings, resulting in 6,000 captives who submitted to him.⁷¹ The two kings succeeding Tiglath-Pileser I followed their predecessor in recording further campaigns against the Mushkians.⁷²

Sargon II (721-705 BCE)⁷³—one of the greatest and most powerful Assyrian monarchs—engraved the “authorized version” of the annals of his reign,⁷⁴ on the wall slabs of three of the salons of his palace (II, V, XIII) at Dur-Sharrukin (Korsabad). In his fifth year, he launched a campaign against the rebellious alliance of Carchemish and Mushki.⁷⁵ In his seventh year, he launched another campaign against Mushki and its king, Mita.⁷⁶ Again, in the fourteenth year of his reign, as he attributed his grand conquests to his gods, Assur and Marduk, Sargon boasted that Mita of Mushki, who had never submitted to the preceding kings, had submitted to him, sending an ambassador with gifts and tribute in response to the terrifying news of Sargon’s other conquests.⁷⁷

3. Tubal — Tabal (Tiberani), mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Isaiah 66:19 as “Tubal,” was linked historically with Mushki, and experienced similar difficulties in its relationship with the Assyrian Empire. In his annals, King Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), particularly in his 22nd, 23rd, and 31st years, mentioned his advance against the 24 kings of the land of Tabal⁷⁸ which was located toward mount “Tunni” (Taurus Mountain Range).⁷⁹ In his throne inscriptions, he listed the land of Tabali (var. Tabalu)⁸⁰ as one of the lands he had conquered.⁸¹ Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE), flaunted the number of his captives and his ability to subdue the many kings against whom he campaigned, including one Uassurame of Tabal⁸²—whose indifference toward the grand Assyrian achievements led eventually to his subjection and to the extortion of tribute from him.⁸³ Shortly after, in

the ninth year of his reign, Sargon II records a heavy military campaign in which he utterly defeated and spoiled⁸⁴ the country of Tabal.⁸⁵ Later, it seems, Tabal became a vassal state of Assyria. Sargon, in recounting his achievements throughout the first fifteen years of his reign, mentioned that he had enthroned the king of Tabal, had given that vassal king his daughter,⁸⁶ and had expanded his territories. Yet, despite this gesture, the “faithless”⁸⁶ king of Tabal conspired with Mita of Mushki to seize Sargon’s borders.

Still later, the continuing resistance drew Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) into a military campaign against Tabalu⁸⁷—whose resistance ultimately proved futile. Assurbanipal (668-627 BCE) recorded the humiliation of the king of Tabal, who surrendered to Assyria, gave his daughter to Assurbanipal as a concubine, kissed his conqueror’s feet, and paid him a large tribute.⁸⁸ What is important for this study is that Tubal was located near the Tauros Mountains in southeast Anatolia, bordering on Mushki and Gurgum (one candidate for Gog), as well as in a fairly limited area at the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. The literature of several successive Ancient Near-Eastern empires contain numerous references to Rosh-like names in the area.

This traditional location of Tubal, with Meshech, in E Anatolia may be contrasted with attested sites for a strikingly similar name associated with (A)Raši, appearing both to its northwest and southeast.⁸⁹ The geographically prominent “Zagros Gates,” a pass into the mountains of the same name northeast of Nineveh, is alternatively named “Tubliš” by the Assyrians. The extent of Tubliaš/Tupiliaš may have been quite large, since more than 100 kilometers to the southeast, toward the mouth of the Tigris, is the Tublia River⁹⁰, which may have been named after this people-group. In any case, Tubliaš is said to be “within” the area of (A)Raši, a nation of considerable extent (see Map 2, p. 136).⁹¹ Thus we have two well-attested sites for Tubal: on the one hand, associated with the peoples of Rosh and Meshech in the northern and western areas of the ANE, and on the other, with Rosh in the eastern side.

4. Gomer — The hostility between Assyria and what may well be Ezekiel’s northern tribes was not limited to Meshech and Tubal. The inscriptions of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) record the first military interaction between the Assyrians and the ancient dwellers in what is now the Russian land, the Cimmerians (biblical Gomer). Esarhaddon launched a military campaign against the Cimmerians, whom he described as barbarians “whose home was far off,” in the land of Hubushna.⁹² Esarhaddon conquered them and cut down all their troops with the sword.⁹³ The

empire that succeeded the Assyrians also interacted with some of these nations.

VII. Babylonian Sources

A. Historical Background

The Babylonian Empire (626-539 BCE) avenged the Assyrian destruction of their capital city, Babylon, in 689 and 648 BCE. Nevertheless, the new empire went on to replicate the practices of their former overlords, particularly in their manner of recording their exploits.⁹⁴ The extant records of the Babylonians regarding Ezekiel's nations, while fewer than those of the Assyrians, offer solid confirmation for at least one of our key nations.

B. Candidate for Identification with Ezekiel's Nation, Rosh

Four texts refer to a Province of *Ru-sa-pu* (with the prefixes of URU- and KUR-, both indicating “people of...”), located around the durable city of Nasibini⁹⁵ (it became a Roman provincial capital, and is now a major town in modern Syria, on its border with Turkey). As in Assyrian literature, the name Rasappa appears in the variant form of Rusapu. But instead of three (or four, if one counts Rasap to the east of the Tigris) different city locations, in Babylonian literature the names appear as a province, covering an extensive area (see Map 2, p. 136). The possibility of a link between Rusapu and Ezekiel's Rosh has both its name and its location to commend it. Bordering this province is the area of the Egyptian Raš, the Urartian and Hittite Urušum/ Urušša, the Greek Ρως / Ρωσος (*Rōs/Rosos*), and Gurgum, Tabal, and the Muški—the latter occupying an area somewhat farther to the west. Four Babylonian sources also mention an URU- or KUR- [people of...] -Raši in the Zagros Mountains east of Dēr and farther east of Babylon. This places Raši in the same general area as the Neo-Assyrian documents surveyed above⁹⁶—that is, in what is now western Iraq. Another major contribution to our project is material from the Greeks.

VIII. Greek Sources

A. Historical Background

Greek literature is a major window on the ancient world. The corpus of this literature extends to some 76 million words, covering a millennium-and-a-half of Greek history—including its extensive geographic and ethnologic treatises. (Essentially all of the extant material is available to the scholar on one CD-ROM disk).⁹⁷

B. Candidates for Identification with Ezekiel's Nations

1. Rosh — References to a place and a people called Ρως (the same Greek form as the Septuagint form of Ezekiel's Rosh) abound in Greek literature. In later material, from the 9th century CE onward, the word most commonly refers to the Kievan Rus'—the group that eventually gave its name to modern Russia.⁹⁸ In earlier literature, however, the term usually designated the name of a town (*polis*), and a people (*ethnē*) in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean (see Map 1, p. 135). This name—mentioned by Aristotle (4th century BCE) and later writers⁹⁹—can assume the forms of Ρωστος, Ρωσος, or Ρως (*Rōssos*, *Rōsos*, or *Rōs*).

Associated with this town or area, is an εθνη Ρως¹⁰⁰ (*ethnē Rōs*) located near the Tauros mountain range,¹⁰¹ which lies an arc pointing west and northeast, the bottom of which swings by the northeast corner of the Mediterranean (see Map 2, p. 136). If true, this would place the εθνη Ρως at the southeastern borders of the traditional areas of Meshech and Tubal, and only a short time after Ezekiel described these associated peoples (in the early- to mid-6th century BCE). The Book of *Judith* mentions the “children of Rassis,” who seem to be located near Cilicia, in the same area, and connected with Mount Rōssos (modern Arsus), mentioned above.¹⁰²

2. Meshech and Tubal — Herodotus (7.78), and Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, 1.124, locate the *Moschoi* (Meshech) in eastern Asia Minor (see Map 2). Around the 12th century BCE, the people of Meshech moved into the area at the east end of the Black Sea from Eastern Europe and were identified as Moschi and Tibarani during the Persian period and to the time of Josephus.¹⁰³

3. Gomer — Homer (*circa* 800 BCE) describes the Cimmerians (Ezekiel's Gomer), who live on the River Oceanus, near the entrance to Hades, “enshrouded in mist and darkness which the rays of the sun never pierce . . . but the poor wretches live in one long melancholy night” (*Odyssey* XI, 12). This description might reflect an extreme northern location during winter.

Conclusions

Ancient Near-East texts—whether biblical, Egyptian, Ugaritic, Hittite, Urartian, Assyrian, Babylonian or ancient Greek—all offer evidence of the presence of a people called Rus' or Rosh, as well as solid confirmations of the historicity of the other northern nations of Ezekiel.

While we recognize that this chapter has not thoroughly established conclusions, but merely offered candidates for further research, we must also recognize that the *traditional* arguments for avoiding the nominal translation of *Rosh* (grammar and lack of candidates) have been answered. At the same time, we must not rest under any illusion that the problem of *Rosh* and the other northern nations in Ezekiel is now settled definitively.

Part of the difficulty in locating Ezekiel's *Rosh* and the other nations is that their identification is not based simply on how one perceives nations contemporary with Ezekiel, but on how one understands their ultimate destiny far in the future—that is, their identification as players in Ezekiel's prophecy. It is to that task that we now turn.

Chapter 2 Notes

¹The NASB, the *Jerusalem Bible* and the *New English Version*.

²Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1969), 426. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Vol. 25 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 361.

³John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), comments on this problems saying, “LXX has *Mosoch* in place of the Masoretic text’s “drawers of,” and omits “bow.” Many scholars prefer LXX because they see it as reference to the place “Meshech” as in Ezekiel 27:13; 38:2,3; and 39:1,” 682.

⁴Other translations that adopt “drawers....” are: KJV, NKJV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, *New Living Translation*, *Today's English Version*, and the Arabic version. However, some translations adopted a middle ground between the two extremes, where Meshech is there but *Rosh* is omitted, i.e., *New Jerusalem Bible* (reads, Meshech, but omits *Rosh*), *New American Bible* (*Mosoch*, not *Rosh*), and the *Contemporary English Version*.

The *Elberfelder Bibel*, the authorized German version, omits Meshech and *Rosh* altogether, though it offers a comment in the margin: “In connection with the Septuagint, two other names are added: Meshech and Tubal.” James Moffatt's translation is more politically sensitive in that it drops the list of the nations altogether.

⁵Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1922). Some German translations follow this, e.g., *Einheitsübersetzung* (1980), *Revidierte Lutherbibel* (1984), as well as an Italian version: *IEP NVP San Paolo Edizione* (1995), a Spanish: *La Biblia de Las Americas* (1986), the new Polish version, *Polish Biblica Tytciacelia* (1965/84), and the main Swedish version of 1917.

⁶Jan Jozef Simons, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1937), 27-28.

⁷List I, 48a, b. Simons, 111.

⁸List I, 31a, b. Simons, 111.

⁹Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis: bis ins 7. Jh. v. Chr.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1979), 209. The same word *ru-ša qad-š*, is equivalent to the Hebrew phrase, **רָשַׁת קָדֵשׁ** (*Rosh Qodesh*), according to Simons, 208.

¹⁰For much of the material on Ugarit we are indebted to James D. Price, “Rosh: An Ancient Land Known to Israel,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6:1 (1985), 72-73.

¹¹P. C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 67-90.

¹²Theo Bauer, *Akkadische Lesestuke* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1953), 2:29, cited in Price.

¹³*BDB*, 1112, cited in Price.

¹⁴Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), 31, cited in Price, 70. Gordon’s pronunciation of the Ugaritic, *rīš*, has been modified in more recent works by Tropper and Sivan. According to Josef Tropper, §21.322.4, the normative writing is *r’iš* “head,” which is pronounced /ra’šu/. There is a rare possible variant, *r’uš*, which Tropper pronounced *rōšu* or *ra’šu*. *Ugaritische Grammatik*. (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000), 21.321.1.7, 34. Daniel Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 15-19, esp. 16-17. The standard edition for Ugaritic texts is now M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997), abbreviated to *KTU*². A new, comprehensive work containing extant Ugaritic texts has just been released. Nicholai V. Harouthiounyan, *Korpus Urartkich Klinoobraznich Nadpisei* (*The Corpus of Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions* [in Russian]) (Yerevan: Institute Vostokovedeniya, Academy of Sciences, 2001), 725 pages, including 173 cuneiform tables and one map. Harouthiounyan’s work was unavailable to us before press time.

¹⁵Three times in David B. Weisberg, *Texts from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar*, Yale Oriental Series: Babylonian Texts (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1980), 17:63. Cited in Price, 70.

¹⁶Samuel I. Feigin, *Legal and Administrative Texts of the Reign of Samsu-Iluna*, Yale Oriental Series: Babylonian Texts (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1979), 12:50. Cited in Price, 70.

¹⁷Feigin, *Legal and Administrative Texts*, 50.

¹⁸Three times by Feigin, *Legal and Administrative Texts*, 50. The Akkadian name, *rēš*, in these contexts, does not mean “head,” but “is jubilant,” as in “Ea is Jubilant,” from the verb, *rāšu*, “to rejoice, to exult in, to be jubilant.” *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (*CAD*), R, 209-11. See also the meanings: 1v2'b’, “said of temples, festivals” and 1c2’ “in personal names.”

¹⁹Stephen D. Simmons, *Early Old Babylonian Documents*, Yale Oriental Series: Babylonian Texts (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1978), 14:73.

²⁰Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, 240 = *KTU*², 4.310.

²¹Meaning, “Man of Ba’al,” *mutu* being “man” in Ugaritic (and Akkadian). Similar names are found in Hebrew, *i.e.*, Metushelah and Metushael. The substantive, *mtym*, “men,” is also attested in Hebrew, *e.g.*, Deuteronomy 2:34; 4:27. F. Gröndahl discusses this name in *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Studia Pohl, 1: Rome, Päpstliches Bibelinstitut (Roma: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1967), 161-162. There seem to be several attestations of the name, including the syllabic cuneiform (Akkadian) documentation from Ugarit. Gröndahl’s book is the standard reference for proper names in Ugaritic, although there are now several studies that help to update it, namely, D. Pardee, “Ugaritic Proper Names,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 37 (1990), 390-513; W.G.E. Watson, “Ugaritic Onomastics (1) and (2),” *Aula Orientalis* 8 (1990), 113-127 and 243-

²⁵⁰ Cf. also, Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquin Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la Lengua Ugarítica*. (DLU) Aula Orientalis. Supplementa 7/8 (Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, Vol. 1, 1996. Vol. 2. 2001), 306: etymology uncertain: *ma-(at)-te-nu/ni/na* and *ma-an-ti-nu*. W. Watson has recently translated this work into English, published by Leiden, E. J. Brill.

²² *Mtn* apparently means “gift,” from the Hebrew word for gift: *mtn*, “matan.” Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, suggests it is from the Hebrew verb *ntn*, “to give.” Cf. Jeremiah 38:1 and 2 Chronicles 23:17.

²³ While it is true that the name, Bel, is an epithet for the patron deity of Babylon, Marduk, the Baal cultus (religious activity) was centered on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. John Day, “Baal (Deity),” *ABD* 1: 545-49.

²⁴ Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, 25. Price also lists several more “Reshites” (= “citizens of Resh”) in Gordon’s *Textbook*: Text 2027, p.10, Text 2078, p.22, and Text 2079, p.23 (= *KTU*², 4.424; 4.374; 4.347), cf. also 4.352 and 4.779.

²⁵ If, indeed, this is Sardis referred to in this text. *DLU*, 398, suggests the reading: “fabricante de lanzas de bronce” instead of “the men of Sardis.”

²⁶ Price, “Rosh: An Ancient Land,” 73.

²⁷ *DLU*, 381, s.v. *riš* (II). Whether or not this port town can be identified with that of the Egyptian promontory toward the N of Ugarit is speculative.

²⁸ <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=41493&sctn=1>>

²⁹ <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=41494&sctn=1>>

³⁰ James Mellaart, “The Political Geography of Western Anatolia during the Late Bronze Age—Who Lived Where?” in *Vorträge gehalten auf der 28. Rencontre assyriologique internationale in Wien, 6.-10. Juli 1981* (Horn, Austria: Verlag Ferdinand Berger und Sohne Gesellschaft M.B.H. A-3580, 1982), 372-76. Figure 1 (map containing Uruša or Uršum). Igor M. Diakonov, *The Pre-history of the Armenian People* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1984), 243 (Maps 1 and 2).

³¹ M. Forlanini, *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici*, S. 205 (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo and Bizzari, 1966-1999), 18.

³² <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=76382&sctn=1>>. See Diakonov, *Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 243.

³³ Boris B. Piotrovsky, *Urartu* (London: Cresset Press, 1969), 45.

³⁴ Piotrovsky, 72.

³⁵ <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=118098&sctn=9>>.

³⁶ Jean-Robert Kupper and Wolfgang Röllig, *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes IX* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1981), VII-VIII.

³⁷ Kupper and Röllig, *Répertoire géographique*, Vol. IX, 73-74.

³⁸ R. D. Barnett, “Phrygia and the Peoples of Anatolia in the Iron Age,” *CAH*, II.2 (1975), 425-26; Vernadsky, *The Origin of Russia*, 189. Omeljan Pritsak (Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University) in a personal letter dated 12 September 1994 suggests, “Apparently the king of Urartu was known to Ezekiel as Rosh (Rus), derived from the name of the important rulers Rusa/Rusas.” In the footnote of this suggestion he adds, “such transformations are often attested in different cultural traditions, e.g., in Arabic sources.”

E. Zimansky notes that “it is of interest that the royal name Rusa is the only word beginning with an initial /r/ in the Urartian corpus. That this sound was not pronounceable in Urartian may have something to do with its transposition to “Ursa” in some As-

syrian texts. Nevertheless, there are place names in the northern part of Urartu's territory, around lakes Sevan and Cildir, that do begin with /r/.” “The Urartian Frontier as an Archaeological Problem,” *Neo-Assyrian Geography*, ed. Mario Liverani (Rome: Università di Roma, 1995), 173. One wonders whether earlier references to Uruššu near Carchemish represents the same phenomenon.

³⁹<<http://searcg.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=40274&sctn=1>>

⁴⁰<<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=119537&sctn=7>>

⁴¹“The Assyrian Empire is basically a triangle formed by the Kurdish mountains to the north, the Tigris River to the west, and the Upper Zab River to the east, flowing into the Tigris. The four great cities of Assyria—Asshur, Nineveh, Arbel, and Calah—were all within that triangle. This triangle expanded its influence beyond its center to include what one might call greater Assyria,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, 732.

⁴²The name could be also Araši. Leory Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*. Part III (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1930), § 169, 72.

⁴³Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), § 220 (Col. I, l. 62-Col. II, l. 84), Vol. 2, § 34 (ll. 228-316), Vol. 1, 17.

⁴⁴Luckenbill, Vol. 2, §: 54, 25-26; 82, 41; 92, 46; 96, 48; 97, 48-49; 98, 50; 99, 51-52; 102, 54-55; 118, 60-62; and 137, 71-72.

⁴⁵Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 248 (Col. IV, l. 54-Col. V, l. 16), 124.

⁴⁶§ 805, Luckenbill, Vol. 2, 307. However, other historical maps confirm the presence of an eastern locale; they use names that contain the same root, *rus*. For example the name *Pa-rus-a* is used in F. M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis: Papers of a Symposium Held in Cetona (Siena) June 26 - 28, 1980* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1981), chart 4. The same name and the same locale is also defined by Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), 179.

⁴⁷Parpolo, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, 23-24.

⁴⁸“KUR basically means mountains; countries; or may refer to people,” Parpolo, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, XVI.

⁴⁹F. R. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1892-1941), 202.13. (Hereafter *ABL*).

⁵⁰*ABL*, 169.8; *ABL*, 1007.R19.

⁵¹*ABL*, 1380.14.

⁵²*ABL*, 1309.R4. *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1902), 34 45 iii 8 and 34 49 iii 10.

⁵³D.G. Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargon's Königs von Assyrien: 722-705 v. Chr* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1883), 14,29. Cameron identifies Bit-Imbi as the capital city of (A)Raši. George G. Cameron. *History of Early Iran* (New York: Greenwood, [©1936] 1968), 116.

⁵⁴*Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* (Paris: G. Masson, 1869-1890), 309 48.21.23. Th. Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1933), 55.14.15. *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1906-1916), 7 46.67.70.

⁵⁵Hugo Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1889), 98.18. Cameron, *History of Early Iran*, 200.

⁵⁶Lyon, 2.12. Winckler, 136.11 and 138.9. *ABL*, 1275.R1.

⁵⁷C. H. W. Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents* (Cambridge, UK, Deighton: Bell and Co.; London: G. Bell and Sons, 1889-1923), 705.4.

⁵⁸R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons* (Graz, Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1956), 97.1.

⁵⁹See Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, appended map.

⁶⁰Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), 179.

⁶¹D. R. Frayne, *The Early Dynastic List of Geographical Names* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1992), 55.

⁶²Ernst Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire. Studies in Geography and Ethnography of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Gerold Walser (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1968), 84.

⁶³F. M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis: Papers of a Symposium Held in Cetona (Siena) June 26 - 28, 1980* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1981), chart 4.

⁶⁴ABD, Vol. 4, 748.

⁶⁵ABD, Vol. 4, 751. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. “Mesopotamia, History of.” <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=115356&sctn=14>>. B. Oded, *Mass Deportation and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979).

⁶⁶“Phrygians were certainly the people called Mushki by the Assyrians, the very name that the Assyrians had used earlier as a label for the northern tribes of various affiliations, in which case the name might also include newly arrived Armenians,” <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=120794&sctn=2>>.

⁶⁷*Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed. 2: 417-18.

⁶⁸Igor M. Diakonov, *The Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 195.

⁶⁹“Tiglath-Pileser I ascended to the throne at the time when a people known as the Mushki, or Mushku (Meshech of the Old Testament), were thrusting into Asia Minor. Their invasion constituted a serious threat to the Middle Eastern civilization because Asia Minor was the principal source of iron, which was then coming into general use,” <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=74341&sctn=1>>

⁷⁰Daniel D. Luckenbill, § 220 (Col. I, 1. 62-Col. II, 1. 84), 1:1.

⁷¹Luckenbill, Vol. 1, § 221, 74. Further records of this battle are also mentioned in Luckenbill, Vol. 1: §: 276 (93), 318 (101). “Those Mushkians, who trusted in their own strength, seized the land of Kutmuhi that used to pay tribute to Assyria.” Tiglath-Pileser I, in these entries, records his victory over the Mushkian troops.

⁷²Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884 BCE) records his conquests in Luckenbill, Vol. 1, §§: 401, 126; and 413, 132. Also Assurnasirpal (1049-1031 BCE) in Luckenbill, Vol. 1, §§ 442, 144.

⁷³“Sargon II extended and consolidated the conquests of his father, Tiglath-Pileser III. Upon his accession to the throne, Sargon faced major problems. One of them was with the kingdom of Urartu and the peoples to the north in the Armenian highlands. Sargon’s problem was not only to maintain the status quo, but also to make further conquests to prove the might of his god Ashur, the national god of the Assyrian Empire,” <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=67468&sctn=1>>

⁷⁴Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 2.

⁷⁵Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 8 (*ll. 46-52*), 4.

⁷⁶Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 18 (*ll. 75-100*), 7-8.

⁷⁷Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 43 (*ll.* 317-401), 22. “The insubmissive attitude of Mita of Mushki is mentioned again in a later entry along with the destructive raids against Mushkian provinces that led to the submission of Mita of Mushki and tribute paying,” Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 71, 36.

⁷⁸Luckenbill, Vol. 1, §: 579 and 580, 206; and 588, 201.

⁷⁹Mario Liverani, *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Roma: Università di Roma, Dipartimento di scienze storiche, archeologiche e antropologiche dell’Antichità, 1995), Figure 1, documents the existence of the tribe Tabal at the Assyrian-Urartian borders as well as in the neighboring areas. Also see Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), 179.

⁸⁰Luckenbill, Vol. 1, § 682, 246.

⁸¹Luckenbill, Vol. 1, § 674, 243-44.

⁸²Luckenbill, Vol. 1, §: 772, 276; and 801, 287.

⁸³Luckenbill, Vol. 1, § 802, 288.

⁸⁴Luckenbill, Vol. 2, §: 172, 94-96; and 213, 109-110.

⁸⁵Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 23 (*ll.* 139-177), 11.

⁸⁶Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 55, 26-27.

⁸⁷Luckenbill, Vol. 2, §: 290, 138; 329, 148; and 349, 154.

⁸⁸Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 781, 297. In confirming the historicity of these tribes, Luckenbill traces Mushki back to the Meshech of Genesis 10:2 (see Footnote 22), while Ernst Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire. Studies in Geography and Ethnography of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Gerold Walser (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1968), 248, emphasizes the historical link between Tabali and the Tubal of Genesis.

⁸⁹Parpolo, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, 358. See the appended map in Parpolo.

⁹⁰Parpolo, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, (appended map).

⁹¹This is particularly interesting in view of the conventional wisdom that the eastern location for *Rosh* “would have had nothing to do with Meshech or Tubal.” Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 435, cf. Astour, “Ezekiel’s Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin.” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95 (December 1976), 567, n. 4.

⁹²On the apparent far-northern location for the Cimmerians in Homer, see Note 2, above.

⁹³Luckenbill, Vol. 2, § 516 (*Prism S, Col. III, l. 47 + Prism B, Col. III, ll. 1-12*), 206-7. The same is also mentioned in the same volume, §: 530, 212; and 546, 217.

⁹⁴*ABD*, Vol. 4, 764, 771.

⁹⁵Jean-Robert Kupper and Wolfgang Röllig, *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes VIII* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1985), 263.

⁹⁶G. E. Cameron, *History*, 116, cited in Khaled Nashef, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen Zeit*. *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes*, V (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1982), 225.

⁹⁷“The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) is a research center at the University of California, Irvine. Founded in 1972, the TLG has already collected and digitized all ancient texts from Homer to 600 CE and a large number of texts from the period between 600 CE and the fall of Byzantium in 1453 CE.

“Its goal is to create a digital library which will include the entire corpus of Greek literature from Homer (8th century BCE) to the present. TLG text materials are currently disseminated in CD-ROM format. The project has just released a new disk (TLG E)

which contains 76 million words of text (6,625 works from 1,823 authors).⁹⁷ From the TLG web page. <<http://www.tlg.uci.edu/>>

⁹⁸The thesis of Håkon Stang, *The Naming of Russia*, Meddelelser, Nr. 77, (Oslo: University of Oslo Slavisk-baltisk avelding, 1996).

⁹⁹E.g., Aristotle, (4th century BCE) [TLG0086] *Vent.* 973a.17. W. D. Ross, ed. *De somno et Vigilia. Aristotle Parva Naturalia*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), 453 b 11-458 a 32. Strabo (1st century BCE - 1st century CE), *Geography* 14.5.19.4; 16.2.8.22 [TLG 0099]. A. Meineke, ed. *Geographica. Strabonis Geographica, 3 vols.* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877), 1: 396, 2: 397-814; 3: 815-1173. Atheneaeus (AD 1st) *Deipnosophistae* 13.68.6 [TLG0008]. Ρωσσος της Συριας (Rōssos of Syria). Plutarch (1st-2nd centuries CE) *Demetr.* 32.2.2 [TLG0007] K. Ziegler, ed. *Demetrius. Plutarch vitae parallelae*, Vol. 3.1 2n edn. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1971), 1-60. Polyaenus (2nd century CE) *Strategemata* 4.6.9.9 [TLG 0616] E. Woelflin and J. Melber., eds. *Strategemata. Polyaeni strategematon libri viii* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), 2-301, 305-425. Cassius Dio (2nd-3rd centuries BCE), [work 3: 2.1.2.31.13 TLG0385]. Polyaenus. U. P. Boissevain, ed. *Historiae Romanae*. Cassii Dionis Cocceiani historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955). Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.2.4. G. Bardy, ed. *Historia Ecclesiastica. Eusèbe de Césarée Histoire ecclésiastique, 3 vols.* Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1952; 1955; 1958), 31, 41-55. Theopompus (4th century CE) *Fragmenta* Work 002, 2b, 115, F.254b.4. J. Chrysostom (d.407) Epistle ΣΛΕ: *Epistle to Porphyrius, Bishop of Rossos* [TLG 0097]. Joannes Malalas (5th-6th centuries CE), *Chron* 198.17; 201.10 [TLG2871]. L. Dindorf, ed. *Chronographia. Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*. Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn: Weber, 1831), 23-496. *Etymologicum Symeonis* [TLG-E] work 001. 2.99.14. F. Lasserre and N. Livadaras., eds. *Etymologicum Symeonis. Etymologicum magnum genuinum Symeonis etymologicum una cum magna grammatica. Etymologicum auctum. vol* (Rome: Ateneo, 1976), 2-40; 42-80; 82-114, 116-144; 146-174; 176-204; 206-234, 236-462. Stephanus of Byzantium, 6th century CE, lists: “Ρωσος, πολις Κιλικιας το εθνικον Ρωσος, αλλα και Ρωσευς, ως απο το ταρσος Ταρσευς.” “Rōsos, a city Cilicia, the nation of the Rōs, but also of the Russians, as from the Peninsula of Tarsus.” Stephan von Byzantium, *Ethnica*, A. Minke, ed. (Graz: Akademische Druck-und-Verlanganstalt, 1958), 548.

¹⁰⁰Ephraem (6th century CE) [TLG], *Poeta et Hist.* 001.2595. Bekker, I., (ed.), *Chronicon. Ephraemius*. Series Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn: Weber, 1840), 7-417.

¹⁰¹Aristotle [TLG0068] Work 051, 6.36.250.20 “εν δε Ιστικω και περι Ρωσον Συριανδρος: πνει δε απο των Συριων πυλων ας διεστηκεν ο τε Ταυρος και το Ρωσια ορη.” “But in Issos and around Syrian Rōsos: they issue forth from the Syrian Gates, separated from the Tauros and the Rōsia Mountains.”

¹⁰²Cary A. Moore, *Judith*. Anchor Bible 40 (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 138. This is probably a reference to the city of Ρωσσος or the εθνη Ρως associated with it.

¹⁰³*Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., 2: 417-18, 420-21.

Chapter 3

Ezekiel’s Northern Nations and Russia

In any attempt to establish an historical link between the Rosh of Ezekiel 38:2,3 and 39:1 and the contemporary nation of Russia, it is necessary to trace the early history of the people group that used to be called Rus’, whose name became that of Russia.

The previous chapter examined the Ancient Near-Eastern data to offer candidates for Rosh and for the other northern nations of Ezekiel’s prophecy that were contemporaneous with the Prophet. In this chapter we attempt to trace the *histories* of these nations—from about Ezekiel’s time until their final dispositions as indicated in prophecy; that is, their role in “the latter days.”

This will be done by examining the ethnic composition of the early Rus’ in an effort to show connections with Ezekiel’s northern nations, and particularly with Rosh. This project will also examine various writers’ *attributions* of Ezekiel’s prophecy to the complex ethnic stew that was early Russia. This is done on the observation that the name a nation is called by others ultimately may be adopted by the nation itself. Certainly this seems to be the case with the Rus’ being identified by the 9th and 10th century Byzantines in their Greek Bible, the Septuagint, as both Jeremiah and Ezekiel’s Ρως (Rōs).

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.

I. The Ethnology of Russia’s Origins

Before navigating the complicated details of early Russian history, let us survey the ethnographic developments in the Russian land, and their possible relationship with the northern nations of the Gog passage of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Since early history, the principal territory of the Rus' homeland (see Map 3, p. 137) was the steppes of Ukraine and Russia—the wide strip of plains along the north coast of the Black Sea. The history of this area is the history of successive waves of invaders sweeping through the smooth terrain of the vulnerable steppes, which offer no natural defenses. Each wave of invaders both displaced and assimilated previous occupants, like ocean waves rolling into a pool on the beach.

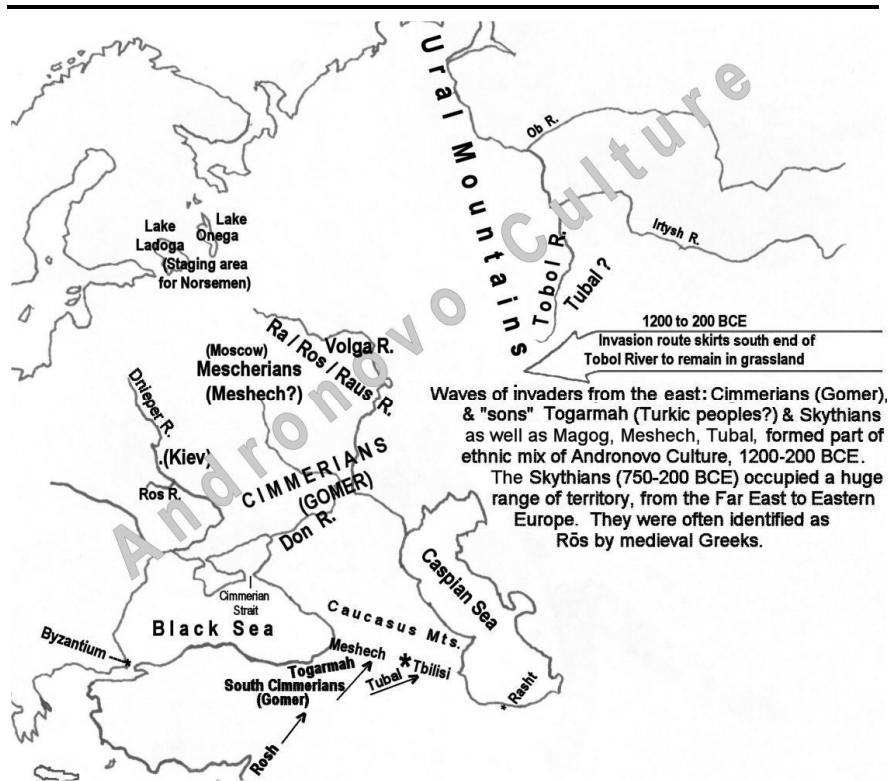
These invaders usually came from the east—the Cimmerians (Ezekiel's Gomer) at the turn of the 1st millennium BCE; the Skythians (the biblical Ashkenaz, and perhaps the other “son” of Gomer, Togarmah, listed in Genesis 10) around 750 BCE; the Sarmatians about 500 years later, around 250 BCE. They were then followed by the Slavs and by the Norse Vikings—often referred to in Russian historiography as the Swedes, Varangians, Scandinavians, or Norsemen (Northmen).

This latter people moved southward into Kiev and the surrounding areas in what is now the Ukraine, invading from the northernmost habitable areas of Europe. The area around the Gulf of Finland and Lakes Ladoga and Onega, near modern St. Petersburg, Russia, served as the staging area for these Viking traders/plunderers—an area exactly on a line from Israel to the North Pole.

The map below¹ shows the early flow of peoples that seem to have included not only Ezekiel's Gomer (the Cimmerians) but also Gomer's “descendants,” Ashkenaz (the Skythians), and Togarmah (Turkic tribes?). The others—Magog, Meshech, Tubal, and Madai (the Medes)—are directly “descended” from Japheth, based on the relationships in the Table of Nations (Genesis 10). It is in the territory of Madai (Medes, Assyr, Madai) that we find a number of Assyrian references to (A)Raši and Tūbliaš. It is therefore tempting to think that Rosh may have migrated with Ezekiel's other northern nations.

The Table of Nations places the family of Japheth in the north. The question is, north of what? Certainly, Ezekiel sees them coming from the point farthest north of his location, as he prophesied, which was either in Judea, or on the River Chebar in Babylonia.

In either case, the “Andronovo” (“new peoples”) culture certainly was in a northerly direction. The map in Chapter 2 has shown the relationship of Israel to this region, and to the nations mentioned in his prophecy and contemporaneous with Ezekiel. The map below locates the so-called “Andronovo” in this region, which peoples include several biblical nations, such as Gomer, Ashkenaz (Skythians), and probably some other “descendants” of Japheth (Genesis 10) as well, e.g., Togarmah, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, and Madai.²

Fig. 2: Ethnic Positions and Movements *circa* 1200 to 200 BCE

A. The Cimmerians (*circa* 1150-750 BCE)

The Cimmerians,³ a nomadic, “Iranian”⁴ group from the east, invaded and occupied a wide area—from the Caspian Sea west, to the area above the Black Sea—from around 1150 BCE to about 750 BCE. These Cimmerians are identified with the biblical Gomer (Genesis 10 and Ezekiel 38-39). Under pressure from the Skythians to the east, the main branch of the Cimmerians either assimilated with the invaders or migrated slowly to the west above the Black Sea.

A secondary, southern branch of the Cimmerians moved south through the Caucasus Mountains into Asia Minor. They attacked the Urartians during the rule of Rusas I (734-714 BCE). Then in 707 BCE they confronted and greatly weakened Urartu again as they moved further west in Asia Minor.

The Cimmerian invasion alarmed the Assyrians, who attacked them during a campaign against Tabal (Ezekiel's Tubal) sometime between 722 BCE and 705 BCE. A generation later, in 679 BCE, the Assyrians defeated the Cimmerians near Tabal, forcing the Cimmerians to penetrate westward in Anatolia—eventually migrating all the way to Ephesus on the Aegean coast. The Cimmerian southern invasion and presence at the east end of the Black Sea may be preserved in the name of a major Armenian city, Gyumri, just over fifty kilometers northwest of the capital, Yerevan, as well as in the Armenian name for Cappadocia (north-central Turkey), “Gamirk.”⁵

What is important here is that Bible commentaries and atlases give a unified opinion that Gomer (the Cimmerians) was ultimately located and assimilated in what is today known as Turkey. However, this is not the whole story. The northern branch of the Cimmerians, and certainly *the main one*, seems to have migrated as far west as Romania, ahead of the Scythian advances, while some were apparently pushed south into the Crimean peninsula in the north-central area of the Black Sea. Ptolemy (2nd century CE) shows the names of three cities in the area as having the “Cimmer-” root, while the isthmus on the east side of the peninsula is to this day called “the Cimmerian Strait” (Fig. 2 and Map 1, p.135).⁶ Basically, however, the Cimmerian ethnic stock assimilated in the area now known as the Ukraine and southern Russia. There seems to be no evidence that the Cimmerians (Ezekiel's Gomer) could be identified with Germany apart from the similarity of the name. Much the same is true for a related Iranian tribe, the Scythians.

B. The Scythians (750 – 250 BCE)

Around 750 BCE, the Scythians, who were known as fierce warriors,⁷ pushed westward into what is now Ukraine⁸—displacing and assimilating the Cimmerians. The Scythians are usually identified as the biblical Ashkenaz (Assyr. Ashguzai), who, along with Togarmah, were “sons” of Gomer.⁹ Rabbinical sources identify Ashkenaz with various areas, including Armenia and parts of Europe.¹⁰

The Scythians had an amazing geographic range during their history, covering as many as eleven time zones, and leaving artifacts as far east as Korea, as far west as Romania, and possibly as far north as the Siberian permafrost. According to Herodotus,¹¹ they also penetrated southward, deep into the Ancient Near East, and for twenty-eight years terrorized its inhabitants as far south as Egypt (Jeremiah 4:29; 5:15-17; 6:22-26; 50:41-42 and all of Zephaniah).¹² That Ezekiel's nations may contribute to the Russian identity, however, is supported by the fact that the Scythians represented a major component of the ethnic make-up of early Russia.¹³ Certainly, as we

shall see below, the “Skythians” were often associated with Ezekiel’s Rosh, again raising the question of attribution of names.

C. The Sarmatians (*circa 250 BCE – 250 CE*)

Around 250 BCE, another nomadic group of Iranian stock, closely related to the Skythians but known as the Sarmatians, appeared in the Ukraine Steppe, conquered the Skythians, and established their domain from 250 BCE to 250 CE. The Sarmatians, however, were not a homogeneous people but were, rather, composed of several tribes, each of which led an independent existence.

One of these tribes, the Roxolani, may represent an early reference to the Rus’, who ultimately lent their name to Russia. The name, Roxolani, in Greek, may be based on the combination of two tribal names, “Rukhs-As”¹⁴ or “Rukhs-Alans” (“Light-Alans”).¹⁵ If so, it may be that the first appearance of the name Rus’/Rōs north of the Caucasus or the Black Sea was when a group of Roxolani assumed residence in the Volga basin—a fact which may explain why the Volga was earlier called Rōs.¹⁶

Another clan of the Sarmatians was the Rosomones, perhaps derived from “Rōs” plus “mojne” (men),¹⁷ who appeared as early as the 4th century CE, which suggests the early presence of the Rōs/Rus’ tribe in the trans-Caucasian area well *before* the arrival of the Varangians (the Norsemen) into the land of the Rus’.¹⁸

D. Slavs versus the “North-men” as the Origin of the Rus’

The open land of Russia, with its vast plains, was invaded not only from the eastern side, but also from both the southwestern and northern sides by the Slavs and the Varangians, respectively. The Slavs are members of the multi-ethnic/linguistic mix of Europe who once resided chiefly in eastern and southeastern Europe, but gradually migrated eastward through what is now the Ukraine and Russia. Prehistorically, the original habitat of the Slavs was Asia, from which they migrated much earlier to populate parts of Eastern Europe. It might be assumed that in their westward movement they joined their more aggressive neighbors—the Alans, a Sarmatian clan.¹⁹

On the other hand, the Varangians, also described as the Scandinavians or Norse-men (“North-men”), invaded the Russian land from the northwest, through the Baltic Sea, and established their early center in Novgorod, around Lake Ladoga near modern St. Petersburg. Eventually they moved south, toward Kiev, using the Dnieper River to reach the heart of (what became) the land of the Rus’ (see Map 3, p. 137).

This movement initiated one of the most controversial historical problems: the identification of the Rus'. Who were the Rus'? What were the beginnings of the state structure of the Kievan Rus' empire? These are among the most disputed and documented questions in the history of Eastern Europe. In a more specific way, we can modify our questions as follows: Did the East Slavs (a people more or less indigenous to the area) create their own state? Or did outsiders do that for them? Were the Rus' Scandinavian outsiders? Indigenous East Slavs? A complex mix of many groups, including some or all of Ezekiel's northern nations? Or any combination of these?

The controversy surrounding these questions derives from the different interpretations given to certain passages in the opening pages of one of the oldest and best-known written sources for the early history of the East Slavs, the *Rus' Primary Chronicle*.²⁰ This *Chronicle* recounts the story of the inhabitants of the area around Kiev who, exhausted from inter-tribal warfare, (somewhat improbably) "invited" three Scandinavian/Varangian/Norman²¹ princes to rule over them to bring order. This account became the basis of the "Normanist theory," which asserts that the Rus' were one of the Varangian peoples, *i.e.*, Scandinavians, who at that time inhabited the Baltic coast.²²

This account seemed to deny modern Slavs their claim to have originated the name "Rus'," which also denigrates their sense of identity. For two-and-a-half centuries, the Normanist theory triggered intense divisions among academics of Russian history—a debate that only recently appears to be redefining itself toward greater appreciation for a more southerly (Slavic) source for the origin of the Rus'.

1. The Normanist Argument — On 6 September 1749, Gerhard Friedrich Müller—the official Russian Imperial historiographer and a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg—theorized that Norsemen founded the ancient state of Kievan Rus'.²³ Those who followed this position called themselves "Normanists," believing that the term Rus' was of Norse origin. They considered the Norsemen—or, more exactly, the Swedes, *i.e.*, people of Germanic origins—to have been the chief organizers of Rus' political life, first on the banks of Lake Il'men' and later on the shores of the Dnieper River. The argument of the Normanists runs as follows:

- a. The Rus' received their name from *Ruotsi* ("rowers," or "oarsmen"), a name derived from the Swedish maritime district in Upland, whose inhabitants were rowers.²⁴
- b. The *Primary Chronicle* includes the Rus' among the Varangian peoples from beyond the sea: the Swedes, Norwegians, and Goths.

- c. Most of the names of Rus' envoys listed in the treaties with Byzantium (911 and 944 CE) are of Scandinavian origin.
- d. The *Annales Bertiniani* (*circa* 839 CE) records that the *Rhos* envoys—who came from the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos to the Emperor Louis I in Ingelheim and whose leader had the title *Chacanus*—were called “Swedes.”
- e. The Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus gave both the Slavic ($\Sigma\kappa\lambda\alpha\beta\eta\nu\iota\sigma\tau\iota$) and Rus’ian ($\Ρ\omega\sigma\iota\sigma\tau\iota$) names for Dnieper cataracts. Most of the Russian names appear to be derived from Old Norse.
- f. Islamic geographers and travelers of the 9th and 10th centuries CE made a clear distinction between the Rus’ and the *as-Saqaliba* (Slavs).²⁵

The appeal to the Byzantine and Arabic authors by the adherents of the Normanist position reflects an emphasis-shift from historical evidence to linguistic and ethnological indications.²⁶ Such appeal to other approaches came from the realization that—in purely historical terms—the problem of a Varangian-Rus’ connection is insoluble.²⁷

2. The Anti-Normanist Argument — After the 19th century CE, the anti-Normanist argument began to take on more serious substance through the work of Soviet historians Dmitrii Illovaiskii and Stepan Gedeonov, who were joined by a host of other scholars.²⁸

The strategy of the anti-Normanists has been either to criticize some particular aspects of the Normanist theory or—often with the use of archaeological, and, more recently, documentary evidence—to construct a new scheme to explain the early development of the Slavic State: a construct in which the Varangians’ invasion could be treated as a mere episode.²⁹ The basic argument of the anti-Normanist theory may be summarized as follows:

The name “Rus” was not originally connected with Great Novgorod or with Ladoga in the north, but with Kiev in the south—an area in which the Rus’ had dwelt since time immemorial. One may support this thesis with two arguments:

- i. There are names of several rivers in that area suggesting a very early presence of a people, such as the *Rōs'*.³⁰ The “church history” of Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, a Syrian source compiled in 555 CE (long before the appearance of the Norsemen), mentions the *Hros* or Rus’, in connection with some North Caucasian peoples found south of Kiev in the same area as the *Rōs'* River.
- ii. No tribe or nation called Rus’ was known in Scandinavia, though there is the oft-cited village of Roslagen in Sweden. But it is never mentioned in any of the Old Norse sources, including the sagas.³¹

The Scandinavian names of the Rus’ envoys who visited Ingelheim in 839 CE and signed the treaties with the Byzantine Empire in the 10th century CE do not prove that the Rus’ were Swedes (Norsemen). The Norsemen were only *representatives* of the Slavic Rus’ princes. In any case, the Latin passive voice

indicates not that these “Swedes” *were* Rus’, but that they “*were called*” Rus’ [that is, by others], perhaps only because they were the official envoys of the Rus’.

One of the oldest Islamic historiographers, Ibn Khurdadbeh, who wrote *circa* 840-880 CE, clearly calls the Rus’ a tribe of the Slavs.

d. Archaeological material from the towns and trade routes of Eastern Europe indicates that few Scandinavians were present in that area.³² Furthermore, some of the 20th century’s discoveries show the existence of East Slavic state structures *before* the Varangians appeared in Eastern Europe.³³

e. It was the expansion of the Rōs’ tribe northward from Kiev (from their base in the middle of the Dnieper valley), and their increasing control over other East Slavic tribes³⁴ (and not the arrival of the Varangians), that in the late 9th century and early 10th century CE led to the formation of Kievan Rus’.³⁵

Furthermore, Soviet historians confirmed a southern origin of the name, Rus’, by the discovery of a 4th century CE term, “*Ruskaya Zemlya*,” which means “Russian Land,” recorded in a chronicle dated *circa* 12th-13th century CE.³⁶ In addition, textual analysis of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, has shown that the text, which identified “Rus” with the Varangians, was clearly an insertion, absent from *Novgorod First Chronicle*, which was earlier than the edited *Primary Chronicle*. In fact, Rybakov has noted that the insertion in this early manuscript appears to be in a different handwriting.³⁷ The argument seems to be the more convincing since two additional excerpts in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* that linked the name Rus’ to the Varangians have no parallels in the text of the *Novgorod First Chronicle*.³⁸

Critical examination of these arguments, however, reveals weaknesses on both sides—which may explain why the debate remains unresolved. The growing feeling among scholars is that there are elements of both theories that are true. While the anti-Normanists may be correct in doubting the existence of a purely Scandinavian tribe called Rus’,³⁹ and also correct in that there is increasing recognition that the name could have emerged indigenously, it is also clear that the Normans did play a significant role in the formation of the Rus’ state.

By the end of our second millennium, scholarship is challenged by the conclusions of Håkon Stang and Jacques Bačić—the latter of whom, in his recent work, justifies his rejection of the original Normanist theory with the following points:

a. The Normanists are unable to identify positively a region in Eurasia outside of Russia where the Rus’ supposedly originated.

b. The Normanist theory must be rejected on the basis of chronology. Normanists maintain that the name *Russi* was brought by “Russian” immigrants to northern Russia in 862 CE and gradually expanded to the Pontic basin. How-

ever, there is evidence that a Russian kaganate [realm] had existed in the area that is present-day Ukraine prior to 839 CE. We reject both dates as the birth dates of Russia [against Stang] because the ancestral namesakes of the *rusci* were settled along the shores of the Black Sea in the 4th century CE, and in the Derbent area (on the Caspian coast east of Tbilisi) in the mid 7th century. It is worth noting that the Aras River flows into the Caspian Sea, emerging only a few kilometers south of Derbent. It could well be that the name of this river, attested to in very early Ancient Near-East sources, reflected the name of the people in that area, or *vice versa*.

c. Regarding the ethnicity of the first Russians, the Normanist theory insists that they belong to the Germanic branch. This Normanist tenet rests not upon any historical data, but upon an erroneous portrait of the Slavs as fairly peaceful, and unwilling and unable to make war,⁴⁰ *i.e.*, unable to create and expand a significant empire against opposition.

d. The Byzantines repeatedly refer to the Rus' as “Tauro-Skythians,” who arrived in the Crimean Peninsula in the middle of the 2nd century BCE, while Roman literature locates them at the western end of the Black Sea in the first two centuries of the Christian era.⁴¹

This latter point deserves clarification. The problem of the Normanist/anti-Normanist debate is compounded by the political tensions and inclinations of each group. Hrushevskyi⁴² suggests that—since the pioneers of the Normanist theory were German scholars who were better versed in the Germanic than the Slavic world—they sought evidence in parallels or sources of Old Rus' law and institutions, in names and terms of tradition, in the German languages, and in the Germanic way of life.

Compounding this Germanic bias were the Germans' condescending attitude toward the Slavs and the Slavs' own lack of confidence in their attainments in the political and cultural spheres. This situation understandably led Russian academics to regard the Normanist theory as a plot against them and against the Slavs in general. Hence, the Normanist/anti-Normanist debate continues to evolve—perhaps toward a common center.⁴³ However, as we shall see, the conviction that the Rus' were an indigenous people located around the Dnieper and the Volga Rivers, as well as on the shores of the Black Sea, seems increasingly credible. Despite this, “the debate goes on.”⁴⁴

It is important at this point to note that the name, Rus', was essentially expropriated from Kiev and the Ukraine by the later center of power in Moscow, who applied the relatively prestigious name of the Kievan Rus' empire to an area much farther to the north. Hence, today, Ukraine—which more plausibly deserves it—lost the name “Russia” to its powerful neighbor to the north.

II. Toponymic Indications for Rōs/Rus'

A frequent observation of the anti-Normanists is that Rōs' was not only the name of a people group or a tribe that intermingled with others, but was also the name of a series of toponyms which may well have reflected the names of their early inhabitants. The persistence of place names over the centuries is an axiom in archaeology for the historical location of pre-literate societies.

The toponymic argument, in this case, is based on the fact that several rivers—all located in the Ukrainian or Russian steppes—either were named Rōs' or contained this root. For example, there is a recent consensus among the researchers in this field that during the first few centuries CE, what is now the Volga River was called the Ra/Rōs/Rus' River. Ptolemy's 2nd century CE map labels the Volga as the Pa (Ra) River.⁴⁵ The *Geographical Compendium* by Pseudo-Agathemeros, from the 3rd or 4th century CE, in the chapter “On the Greatest Rivers,” relates that the Jaxartes, the Oxus, the Rōs, the Cyrus, and the Araxes [Aras] all mix their waters in the Caspian

Sea.⁴⁶ An anonymous fifth century Greek geographer also calls the Volga River the Ρωç.⁴⁷ Al-Hāwarizmī, a central-Asian Arabic scholar who edited Ptolemy's *Geographia* in the mid-800s CE, identified a "River D. Rus'," which originated from the Rus' Mountains.⁴⁸ One Russian scholar, Novosel'cev, suggested that this appears to be the first Arab reference to Rus' and, by implication, to the Russian people.⁴⁹ Vernadsky noted that the tribe of Roxolani, which he takes as a composite of the names, Rōs and Alans, inhabited the Volga basin, suggesting the reason for the Volga being called Ra(s) or Rōs.⁵⁰ The Gothic form, *Raus*, may correspond to both Rus' (the Latin form), and Rōs (in the Septuagint), resulting in *Raus* = Rōs River.⁵¹

Even closer to the original Kievan Rus', on the Dnieper River, is its tributary, the "Rōs," just a few kilometers to the south of Kiev. The fact that this river is so named, is one of the principle arguments for an indigenous, rather than a Scandinavian, source for the name, Rus'.⁵²

In addition, the names of several other rivers, which are derived from the root *rus/rōs* and which exist over very wide expanses, are cited in support of this argument. For example, the Rōs (Dnieper tributary); the Rusa, a tributary of the Seim;⁵³ the Rsha is in the region of Chernihov (a district in northern Ukraine);⁵⁴ the Ruska, in Volynia (the area south of the Rōs tributary of the Dnieper River);⁵⁵ the Rosz, a tributary of the upper reaches of the Dnieper; and the Rus' or Rōs (not to be confused with the Rōs south of Kiev), a tributary of the Nieman (which takes a northwestern course and flows into the Baltic Sea).⁵⁶

If the Aras River, tracing the southern Caucasus mountain range (see Map 2, p. 136), appears as a reflex of the well-attested (A)Raši of the Assyrians (see above), then there may be still another link between the Ancient Near-Eastern references to Ezekiel's Rosh and the early Rus'. A suggestion of this comes from Bochart, who claims that the Araxes/Aras River was once called the Rōs (Ρωç),⁵⁷ further indicating a people of this name in the vicinity. Moreover, if one traces the shoreline of the Caspian southward a few kilometers from the mouth of the Aras River, one encounters the prominent modern city of Rasht. Could the name of this city echo the extended presence of the people of (A)Raši who occupied the Zagros Mountains just below to the southwest—in the Assyrian period?

In any case, if the axiom is true that toponyms are valuable sources of information about the history of pre-literate societies, then there are many indicators of the existence of a people, Rōs/Rus', throughout the areas of Russia, the Ukraine and the Caucasus Mountains—and long before the invasion of the Norsemen.

III. Traditional Attributions of Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Northern Nations

Since early Christian times, there has been an unmistakable eschatological impulse toward identifying the Trans-Caucasian inhabitants with the people groups of the Gog passage of Ezekiel 38 and 39.⁵⁸

For example, as early as the third century CE, the Goths—who were often called the “Skythians” by the Byzantines⁵⁹—attacked and harried Greece in 267 and 296 CE.⁶⁰ A century later, in 378 CE, the Goths annihilated two-thirds of the Roman army in the Battle of Adrianople. To many, this momentous event was not without its theological overtones. Such a defeat of the most powerful empire on earth precipitated the connection between the Goths—with their northern location—and the eschatological northern foe, the similar-sounding Gog⁶¹ of Ezekiel 38 and 39.⁶²

And if the Goths—a people comprising the complex ethnic mix we know as modern Russia—were identified as Gog, the name Rosh followed an even more striking path. The prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39 is the very tradition upon which the later generations of Byzantines and others drew in identifying Rus' with Ezekiel's Rosh.⁶³ For example, Afrem, a Syriac church father (306-373 CE), in his commentary on the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, referred to Ketim as the father of “Rōsāyē.”⁶⁴

The progeny of the sons of Noah . . . Japhet begat the sons: Gomer, Magog, Taugarma, Madai, Yavan, Eliša, Tobel, Mašek and Tiras. Yavan became the father of the Yawnāyē. The sons of Yavan: Eliša, Taršiš, Ketim, and Rodanim. Ketim is the father of the Rōsāyē. Rodanim is the father of the Rōdāyē, that is, those who live on the isle of Rhodes.⁶⁵

What is interesting about Afrem's commentary is that he clearly expects his readers to know—without explanation as was done with the Rōdāyē—who the Rōsāyē were and where they lived. Since Afrem was Syrian, he certainly was familiar with the near-by “Ketim” (Hebrew: *Kittim*), which refers to Cyprus. One might suggest that the Rōsāyē may have been οἱ Ρωσσοί (*hoi Rōssoi*)⁶⁶ who bordered Syria to the North along the Tauros Mountains (see Map 2, p. 136).⁶⁷

Others have suggested a more northern location for Afrem's Rōsāyē.⁶⁸ Zöllner wrote that the Septuagint influenced the identification of the Rōsāyē with both the earliest Russians and with the Rosh of the prophet Ezekiel.⁶⁹ Diakonov concluded that Afrem understood the Rōsāyē (it is in plural form) to be “Russian” Eastern Slavs, showing that the name, in fact, was known to the Syrians as early as the 4th century CE.⁷⁰ Whether or not Rōsāyē applies, as is most likely, to the northern Syrian location, it may be that both posi-

tions are ultimately correct: There is evidence that the Rōs of eastern Anatolia (northern Syrian location) may well have migrated to the eastern, if not northern shores of the Black Sea.

Less than a century later, in 434 CE, Proclus—the bishop of Constantinople from 434-457 CE—applied the name Ρως (Rōs) in Ezekiel 38 to the leader of the Huns, Rougas, on the occasion of his death in 433 CE, after he militarily threatened the Byzantine capital.⁷¹

At about the same time, and in response to the same invasion, the author of the *Life of St. George of Amastris* notes that the “Russes” (Rōs) were “terrible, not only by their deeds, but also by their very *name* [italics ours],”⁷² which the author identifies with the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38-39. In this connection, in 839 CE, in correspondence from the Byzantine emperor Theophilus to the Carolingian Lewis the Pious, the name Ρως appears to be applied to the Viking (more properly, Varangian) Rus’, though the letter survives only in Latin.⁷³ This letter may have issued from a crucial encounter that same year between the Byzantines and the Rus’.

Apparently a delegation from the unknown north appeared at the Byzantine royal court 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 non-defined 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 Ρώς. It was with trepidation that the name was recorded, being a close call, too close for comfort, to the biblical . . . name of Ρωθός.

The greatest state on earth was set on its path. According to the present thesis, then, its name belies the petty theories of ‘local’ relevance that have hitherto been launched—of both the Normanist and the Anti-Normanist variety. 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.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵

Within 21 years their fears were realized. The prophecy came true: Constantinople was attacked from the far North by those whom the Patriarch Photius identified as Rōs (Ρως). Photius did not, however, seem to directly quote from Ezekiel, but used instead the language of Jeremiah and Lamentations to describe the invader's ferocity and savagery.⁷⁶

Photius, a Greek Byzantine who used the Septuagint, of course, may have had in mind Jeremiah 25:23-26 (32:22-25 in the LXX), which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, attests a Ρως in a list of nations just after Dedan (one of the nations in Ezekiel 38) and Teman, but just before Elam, which is the most common association of (A)Raši in Assyrian records. So it is likely then that Photius had *both* Ezekiel's and Jeremiah's references to Ρως in mind, in view of the earlier encounter and identification of them in 839 CE.

In Byzantine literature, however, only Leo the Deacon (*circa* 950-994 CE), directly and explicitly applies another attack in 971 CE of the Kievan Rus' on Constantinople to the prophecy of the Ρως of Ezekiel 38-39, describing them as Ταυροσκυθος (*Tauroskythos*).⁷⁷ The identification of the Ρως as a people among the “Skythians,” however, was widespread among the intellectuals⁷⁸ of the time, though the term, “Skythian” may have simply meant “barbarian” of no particular kind, usually from the north or east. On the other hand, the Byzantines consistently identified the specific name, Ρως, with savage northern invaders who over the centuries threatened the great world center of Constantinople.

Sometime later, Laonicus Chalcocondyles⁷⁹ suggests that the Ρως were named Sarmatians, a tribe from central Asia appearing *very early* about the 4th to the 2nd centuries BCE, who pursued the Skythians around the northern Black Sea. Again, it is difficult to determine if this writer had any clear notion of just who the “Sarmatians” were, or if the term was simply a kind of synonym for “Skythians.”

Beyond these examples, there are a number of references to Ezekiel's Ρως in the commentaries of the early church fathers. Inevitably, they suggest that Ρως merely represents the Hebrew word for “head” or “chief,” identifying it occasionally with the “head” of the empire: Rome. Exceptions to this identification, of course, were Leo the Deacon, as above, and most of his Byzantine contemporaries.

Excursus: The Rōs as “Tauro-Skythians”?

Several medieval sources refer to the Kievan Rus' (Ρως) as “Tauro-Skythians.” Though this tradition seems to be ignored in contemporary historiography, one can only wonder, on further evidence, if the implications of this tradition could be reconsidered. Could this term: 1) link the well-attested Rōs

of the northeastern Mediterranean ultimately with the Kievan Rus, and, 2) offer an indication of the very early ethnic origin of the Kievan Rus with the Skythians who appeared above the Black Sea a full millennium before the Varangian/Norsemen?

In Greek literature, according to Aristotle (4th century BCE), the name, *Rōs*, or “*ethnē Rōs*,” was at that time associated with the Tauros Mountains.⁸⁰ But the Tauros Mountains to which Aristotle refers are in southeast Anatolia, above the northeastern notch of the Mediterranean Sea (see Map 2, p. 136).

Two or more centuries later, the “Tauro-Skythians” appear in two places: In and around the Crimean (Tauridian) Peninsula (2nd century BCE),⁸¹ and also on the western coast of the Black Sea (first two centuries CE),⁸² described in Byzantine and Roman literature, respectively. These Skythians eventually disappeared by assimilation.

At this point, one may ask, did Aristotle’s *ethnē Rōs* (“people of *Rōs*”), who lived along the Tauros Mountains, eventually migrate north through the Caucasus, leave their name between the Black and the Caspian Seas (see Map 3, p. 137), then move westward across the northern shores of the Black Sea, and finally settle on its western coast, carrying their name (Tauro-Skythians) with them? Aristotle’s reference to the *ethnē Rōs*, appeared, of course, only two centuries after Ezekiel’s prophecy, and it has the added attractiveness of having been clearly located in the same area as Meshech and Tubal (Map 2, p. 136).

This scenario may also provide evidence for a very early appearance of the Rus/*Rōs*. According to Nicetas Choniates, “Galatia is one of the provinces ruled by the *Rōs*, also called Skythians farther north.”⁸³ This could suggest the connection of the *Rōs* of central and eastern Anatolia (that is, the well-attested Rosh near the Anatolian Tauros Mts.) with the modern nation of Russia. But the “Galatia” Choniates mentions may not be the familiar Galatia of St. Paul’s time. Instead, he may be referring to a much earlier period when the *Rōs* ruled “Galatia” at a time when they dwelt on the western coast of the Black Sea—a fact that raises an interesting issue. Though Choniates lived in the 12th to the 13th centuries CE, he may be citing a much earlier historical source: one that indicated that *when the Rus’ ruled the Galatians, they did so before or during the third century before the Christian era*, since the Galatians seem to have left the western Black Sea area for north-central Anatolia around 279 BCE!⁸⁴ If this is the case, we have very early attestation for the *Rōs* on the Black Sea—*in the third century BCE!* Indeed, the modern province and its significant capital city, both named Ruse, in northern Bulgaria, may reflect the earlier presence of the Tauro-Skythian Rus on the west coast of the Black Sea.

On the other hand, if Choniates is referring to a Galatia that existed much later, during *his time*, then can one say that the *Rōs* dwelt in Anatolia very early? Could Choniates be referring to the *Rōs* who are well attested in the area around the Tauros Mountain Range? If so, we have preserved in Choniates work a very early source placing the *Rōs* *both* in central, and possibly eastern Anatolia, *and*, as the “Skythian” *Rōs*, closer to Kiev.

One further piece of evidence suggests a very early existence of the Rōs. This is a brief entry in a second century CE lexicon by Herodianus who introduces an alternate spelling, Pouç, equating it by a colon with the name, Ρωç (Pouç : Ρωç).⁸⁵ The lexicographer offers no other qualification or description, apparently assuming the reader would know at least one name (both capitalized as Greek does with proper names). Since the later Byzantine term for the Varangian or Viking Rus' also was spelled either as Ρωç or Pouç, and since the name for the city of Ρωç or Ρωσσοç in Syria does *not* have this variant form, Pouç, is it possible that Herodianus provided the earliest reference to the Rus', a people living north of the Black Sea, situated there long before the appearance of the Norsemen?

Besides Afrem in the 4th century CE (above), another Syriac theologian—Jacob of Serug—played a role in the identification of the northern nations of the Gog passage of Ezekiel. Jacob described nations in the north, penned up behind “Alexander’s Gate” in the Caucasus Mountains, who were to be released at the end of time.⁸⁶

And the Lord shall visit evil upon the world. And the nations that are within this gate shall be roused up. And also the hosts of Agog and the peoples of Magog shall be gathered together. These peoples [are] the fiercest of all creatures.

The legend of Alexander’s Gate, as described below, may reflect the notion of Satan being released from the pit at the end of the thousand years of Jesus’ earthly reign, which release would precipitate the invasion of Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-9). However, perhaps the most relevant link in the identification of Ezekiel’s northern nations with the Caucasians in general and Rosh in particular came in the 9th century CE from the Byzantines. In 860 CE, the Rus' waged an unexpected attack from the sea on Constantinople, thereby confirming the eschatological expectations of Christian Byzantium.

Earlier, and prior to the arrival of the Rus' (Ρωç) at Byzantium, the Byzantines were able to call on the Khazars of Serkel (a town beyond the Sea of Azov) for help, but they could not now, since the Khazars were Turks—descendants of Togarmah (at least the names appeared to correspond phonetically), whom the Byzantines believed to be one group of Gog’s hordes who would overrun the civilized world at the End Time.⁸⁷ Later Jewish tradition supports this identification, locating Magog in “the farthest north,”⁸⁸ and identifying it with the Goths and ultimately with the Russians. When the nation of the Khazars had converted to Judaism in the 8th century CE, Rabbi Chisdai Ibn Shaprut wrote to its king addressing him as “*naši rosh, meshech v’tubal*.” This salutation, drawn from our verse [Ezekiel 38:2], indicates that

the *Gaonim* [medieval rabbis] had a tradition that these countries were indeed located in Russia.”⁸⁹

Muslims, who were influenced by much the same eschatological fears and expectations as the Christian Byzantines, were not far from the scene. In this connection, the attention of the Muslims was focused on the northern quarter (the Caucasus Mountains and beyond), and especially on a legendary wall (“Alexander’s Gate”) that is to burst on Judgment Day, pouring out hordes of half-demonic warriors who will ravish the world. The wall was built by *Dhu'l-qarnayin* “the two-horned” king (identified by all with the Macedonian king, Alexander the Great), to hold back *Yadjudj wa Madjudj* (“Gog and Magog”) until their great End-Time invasion.⁹⁰

For the most part, Muslims believed that Gog and Magog lived north of the Caucasus, or at least beyond the mountains of Armenia, and that they were close neighbors, if not allies, of the Russians.⁹¹ Many educated Muslims who lived in the centuries prior to the emergence of Russia as a Christian state believed that the whole northern region of Eurasia was the domain of the Slavs—the Russians—and that beyond Slavia there was nothing.⁹² The Slavs, then, if not identified with Gog and Magog, were at least of the same ilk.

The earliest dated mention of Slavs in the Arabic language is in the *Diwan*, a collection of poems of the poet al-Akhtal, written between 685-705 CE at Damascus. In one poem, al-Akhtal described the Slavs, many of whom had settled in Anatolia, as “fair-haired”⁹³ and indicated that he may actually have seen them. Accordingly, Arabic writers⁹⁴ occasionally used the term “*Rusiya*,” which is the Arabic rendering of the Eastern Slavic Rus’, the very designation of the people and land from which modern Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus derive. The rapid ethnic, political, and social evolution of the term and the people(s) which it denoted during the 9th - 10th centuries CE produced a series of temporary, multi-layered, and occasionally contradictory notices in the classical Islamic geographical literature. In contemporary Byzantine sources it appears as *Rōs*, which may be the source of the Arabic form.

Moreover, attestations of a very early *Rōs* in the form *Urus* and its variants are found in a number of Turkic languages, which go back to the Arabic. Sources written in Latin record them as *Rhos*; the Bavarian Geographer of the 9th century CE as *Ruzzi*; Liudprand of Cremona in the mid-10th century CE as *Rusios*; Theitmar of Merseburg, in 1018 CE, as *Rusica*, Old German as *Ruz* or *Riuz*; Old Swedish as *Ryds*.⁹⁵ Another early attestation appears from Al-Mas’udi, in his book *Muruj adh-dhabab wa ma’adin al-jawahir* (*Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*), who mentions that the Rus’ consist of many peoples who fall into different categories, *only one of whom*

were the “Ladogans,” the inhabitants of Old Ladoga, a Norse settlement near present day St. Petersburg.⁹⁶

It is important to note here that this author detached the name, Rus’, from an exclusively Normanist source. Al-Tabari, in his work *Ta’rikh ar-rusul wa-l-muluk (History of the Emissaries and Kings)*, which describes the Muslim conquest of Armenia and the extension of Islam to the Derbent Gate,⁹⁷ does not mention the Russians by name. However, the Persian writer Bal’ami, in his condensed and translated version of al-Tabari’s work, which he completed around 963 CE, implies that the Russians already had been so named by 642 CE.⁹⁸

Although Muslims of the early Middle Ages had contacts and conflicts with the Russians, these Islamic writers variously understood the Rus’ either as one people, or as a variety of peoples identical with, or related to, the Slavs, or they identified them with the “Men of the North,” or even with Gog and Magog. However, none of the writers who dealt with Russia appears to have known the exact location and extent of the Russian domain. Most of the recorded data are vague and imprecise.⁹⁹

In view of the foregoing, there is no doubt that Rōs or Rus’ were an historically identifiable people, who—long before the early invasion of Norsemen—quite likely stamped its name on various locations, rivers, and tributaries in the area of the Trans-Caucasus, from the Volga River in the east to the Dnieper River in the west, and possibly to the prominent Aras (Rōs?) River, south of the Caucasus Mountains.

More importantly for our thesis, this identification of Rōs or Rus’ emerged in explicit connection with the Byzantines’ Septuagint version of Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Ρως (Rōs)—specifically since Ezekiel had identified Rōs as bloodthirsty barbarians invading from the extreme north, whose name was so clearly the same (at least to 9th-century Byzantines) as that of the contemporary 9th-century marauders, the Rōs/Rus’.

Even if it can ultimately be shown that the Norsemen were the original bearers of the name, Rōs/Rus’, the very designation, “North-men” who invaded from the “uttermost parts of the North,” still fits precisely Ezekiel’s description of this people, both by virtue of their name and their origin at the edge of the habitable North—exactly north from Israel, the point of reference of Ezekiel’s prophecy. The next section moves the discussion more toward the remaining northern nations of Ezekiel.

IV. Migrations and Destinies of Ezekiel's Other Northern Nations

The previous chapter located the *Ancient Near-Eastern* locales of the other northern invaders besides Rosh, namely: Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Togarmah, and Gomer. This section builds on the previous chapter by tracing the *ultimate* destinations of Ezekiel's nations associated with Rosh, to discover their possible modern relevance to the Gog passage.

A. Gog and Magog

Over time, identifications of Gog and Magog have proved to be varied, uncertain, and often fanciful. Because of the obscurity of these names in history and their prominence in Ezekiel's prophecy, identifications have tended to assume a spiritualized or legendary cast,¹⁰⁰ though just as often, they appeared in concrete, contemporary, and therefore ominous, relevance.¹⁰¹

Many identifications of Gog and Magog with individuals or peoples contemporaneous with Ezekiel's prophecy (*circa* 573 BCE for the dating of chapters 40-48)¹⁰² have been proposed: as a cipher for Babylon or Alexander the Great;¹⁰³ as the "Skythians";¹⁰⁴ as Gyges, king of the Lydians; as the Gur-gum, a people at the edge of the Assyrian empire;¹⁰⁵ as the Gogarenes of Ptolemy's 2nd-century map and of Strabo; and as the Goths, the Huns, the Alans, the Khazars, Arabians, Turks, Magyars, Parthians, Mongols, and the Ten "Lost" Tribes of Israel—among others.¹⁰⁶

Pliny lists a "Mabog" near the city of Rhosus and the Taurus and Rhosus Mountains in northern Syria,¹⁰⁷ and in Lysia, a Mount Gagae, which would appear to be located in northeastern Anatolia.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, the expression, "Gog and Magog," was applied to many invaders from the far north—particularly the Goths, with their similar-sounding name.

Islam adapted the archetype in the *Koran* (18:83-100 and 21:96), repeating a legend that Alexander the Great had created huge metal gates in the Caucasus Mountains to pen up the quasi-demonic Gog and Magog until they would break through at the end of time to ravage Jerusalem and the world.¹⁰⁹ Some Christian writers have suggested that "Caucasus" means "Gog's Fortress"¹¹⁰ in Arabic (*Gugh hisn*)—possibly reflecting this legend.

Andrew Anderson has traced the history and location of this story, showing that as known geography advanced, Alexander's gates were repeatedly relocated to unknown territories toward the north and east until they disappeared entirely. He tells of an 18th-century work that, despite its late date, may reflect a very early tradition:

In the central Caucasus, more than a century ago, [Jacob] Reineggs found a people called “Thiulet” who called their mountains Ghef or Gogh. The very highest of these lying to the north, they called, Moghef or Mugogh. One naturally wonders whether such a tradition could be carried back to biblical times.¹¹¹

More likely, the tradition is Muslim, deriving from the two passages in the Koran (Suras 18 and 21). One could also wonder if such a tradition could be related to both biblical times and to the 21st century, where the identifications of Gog and Magog continue as a kind of ongoing application of Ezekiel’s prophecy to present events.¹¹²

At the present state of the question, however, the issue of the identity of Gog and Magog seems beyond reach of the historian. Even the Apocalypse (20:7-10) seems to spiritualize this event, or at least seems to emphasize the demonic nature of this pair, who are at “the four corners of the earth.”

This universal scope echoes Ezekiel 38-39, where nations—perhaps representative—from those same four directions also converge on the newly regathered Israel. It would seem that, as a counterpoint to the “two witnesses” (Revelation 11:3-12), Gog and Magog now represent *spiritually* the terrifying might of the world’s demonically-inspired military power arrayed against the people of God, as opposed to those vulnerable witnesses of the defenseless Messiah—“the Lamb that was slain.”¹¹³

However, while the spiritual aspect of this confrontation is clarified in the Book of Revelation, the attack also, after all, does appear in the physical realm. Real blood is shed, and identifiable physical enemies of God inflict real suffering and death.

Hence, the believer’s awareness of who these enemies are must be based not only on a *spiritual* discernment of the times and of the Scripture, but also on the expectation that real events involving real nations are also involved. Accordingly, we now attempt to identify a nation that is somewhat less legendary, namely, Meshech.

B. Meshech

Ezekiel’s tribe of Meshech, which is thought to have migrated from E. Europe late in the second millennium BCE, is fairly well attested in Ancient Near-East literature¹¹⁴ as being located in central and eastern Anatolia (roughly, modern Turkey). However, after that period they can be shown to have moved progressively farther north.¹¹⁵

A major figure in Ancient Near-Eastern historiography, Igor M. Diakonov, though, distinguishes between a western and an eastern Muški—the latter of whom he describes as “Proto-Armenians.”¹¹⁶ Armenia, therefore, seems to have received at least part of its identity from the biblical Meshech.

Diakonov asserts that the Muškian kingdom of Alzi in the 12th to 9th centuries BCE, which was later included in Urartu, can also be viewed as one of the nuclei of the Armenian state. And, to a certain extent, we can view as such nuclei *any* Hurrian, Urartian, or Luwian kingdom in the Armenian Highland. These states were also created by ethnic groups that were not foreign to the Armenians, and by people whose descendants merged with the Armenian nation—although, at the time, they themselves still spoke other languages.¹¹⁷

The connection of the western Muški to the modern nation of Georgia is based, not necessarily on the genetic continuity of the inhabitants, but rather on the grounds that “certain Georgian tribes were called Moschi because at one time they lived in territory subject to Phrygia (Muški), or had a Phrygian-type culture.”¹¹⁸

More concretely, however, Herodotus (5th century BCE) locates the Mo-schoi in the Pontic region of northeast Anatolia. By the first pre-Christian century, Strabo reports them even closer to the present Meškian homeland. Ptolemy’s map of the area (2nd century CE) shows the Moschicus¹¹⁹ mountains at the eastern edge of the Black Sea—at the western end of the “Gogarene” region (on the southern bank of the Cyrus River, between the Black and Caspian Seas), near the towns, “Mescheia” and “Mosega.” The latter are only a few kilometers from “Thabilaca” (<Tubal?), with all of them lying along the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountains.

It is important to note that Ptolemy’s map of this area offers relatively few place-names, so those above are fairly prominent. Even today, in the nation of Georgia, one can track a 45-mile diagonal line running from northwest to southeast that includes Meskheta, Tbilisi, and Rustavi as its major landmarks.

Meshech may also have given both its identity and its name to the district of Samtskhe in modern Georgia (probably from the Georgian, >*Sameške* = ‘Land of the Meškhi’) and to Mtskheta (above modern Tbilisi), the capital since the 3rd century BCE of this Kartlian (Iberian, E. Georgian) state.

The East Anatolian origin of the Meskhi seems to be confirmed by the fact that most of the Meskhi speak an East Anatolian dialect of Turkish.¹²⁰ It is perhaps significant that the adjoining Daghestanis’ name for modern Georgia is “*Mosoch*.¹²¹ Moreover, an Armenian newspaper, “*Meshak*,” edited in Tbilisi in the late 1800s, seems to have reflected the ethnic name associated with the region.¹²²

The history of the Meškhi does not end here. On 15 November 1944, Joseph Stalin secretly deported the Meškhi from Georgia to central Asia. Despite attempts to return to their ancestral homeland just north of Tbilisi,

the largest number of deportees now lives widely scattered throughout eastern Uzbekistan, southern Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia. Others have been resettled in Azerbaijan in the North Caucasus, where they appear to be assimilating.¹²³

At this point, one may raise the controversial identification of Ezekiel's Meshech—one which has been roundly denounced for decades—with Moscow.¹²⁴ Whether the Meskhi are related to the Mescherians, widely dispersed in eastern European Russia, but centered on territory now occupied by Moscow, is difficult to prove aside from the similarity of the name.¹²⁵

It is particularly interesting, however, that Ezekiel's Meshech seems to have invaded what is now eastern Turkey in the 12th century BCE, doing so from *Eastern Europe*.¹²⁶ Moreover, it is perhaps significant that the Mescherians were located almost exactly in the area of modern Moscow—its southern suburbs now expanding into what is presently called the “Meshchera lowlands.”¹²⁷

Whether or not this tribe lent its name to Moscow seems lost to historical proof. But *circa* 800 CE, there were only a dozen or so tribal names of any kind in Russia generally—at least that have come down to us—and the coincidence of this tribal name co-located with Moscow seems striking.¹²⁸ The scenario may have been that Meshech, perhaps as part of the Finnic-Ugric migration¹²⁹—from the east, tracing the southern end of the Urals—settled in what is now the area of Moscow. Very early, however, *circa* 1100 BCE, at least a part of this group continued southward into eastern Anatolia, to be identified as the Assyrian's “Mushki” (see Map 1, p. 135).

Therefore, no one may now dogmatically claim that “there is no etymological, grammatical, historical, or literary data in support”¹³⁰ of identifying Ezekiel's Meshech with Moscow. In any case, one can at least demonstrate historically that Ezekiel's Meshech eventually found its descendants scattered throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States, today's fragmented successor to the Soviet Union.

In whatever ways Ezekiel may have understood Meshech as an eschatological people, it is clear that both in name and in ethnicity, Meshech has identifiably persisted into our own times. To a lesser extent, one may make a similar case for Ezekiel's Tubal.

C. Tubal

At the beginning of this chapter we noted that a number of “Japhetic” tribes, probably including Tubal, seem to have migrated generally both westward and eastward from a huge area centered on the Ural Mountains. Before this east-west outflow, Tubal may well have been part of the migra-

tion of the Cimmerians (Gomer) originally migrating from the far East—skirting the southern end of the Ural Mountains as a way of remaining within the narrow (east-west) band of grassland required to feed their livestock during the journey.

Along the east side of these mountains, flowing northward, is the Tobol River (see Map 1). It is likely that the wide-ranging Japhetic tribes, some of whom (Gomer, and his “sons” Ashkenaz [Skythia] and Togarmah [Genesis 10]), as well as Meshech, Tubal and possibly Rosh, appeared during Ezekiel’s time in what is now eastern Turkey. They also may have migrated westward earlier just south of the Ural Mountains, establishing the river name, Tobol, and at least four cities as evidence of their settlement there.

Indeed, near the source of the Tobol River is a city in Kazakhstan ($52^{\circ}40' N$ latitude, $62^{\circ}40' E$ longitude) named Tobol. Roughly 100 kilometers upstream and downstream of this Tobol on the Tobol River lie two cities named Tobol’skiy—one in Kazakhstan (north) and one inside the Russian border (south). At the mouth of the Tobol River, joining the Irtysh River, lies the major city of Tobol’sk, once the capital city of Siberia. Still farther north, the Irtysh/Tobol River empties into the Ob. At its mouth on the Arctic Ocean we find a city, Tobol’ka, Yamalo-Nenets, Russia—further attesting to the impact of this name in the area.

At the other (southern) end of the Tobol, because they lie in a narrow band of grassland at the southern end of the Ural Mountains, the “Tobol”-root cities and river source would likely lie in the path of the great migrations of “Gomer” (the Cimmerians) and his “sons,” Togarmah and the Skythians, and possibly, Meshech, Tubal and Rosh. Place-names often move along the path of migration of the tribe to whose language they belong.

Moreover, the names of geographical features tend to be extremely persistent over time. Even when renamed by subsequent invaders, the local populations tend to revert to original names once the invaders move on or disappear. One can recall the fate of such names as British Honduras, Northern Rhodesia, Stalingrad, Leningrad, and Cape Kennedy in modern times.

The so-called, “Andronovo” culture (Fig. 2), comprised in part of the “Japhetide” peoples, seems also to have evolved into, or to have included, the peoples who emerged as the Slavs. According to Vernadsky, a former director of the Harvard Institute for Russian Studies, a Slavic group moved, around 800 BCE, from the north Caucasian plains, through the mountain pass of Daryal and stopped in Mingerelia. From there they moved to Phrygia¹³¹ where, at that time, they could well have been identified as Ezekiel’s Tubal.

The argument seems hypothetical, but the participation of the Slavs in the Skythian/Alanic migration seems certain.¹³² Clearly, there are place-

names both in Trans-Caucasia and in Asia Minor, which seem to be Slavic in origin, such as Tbilisi in Georgia. Ptolemy's 2nd century map of Armenia has placed "Thilbis" and Tabalica on the southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains.¹³³

D. Gomer (Cimmerians)

See section I. A. (pp. 81-82) for the material on this section.

E. Togarmah

The biblical Togarmah, who may have followed the migration route of biblical Gomer (the Cimmerians), is listed in Genesis 10 as a "son" of Gomer, as well as Meshech, Tubal, and the Skythians (biblical Ashkenaz). If Togarmah is to be identified with a proto-Turkic people, this migration route (see map above) would be confirmed by the fact that the original Turkic peoples perhaps were, and still remain, located in central Asia (Uzbekistan, Afghanistan) and Russia as part of the Altaic language group, possibly as early as the Skythian migrations. While the Turkic people group is first historically documented only in about the 6th century CE, their ethnic and linguistic roots extended throughout this area far earlier.¹³⁴

In any case, a "Tegarama," is mentioned in Hittite literature.¹³⁵ The hieroglyphic Luwian (the biblical Lud) Lakarama and the Neo-Assyrian sources, list a city (-state), "Tilgarimmu," which had been attacked by Sennacherib in 695 BCE.¹³⁶ The modern Turkish city of Gurun may preserve the last traces of this national name.¹³⁷

The ultimate destiny of Togarmah, however, appears to be tied to that of the Armenians. According to Diakonov, while the "house of Togarmah" came to an end in the Persian era, it did so only in name, since its remnants became one element of proto-Armenia.¹³⁸ The central historical myth of the Armenian people was produced by Moses Xorenaci, who correctly located the biblical Togarmah in Armenia Minor (on the southwestern edge of the Caucasus Mountains) at a time when Jewish tradition, e.g., in *Targum Jonathan* (5th century CE), was ascribing the name to Germany! Xorenaci traces the origin of the Armenian people to a legendary Hayk, son of Torgom (the form is an early Greek Bible version of Togarmah), who was a son of Japheth (Genesis 10). Whether the name, Togarmah, a Japhetic tribe, can be identified with the earliest "Turkic" peoples as early as the end of the 2nd millennium BCE is speculative but possible. Perhaps they were part of the "Andronovo culture," some members of which migrated southward from the great eastern steppes of China and what are now Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan into what is now northeastern Turkey.

This self-identification of Armenia with Togarmah as a descendant of one of Ezekiel's northern nations raises questions about the prophecy's fulfillment. As an ultimate destination for the "house of Togarmah," Armenia—either its people or its culture—would seem to be the best candidate. Much earlier, however, elements of the "house of Togarmah" may have been part of the great 2nd and 1st millennium BCE Japhetic movements far to the north, and assimilated into modern Russia and Turkey.

Conclusions

Modern scholarship has provided indications of a tribe of Rōs/Rus', which lent its name to a variety of topographic features in what is now Ukraine and Russia, at a time *substantially before* the name became identified with Scandinavians. Further, the Christian Byzantines clearly made a connection between the Rosh of Ezekiel and the inhabitants of Russia—though perhaps more on theological than on historical grounds.

But this apparently facile connection may, in fact, have some historical substance. The long tradition of a Rosh-like name in southeast Anatolia which is found in possibly in Egyptian and Ugaritic documents, while certainly in Hittite and numerous Greek sources, along with its associated peoples—Meshech and Tubal. It is also clear that these latter peoples migrated northward into the Caucasus.

Could the associated people of Rosh have migrated northward with them? Evidence for this does exist in a possible connection of the Rosh of the Tauros Mountains to the Tauro-Skythian Rōs, to a province in Iberia (the Caucasus) named Radsh,¹³⁹ to the Ρως : Ρους connection of Herodianus, and to the Roxolani, the Rōsāyē, the Rosomones, and the Rusci—all of whom were located around the Black Sea long *before* the arrival of the Varangian/Norsemen.

Moreover, numerous geographical names appear—from the Aras (= Rōs?) River along the southern edge of the Caucasus Mountains, to the major city of Rasht, just below its mouth, to the early name of Rōs for the mighty Volga and several other rivers, to the Rōs River near Kiev. All indicate the early existence of a Rōs/Rus' people who link the Ancient Near-Eastern candidates for Ezekiel's Rosh to the people and name of Russia—again, well before the arrival of the so-called "Rus'" of the Norsemen!

A number of the peoples mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39—Gomer, Mesh-ech, Tubal, and Togarmah—seem to have migrated into what is now Ukraine and Russia from the east and seem likely to have constituted the ethnic mix of the early Rus' Russia and the Ukraine. Hence, these Japhetic peoples were *mostly* located north of the Black Sea and *not limited* to loca-

tions within eastern Anatolia, as many biblical atlases and commentaries seem to suggest.

Finally, this chapter has shown that the name of Rosh mentioned by Ezekiel has played a profoundly significant role in the history of Russia—even to the point of actually *naming* it! And, at the very least, it has been demonstrated that the problem of Ezekiel's northern nations and their relationship to possibly equivalent contemporary nations is much more complicated and positive than has been conceded thus far in recent Christian biblical or theological scholarship.

Chapter 3 Notes

¹ Modified from the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Former Soviet Union*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1994), 68.

² The most helpful discussion of the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) is that of D. I. Block in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Fully revised ed. Ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 4:707-13 (hereafter, *ISBE*).

³ Following J. D. Wineland, "Cimmerians," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1025. Also Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1932), 7, notes somewhat imprecisely that the Cimmerians could be identified either with Gog—based on Ezekiel's description of the invasion of the Cimmerians (Gomer), who came down from the north by way of the pass of Dariel toward the end of the 8th century BCE in the reign of Sargon of Assyria (722-705 BCE)—or more probably with the incursion of the Scythians, who descended by way of the pass of Derbend in the following century under Esarhaddon (681-668 BCE).

⁴ "Iranian" here applies to a people inhabiting an area east of the Caspian Sea, just to the north of modern Iran. It is interesting that in this way, Ezekiel's Gomer (the Cimmerians) seem to be linked by name to another nation depicted as invading Israel in the last days—Paras (Persia), today's Iran. The territory later to be ruled by the Rus, centered in Kiev, was overrun by successive waves of "Iranian" invaders: the Cimmerians, the Scythians and the Sarmatians (3rd century BCE). The identification of the earliest Cimmerians with "Iranians," who were also the source of the Scythians, is made by Askold I. Ivantchik, in the definitive study, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 156-57.

⁵ J. J. Reeve, "Gomer," *ISBE*, 2: 525.

⁶ "The Cimmerians once possessed great power in the Bosphorus and that is why it is called the Cimmerian Bosphorus." Strabo, VII. 4:3

⁷ The savagery of the Scythians is noted in the prophecies of Jeremiah (4:29; 5:15-17; 6:22-26; 50:41-42) and Zephaniah, as well as in 2 Maccabees 4:47; 3 Maccabees 7:5; 4 Maccabees 10:7; and Colossians 3:11.

⁸ Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 27-28.

⁹D. I. Block, “Table of Nations,” *ISBE*, 4: 707-13.

¹⁰See <<http://www.heritagefilms.com/ARMENIA.html>>

¹¹Herodotus, *History* 1. 103-06.

¹²A. Malamat, “The Historical Setting of Two Biblical Prophecies on the Nations,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 1 (1950/51), 154-59.

¹³Modern Russians in the River Don area are “perhaps ... vestiges of the descendants of the Irano-Scythian tribes who inhabited southern Russia in ancient times.” Bertil Lundman, *The Races and Peoples of Europe*. (New York: IAAEE, 1977), 49.

¹⁴It is intriguing that a variant form of Alan is As, from which is derived the name of the continent of Asia.

¹⁵This derivation from Iranian, “Rukhs-Alans” or “Light-Alans,” is proposed by Vernadsky, *The Origins of Russia*, 63-64. Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 32. “Those tribes were not divided by natural borders of any great significance; gradually they drew closer together developing a tribal league system. The name of the tribal league was taken from the name of the main tribe within that league. The unification of around 150 tribes into fifteen large leagues was a significant step forward in the development of the Slavic tribal society, which brought closer the emergence of statehood.” Boris Rybakov, *Early Centuries of Russian History* (Moscow: Progress Pub., 1965), 11-12.

¹⁶Vernadsky, *The Origins of Russia*, 63-64.

¹⁷Vernadsky, 68. “The Rōs as a people and persons of that tribe, Rosomones, were known in the middle of the 6th century CE to Jordanis, the secretary of the Prince of the Goths in northern Italy, and to the Syrian writers who concerned themselves with the Byzantine affairs.” See also, Rybakov, *Early Centuries of Russian History*, 14.

¹⁸Rybakov calls attention to a passage in a chronicle from the time of Ivan the Terrible known as *Stepennaja Kniga*, noting that the Muscovite historians of the 16th century CE found some documentation concerning the events of the late 4th century CE during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius (379-395 CE), where the enemies of the Byzantines were the Slavonic Rus’es and the Rosomones; he etymologizes that latter name as a composite of *Rōs*, “Russians,” plus *moyne*, “men.” In this context and at that time, Rybakov comments, the two emperors of Byzantium and Iran had to fight the “Rōs-warriors,” the Erul (red) Rosomones.” Håkon Stang, *The Naming of Russia*, 226-227. Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia* (New York: Kraus Co, 1969), 129, however, is more doubtful.

¹⁹Vernadsky, 7. Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 38, supports Vernadsky at this point. “According to the Sarmatian Theory the homeland of the Slavs was considered to be the Don River, thereby placing the Slavs in close relationship with the Iranian Skythians and Sarmatians.”

²⁰Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 51. “The *Russian Primary Chronicle*, also called *Chronicles of Nestor* or *Tale of Bygone Years* ... is a medieval Kievan Rus historical work that purports to offer an account of the early history of the Eastern Slavs to the 2nd decade of the 12th century CE. The chronicle was compiled in Kiev about 1112 CE and was based on material taken from Byzantine chronicles, west and south Slavonic literary sources, official documents, and oral sagas; the earliest extant manuscript of it is dated 1377 CE.” “Russian Primary Chronicle, The” Encyclopædia Britannica from En-

cyclopædia Britannica Online. <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=66154>> [Accessed July 16, 2003].

²¹The name, “Norman,” of course, is a contraction of the name, “North Man,” a term that may offer added significance to the understanding of Ezekiel 38-39.

²²Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 52.

²³“Gerhard F. Müller, a German historian in the service of the Russian Empire, set the Normanist tone in the 18th century. Müller and his successors claimed that most features of early Kievan Rus’ civilization—its political and legal structure, religion, and art—owed their origin and subsequent development to Scandinavian influences....” later research undermined many of these original Normanist assertions” Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 52.

²⁴Against this argument see G. Schramm, *Die Herkunft des Namens Rus'*. (Wiesbaden, Berlin: Harrassowitz Osteuropa-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin, 1982), 17-19. Also, Stang, *The Naming of Russia*, Ch. 20, 285-97.

²⁵Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'* (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard Univ. Pr. for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981), 1:5.

²⁶Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, Vol. 1. from Prehistory to the Eleventh Century (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1997), 474-75.

²⁷Hrushevskyi, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, 477.

²⁸Pritsak reports that the motive behind the official Soviet historiographers’ adoption of the anti-Normanist position was based on the assertion that the “Normanist theory” was politically harmful because it implicitly denied the ability of the Slavic nations to form an independent state by their own efforts (Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, 4).

²⁹Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 53.

³⁰Based on this premise, there are two toponymic suggestions based on the name Rōs’ being attributed to two watercourses. The first suggestion places the Rōs’ tribe to the area of Kiev where there is a Ros’ tributary of the Dnieper River by the area of Roden. The second suggestion places the Rōs’ tribe to the area east of the Azov Sea where the Volga River used to be named Rōs’. Certainly this follows the pattern of invasion/migration from the East by Gomer (the Cimmerians) and the related Japhetic (“Iranian”?) peoples. It is quite reasonable to suggest that *Rosh* was part of these migrations.

³¹Hrushevskyi, *A History of Ukraine-Rus'*, 478.

³²Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, 5-6.

³³Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 53.

³⁴By examining both the map which indicates the presence of the Rosomones as early as the 4th century CE (to be found at <<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/6200/carto/e380.html>> #380) as well as the historical documents coming from the same era used by Rybakov to identify the Rosomones with the Rus’ “Russians,” it is clear that the Rus,’ by the 4th century CE, had already established themselves as a nation and had initiated wars with other, previously-established nations: Byzantium and Persia. This means that the early Russians were working on expanding their territories on both sides of their boundaries, toward the southeast *vis à vis* Persia, and toward the southwest *vis à vis* Byzantium. So, their territorial expansion did not begin in the 9th century CE, but as early as the 4th century CE. Robert Sokal locates the Rus as early as 650-737 CE in the lower Don R. region and the Kuban delta. He suggests that the Rus are “an Iranian-

Slavic tribe and believes that Varangians acquired name of Rus from them rather than it being originally applied to [the Varangians].” <<http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/ee/msr/Ethno/dategen9.html>>.

³⁵Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 53.

³⁶M. N. Tihomirov, cited in A. A. Gorski, “The Problem of the Etymology of ‘Rus’ in Modern Soviet Historiography,” [Russian] *Istoriya SSSR*, 3 (1989), 132.

³⁷Rybakov, *Early Centuries of Russian History*, 25.

³⁸A. A. Gorski, “The Problem of the Etymology of ‘Rus’,” 131-32.

³⁹Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 6.

⁴⁰Jacques Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia* (New York: Columbia U. Pr., 1995), 5-6.

⁴¹See the Excursus on Tauro-Skythians, below.

⁴²Hrushevskyi, *History of Ukraine-Rus*, 472.

⁴³Tamara Rice, *A History of Russia* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 5th ed., 1993), 27.

⁴⁴Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*, 54. So also H. Paszkeiwicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1963), 18. “There can be but little expectation that the problems discussed will ever be solved to the satisfaction of all the scholars.”

⁴⁵Ptolemy, *Geography*, V, 8, 13, identifies the Volga as Ραξ, and the thought that it is pronounced “Raw,” may be based on the verbal reports of travelers, often second and third hand, who represent a variety of languages and therefore a variety of pronunciations of the wide range of topographical features. The significance of this is that sibilants are in the high-frequency range of human speech, which is most likely to be lost to the slightly-hard-of-hearing or to simply drop out of pronunciation as also do many words in French. So either by transmission through two or three languages or due to the possibility that an “s” sound would not be heard at the end of a word, the original name of Ptolemy’s “Ραξ” could easily have been “Ραξ” or “Ρωξ,” in either case, pronounced almost exactly the same.

⁴⁶Pseudo-Agathemeros (3rd - 4th centuries CE), cited in Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 72.

⁴⁷*Hypotyposis Geographiae* X, 29, in K. Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965), II: 502. Vernadsky, *Origins of Russia* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), 64 n1, notes that while “Müller amended the name Ρωξ to Ραξ [perhaps in deference to Ptolemy]—in a note he explained that in the manuscript and previous editions the name always reads ‘Ρωξ.’”

⁴⁸Al-Hawarizmi edited Ptolemy’s *Geographia* between 836-847 CE. Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 180.

⁴⁹Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 181. Anatolii P. Novosel’tsev, “Vostočnye istočnyx slavjanax I Rusi VI-IX vv,” *Drevnerusskoe godsudarstvo i ego mezhdunarodnoe znachenie*, Institut Istorii (Akademija nauk SSSR) Ed. Lev Cherepnin (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 373. Stang suggests that Novosel’tsev ignores Ptolemy’s original latitude and longitude indicators which place this river and mountain in France, rather than eastern Europe! Stang’s conjecture, however, requires a re-reading of the Arabic text that Al-Hāwarizmī used.

⁵⁰Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia*, 63-64.

⁵¹Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 73.

⁵²Omelijan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 68-69, though see Schramm, *Die Herkunft des Namens Rus*, 24-29.

⁵³The Seim River appears at the eastern side of the famous Ukrainian Dnieper, joining the Desna River. Both of them flow into the Dnieper at the area of Kiev. See Map 4 in Magocsi, *A History of the Ukraine-Rus*.

⁵⁴<<http://www.infoukes.com/ua-maps/oblasts/>>

⁵⁵Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 129.

⁵⁶Paszkiewicz, *Origin of Russia*, 131.

⁵⁷Samuel Bochart, *Samuelis Bocharti Geographia Sacra, Seu Phaleg et Canaan, Cui Accedunt Variae Dissertationes Philologicæ, Geographicæ, Theologicae ...ut et Tabulae Geographicæ et Indices*. (Lugduni Batavorum, C. Boutesteyn, and J. Luchtmans, 3rd ed. 1692), III, 13, cited in Patrick Fairbairn, *Commentary on Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, [1876] 1989), 423.

⁵⁸The geography of the *Book of Jubilees* places all of the “sons” of Japheth to the north of the “Great Sea,” i.e., the Mediterranean Sea in the west and the “Sea of Me’at (Meotis, Sea of Azov—a bay on the northern shore of the Black Sea) in the east. See the *Jubilees Mappa Mundi* in the article by Philip S. Alexander, “Early Jewish Geography,” *ABD* II:982.

⁵⁹Stang, *Naming of Russia* (218) also follows Herodotus and other early historiographers in suggesting that “the term Skythians in ancient geography included all the barbarian population north of our frontiers of civilization.” He continues (219): “The Tauro-Skythians are but another learned label for the Russians who are liars, savage, and cruel.” So also, Bačić (330): “All northern barbarian peoples since Herodotus [5th century BCE] were frequently called by this name [Scyths]. The names *hoi Rhos* and Scythes ...point to the north as the general direction in which their country was located...” *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 330.

⁶⁰Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 88.

⁶¹Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 89. Such identification is confirmed in the *Carmen Apologeticum*, verses 809-810, cf. Bousset 1900, 119. Here, as in other works, the appearance of Gog and Magog is made to precede that of the Anti-Christ.

⁶²The catastrophic defeat of the Romans at Adrianople at the hands of the Goths in 378 CE was enough for the next logical move: identifying the Goths with Gog/Magog—made all the easier by the near harmony of the sounds Gog and Goth. What is more important is that the Goths themselves adopted this equation, as evidenced by Isidor and Jordanes (*Getica*, Ch. 29). Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 89-90.

⁶³Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 90.

⁶⁴The “-āyē” ending in Syriac is the plural Gentilic, i.e., a suffix indicating members of an ethnic group.

⁶⁵Cited in Stang, 102.

⁶⁶Stang is incorrect in claiming that *hoi Rōs* could not occur in the plural form (*hoi Rōssoi*). *Naming of Russia*, 102.

⁶⁷See the Excursus: “The Rōs as Tauro-Skythians,” below.

⁶⁸E.g., Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 102, based on the so-called Japhetide connection.

⁶⁹“It almost seems as if these early Russians owe their existence merely to a text of the Greek Bible-texts; that via the Seputagint, among the monster-peoples of the prophet Ezechiel, a people, ‘Rōs,’ is known.” E. Zöllner, “Rugier oder Russen in der Raffel-

stättner Zollurkunde,” *Mitteilungen des Institutes für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 60 (Vienna, 1952), 113.

⁷⁰I. M. Diakonov, *Pre-history of the Armenian People*. E.t., Lori Jennings (Delmar, NY: Caravan Press, 1984). In the same vein, another Syriac document from an unknown author in the 6th century CE grouped a people, “Heros,” with northern people groups. The original form of the word Heros is ‘Pōç, which is likely connected to Rus. Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 102, 104.

⁷¹Recorded in Sokrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.43.18, TLG-E 2057. “The emperor being informed of this, immediately, as his custom was, committed the management of the matter to God; and continuing in earnest prayer, he speedily obtained what he sought; for it is worth while to give attention to disasters which befell the barbarians. For their chief, whose name was Rougas, was struck dead with a thunderbolt. Then a plague followed which destroyed most of the men who were under him: and as if this was not sufficient, fire came down from heaven, and consumed many of the survivors.

“This filled the barbarians with the utmost terror; not so much because they had dared to take up arms against a nation of such valor as the Romans possessed, as that they perceived them to be assisted by a mighty God. On this occasion, Proclus the bishop preached a sermon in the church in which he applied a prophecy out of Ezekiel to the deliverance effected by God in the late emergency, and was in consequence much admired.

“This is the language of the prophecy: ‘And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog the prince of Rhos, Mosoch, and Thobel. for I will judge him with death, and with blood, and with overflowing rain, and with hail-stones. I will also rain fire and brimstone upon him, and upon all his bands, and upon many nations that are with him. And I will be magnified, and glorified, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations: and they shall know that I am the Lord.’

“This application of the prophecy was received with great applause, as I have said, and enhanced the estimation in which Proclus was held.” *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus*. Translated by A. C. Zenos, PNF 2, 409.

⁷²Vernadsky, 189. “The Biblical name ‘Rōsh’ was in Greek pronounced ‘Rōs’, identical with the name of Russes (Rōs). Presumably, this is a reference to the Biblical *Rosh*. It should be noted that at the time of the Hunnic invasion of 433, Patriarch Proclus had recalled Ezekiel’s prophecy (Eze. 38:2) concerning the ‘Prince of *Rosh*.’ The author of the *Life of St. George* apparently followed the same tradition. In this case the Biblical tradition sounded more convincing since the name of the invaders was actually identical with the Biblical name.”

The relevant text of the *Life of St. George* is as follows: “There was an attack by barbarians, Rōs, a nation which all know to be savage and coarse to the utmost degree, carrying in itself no traces of the love of man whatsoever. By beastly mores, inhuman affairs, making manifest their bloodthirst by their very outward appearance, finding their satisfaction in nothing other typical of humans than in killing, they—this terrible people both as regards factual behavior *and their name* [italics mine]—having begun their ravagings from the Propontis and having visited the opposite littoral, they at last reached the birthplace of the Saint [George of Amastris].” Cited from Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 167.

⁷³[Theophilus] also sent with the envoys some men who said they — meaning their whole people [gens]—were called Russians. ... He discovered that they belonged to

the people of the Swedes.” The *Annals of St-Bertin*. E.t. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester and New York: Manchester Univ. Pr., 1991), 44. Translated from “*Rhos vocari dicebant . . . eos gentis esse sueorum [Swedes]*.” Prudentius Trecensis Annales in *Patrilogia Latina Database* (CD-ROM).

⁷⁴Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 298-99.

⁷⁵Stang, 148-149.

⁷⁶Photios, *Homilies*, ed. B. Laourdas, E.t., C. Mango (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1958), 96-98. Alexander A. Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860* (Cambridge, MA: the Mediaeval Academy of America, 1946), 166.

⁷⁷“γαρ εισετι και αιματι τα νεικη Ταυροσκυθαι διακρινειν ειωθασιν. Οτι δε το εθνος απονενοημενον, και μαχιμον, και κραταιον, πασι τοις ομοροις επιτιθ εμενον εθνσι, μαρτυουσι πολλοι, και θειος δε Ιεζεκιηλ, μνημην τουτουποιουμεν ο, εν οις τουτα φησιν, Ιδου εγω επαγω επι σε τον Γωγ και Μαγωγ, αρχοντα Ρως.”

“Slaughter and bloodshed usually distinguished the victories of the Tauroskythians; that their nation is mad, warlike, and mighty, having attacked all the neighboring nations, testify many, including the divinely-appointed Ezekiel, wherein he makes mention in this same manner: ‘Behold I am against you, Gog and Magog, ruler of the Rus.’” TLG-E3069 Work 001.63.9, *Patrologia Graecae*, 117: 873-74). I am grateful to Omelian Pritsak, Dean of the Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute, for guiding me through this “Byzantine” material, as well as for other assistance.

⁷⁸Suda (10th century CE), TLG-E 9010. *Lexicon*. Sigma. 704.1 “Σκυθης; ο Ρως” Constantinius VIII (10th century CE) TLG-E 3023. *De Administrando Imperio* 13.25 and Nicephorus Gregoras (13th-14th century CE) TLG4145. *Byzantina Historia* 3.513.18. Michael Glycas (12th century CE) TLG-E 3047 *Historia et Astrologia*: “. . . οι Σκυθαι, τουτοι εστιν οι Ρωσοι” (“The Skyths, these are the Rōs”). I. Bekker (ed.), *Michaelis Glycae Annales*. Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Weber: Bonn, 1836), 3-457. So, also Theophanes Continuatus (10th century CE) [TLG4153] *Hist. et Chronographus* (001.196.6) in I. Bekker (ed.), *Fragmenta*, ed. by H. J. Mette, in *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*. 2B: 536-617; 3B: 742, addenda.

⁷⁹(15th century CE) TLG-E 3139, *Historiae*, 001.31.2. E. Darko, *Historiae*. Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum Demonstrationes. 2 vols. in 3 (Budapest: Academia Litterarum Hungarica, 1922, 1923, 1927), 1-205; 1-146; 147-307.

⁸⁰Aristotle [TLG0068] Work 051, 6.36.250.20. “εν δε Ισσισω και περι Ρωσον Συριανδρος: πνει δε απο των Συριων πυλων, ας διεστηκεν ο τε Ταυρος και τα Ρωσια ορη.” “But in Issos and around Syrian Rōsos: they issue forth from the Syrian Gates, separated from the Taurus and the Rōsia Mountains.” Also, Pliny, *Natural History*, V. xviii. “On the coast is the River Orontes, which rises between Lebanon and Counter-Lebanon, near Baalbec. The towns are Rhosos,—and behind it the pass called the Gates of Syria, in between the Rossos Mountains and Mount Taurus”

⁸¹Yuri Zaytsev, “King Skilur and the Barbarians of the Northern Black Sea Lands in the 2nd century BCE,” Second International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities: Local Populations of the Black Sea Littoral and their Relations with the Greek, Roman and Byzantine Worlds and Near Eastern Civilisations (8th century BCE - *circa* 1000 CE) Ankara, 2-9 September 2001. <<http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~arkeo/blacksea/wednesday2.htm>>

⁸²*Life of Antoninus* Classical Library (1921). Locates the TauroSkythians on the west

coast of the Black Sea. “He [Atonius Pius, Roman Emperor, 138-161 CE] sent troops to the Black Sea to bring aid to Olbiopolis against the TauroSkythians and forced the latter to give hostages to Olbiopolis.”

Georgius Cedrenus (11th-12th century CE). “Τα δε εντος Ευξεινου και πασαν την αυτου παραλιαν οτων Ρως επορθει και κατετρεχε στολος (εθνος δε οι Ρως Σκυθικον, περι τον αρκτων Ταυρον κατωκημενον, ανημερον τε και αγριον).” “And within the Black Sea and throughout its coastland the Rus were attacking army expeditions (the Rus people are Skythians, having settled around the northern Tauros, [are] both savage and wild.)” (TLG-E 3018. Work 001.2.173.7). *Chronographus*, in I. Bekker (ed.), *Compendium Historiarum: Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope*, 2 vols., Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Weber: Bonn, 1838), 3-802. This expression is essentially replicated in Georgius Sphrantzes, *Historia* (15th century CE) TLG-E 3143, Work 001. Mich 3.18.2, in V. Grecu (ed.), *Chronicon sive Minus: Georgius Sphrantzes. Memorii 1401—1477. Scriptores Byszantini 5* (Academie Republicii Socialiste Romania: Bucharest, 1966), 2-146. Joannes Zonaras (12th - 13th century CE). “Το δ' ε θνος των Ρως Σκυθικον ον των περι τον Ταυρον εθνων στολω τα του Ευχεινου Ποντου κατετρεχε . . .” (“And the race of the Rus are Skythian creatures related to the Tauros tribes, who attacked army expeditions at the Black Sea.”). TLG-E 3135. Work 002.404.6. *Historia et Grammatica*, in L. Dindorf (ed.), *Epistome Historiarum: Ionnis Zonarae Epistome Historiarum*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1868), 1-402. Joannes Scylitzes (11th-12th century CE) [TLG3063] Historian (Work 001.Mich 3.18.2) in J. Thurn (ed.), *Synopsis Historiarum. Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5 Series Berolinensis (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1973), 3-500.

⁸³Nicetas Choniates (12th-13th century CE) εστινδε η Γαλιτζαμιατων παρα τοις Ρως τοπαρξιων, ους και Σκυθας Ψπερβορευονς φασιν. (001.Man1, pt 4.129.2). [TLG-E 3094, in J. Van Dieten (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae Historia, Pars Prior*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1975), 1-635.

⁸⁴Robert R. Sokal, *The European Ethnohistory Database*, <<http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/ee/msr/ethno.html>> Alexander Randa (ed.), *Alteuropa. Handbuch der Weltgeschichte*, 2nd edition. (Olten, Switzerland: Walter Verlag, 1958), 397-426.

⁸⁵Herodianus (2nd century CE) [TLG0087] work 036, 121.2.

⁸⁶Cited in Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 99.

⁸⁷ Bačić, 295, comments on that important historical event: “Scholars admit that the literate Byzantines patterned both the national name [of Russia] and the character of their northern neighbors and enemies after the awesome Rōs who would command Gog and Magog at the End Time.” Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 16. He adds, “The Russi were called *Hoi Rhos* because their actions, in the imagination of the Byzantines, resembled the role assigned by Yahweh to the leader of Gog and Magog called Rhos in the Septuagint version of the Book of Ezekiel.”

Pseudo-Zonaras (12th century CE?) in his lexicon defines Ρωσος (*Rōsos*) as a πολις (*polis*) (a town—likely the *Rōssos* in Syria) and, the next entry, Ρως, η ρωσια (*Rōs, hē rōsia*). TLG-E 3136, work: 001.rho.1626.2. Zonaras, Joannes, *Lexicon. Ex Tribus Codicibus Manuscriptis Nunc Primum* (Amsterdam, A. M. Hakket, [1967] 1808), 2 v. cxlvii p., 2160 columns. The significance of this may lie in the fact that as with other Byzantine writers, he may be associating Ezekiel’s LXX *Rōs* with Russia. Otherwise,

there is no known word in Greek with that spelling. See Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1996), *ad loc.*

⁸⁸Rabbi Moshe Eisemann, *The Book of Ezekiel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources* (Brooklyn, NY: 1980), II: 581. “In this light, one may understand an oral tradition passed down from the *Vilna Gaon* (see *Chevlei Mashiach BiZemaneinu*, 134) that when the Russian navy passes through the Bosphorus (that is, on the way to the Mediterranean through the Dardanelles) it will be time to put on Sabbath clothes [in anticipation of the coming of *Mashiach*]” (581, note 1). Elsewhere Eisemann notes that in Torah symbolism “the north is viewed as the seat of the forces of evil.” Beyond that, Jewish tradition, at least among the *gaonim* [leading rabbinic scholars in the Medieval period], espoused the view that not only Magog, but Meshech and Tubal “were indeed located in Russia” (583).

⁸⁹Eisemann, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 583, citing *Chevlei Mashiach BiZemaneinu*, 134.

⁹⁰Anderson's, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations*, cited above, remains the most comprehensive account of this fascinating legend. Also, Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 340-341: “Gog and Magog had entered the *Koran* both from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, which were supplemented by folk legends about the first truly universal monarch, Alexander the Great.”

⁹¹Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Lahore, Pakistan: Muhammad Ashraf, 1981), 760-765.

⁹²Michiel Jan de Goeje, *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum. Pars quarta. continens indices, glossarium et edenda et emendanda*, VI (Lugduni Batavorum: E. J. Brill, 1879), 93.

⁹³Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 339.

⁹⁴Examples of those Arabic writers are: Al-Idrisi, 914 CE, an Arab geographer and an adviser to Roger II, the Norman king of Sicily. He wrote one of the greatest works of medieval geography, *Kitab nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afqaq* (“The Book of the Pleasure Excursion of One Who Is Eager to Traverse the Regions of the World”) <<http://www.eb.com/bol/search?query=alyakubiandDbase=Articlesandhits=10andskip=10>>.

Al-Ya'qubi, 844 CE, an Arab historian and geographer, author of a world history, *Ta'rikh ibn Wadih* (*Chronicle of Ibn Wadih*), and a general geography, *Kitab al-buldan* (*Book of the Countries*), <http://www.eb.com/bol/search?default_type=standardandquery=Ya%27kubiandDBase=Articles> Al Mas'udi, a historian and traveler, known as the “Herodotus of the Arabs,” was the first Arab to combine history and scientific geography in a large-scale work, *Murij adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawahir* (*The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*), a world history, <http://www.eb.com/bol/search?default_type=standardandquery=mas%27udiand DBase =Articles>. “al-Ya'qubī,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, *et al.* (Leiden, the Netherlands: 1995), IV/2, 1152.

⁹⁵Following B. Golden, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, VIII: 618.

⁹⁶Al-Mas'udi, *Al-murij adh-dhahab*, II, 317. Birkeland, 1955, 37.

⁹⁷I.e., at the eastern end of the Caucasus mountains, on the coast of the Caspian Sea.

⁹⁸Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 351.

⁹⁹Bačić, *Red Sea - Black Russia*, 373. As an example of the imprecision of the Arab writers concerning Russia and its geography, “The tradition represented by Ibn Rusta, Gardizi, and others, place the Rus on an island of three days' journey in the width of a sea. Al-Nuwayri describes the Black Sea as the ‘Sea of the Rus,’ adding that the Rus

inhabited the islands in it,” “Rus,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, VIII, 622. So also, Stang, *Naming of Russia*, 112.

¹⁰⁰Some modern biblical scholars assign to Ezekiel’s prophecy a dependency on weak pagan sources. “The basic conception of the Gog prophecy [probably] goes back to a Babylonian didactic poem known as the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin. ... the action of the Cuthean Legend takes place in the past; that of the Gog prophecy, in the future.” Michael C. Astour, “Ezekiel’s Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95:4 (December 1976), 567-579.

¹⁰¹A most comprehensive and helpful source for the identification and location of Gog and Magog is a recent doctoral dissertation by Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as Pre-text for Revelation 19,17-21 and 20,7-10*. Studienbibliotek for Bibel og Misjon, 5 (Oslo: Fjellhaug Skoler, 1999).

¹⁰²The text of Ezekiel 33:21 dates to 585 BCE and chapters 40-48 to 573. Wm. S. LaSor, “Ezekiel,” *ISBE*, 3rd ed., II, 262.

¹⁰³William H. Brownlee, “‘Son of Man, Set your Face’: Ezekiel the Refugee Prophet [the Hebrew idiom, *sīm pānēka*],” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 54 (1983), 83-110. Jan G. Aalders, *Gog en Magog in Ezechiel*. (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1951).

¹⁰⁴*Antiquities of the Jews*, I.6.1. See also Max Uhlemann, “Über Gog und Magog,” *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, V (1862), 265-86. François Lenormant, “Magog, Fragments d’une étude sur l’ethnographie du chapitre X de la Genèse,” *Muséon, Revue Internationale*, I (1882), 9-48. E. Lipiński, “Gyges et Lygdamis d’après les Sources Hébraïques et Néo-Assyriennes,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 24 (1993), 65-71.

¹⁰⁵See Map 2, 136.

¹⁰⁶See the summary in Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: the Mediaeval Academy of America, 1932), 3-14, for an extensive and documented list of identifications.

¹⁰⁷*Natural History*, V. xix. “Now let us speak of the places inland. Hollow Syria contains the town of Kulat el Mudik, separated by the river Marsyas from the tetrarchy of the Nosairis; Bambyx, which is also named the Holy City, but which the Syrians call Mabog—here the monstrous goddess Atargatis [Astarte?].”

¹⁰⁸*Natural History*, V. 28. “In Lycia therefore, after leaving the promontory of Mount Taurus.... The town of Olympus stood here, and there are now the mountain villages of Gagae, Corydalla and Rhodiopolis....”

¹⁰⁹For a fascinating history of the variations of this legend, see Andrew R. Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: the Mediaeval Academy of America, 1932). In medieval times these hordes were even identified with the Jews themselves! Andrew C. Gow, “The Red Jews: Apocalypticism and Anti-Semitism in Medieval and Early Modern Germany,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1993. Joachim of Fiore’s [1132-1202 CE] innovation, however, was that the Antichrist was *not* a Jew and that a second antichrist (Gog) would appear shortly after the first. Robert E. Lerner, “Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore,” *Speculum*, 60 (July 1985), 553-570.

A generation later, the notion of Gog as one of the “kings of the East” came to be emphasized. Charles Burnett and Patrick Gautier Dalche, “Attitudes towards the Mongols in Medieval Literature: the XXII Kings of Gog and Magog from the Court of Frederick II to Jean de Mandeville,” *Viator* (1991), 153-167.

¹¹⁰Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 327. L. Bauman, *Russian Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1942), 23-25. An alternative is that "Caucasus" derives from the Hittite *Kaz-kaz*, the name of a people living on the southern coast of the Black Sea. "Caucasus Mountains" Britannica Online. <<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5000/36/77.html>> [Accessed 11 March 1999].

¹¹¹Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, 8. Reineggs, Jacob, originally Christian Rudolf Ehlich, 1744-1793. *Allgemeine historisch-topographische Beschreibung des Kaukasus* (Gotha und St. Petersburg: Gerstenberg und Dittmar, [1796] 1797), A. J. Wensinck, "Yadjadj wa Madijadj," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, IV (London: Luzac & Co., 1915), 1142.

¹¹²J. Hugh Michael, "Gog and Magog in the Twentieth Century: [Rev 20:7-10; Ezek 38-39]," *Expository Times*, 61:12 (December 1949), 71-73.

¹¹³The two witnesses may represent the testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the revelation of Jesus, personified in Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-8//Mark 9:2-8//Luke 9:28-36). Their death and resurrection may represent the period of tribulation of believers (the readers of Revelation) who likewise bear witness to the Messiah.

¹¹⁴Simo Parpolo, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* (Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1970), 252-53. Edwin Yamauchi, "Meshech, Tubal, and Company." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19/3 (Summer 1976): 239-47. See Chapter 3, above, for the Ancient Near-Eastern survey, as was done for each of the following nations.

¹¹⁵A. Augusto Tavares, "Meshech (Genesis 10:2): One of the Sea Peoples in the South Iberian Peninsula?" Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Div A. (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994), 37-42. As early as the 12th century BCE, the *Mushki* (perhaps = *Moshke, Moski*; the Meshech of the Old Testament) appeared in the upper Euphrates area. King Mita of the Muški (late 8th century BCE) is usually identified with Midas the Phrygian. Many scholars believe the Muški were a non-Phrygian people within the Phrygian Empire, and ancestors of the Meshkhi, who once were included within Armenia, but are now centered in Georgia and dispersed throughout the former Soviet Union.

¹¹⁶"One thing is clear, however: in the ancient oriental sources the term *Muški* was used to designate Phrygia and the Phrygians [in what is now central Turkey] whose Indo-European linguistic affiliation is unquestionable. Therefore other Thraco-Phrygian tribes may also have been so designated, including the Proto-Armenian ones." Diakonov, *The Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 119.

¹¹⁷Diakonov, *Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 130.

¹¹⁸Diakonov, 118.

¹¹⁹See also, Pliny, *Natural History*, V. xxvii, who likewise gives the name of one of the "races" (*gentium*) on the south slopes of the Caucasus Range as "Moschian." See also, VI. iv. and VI.xi.

¹²⁰McCadden, "Meskhi," *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1981), 22:5. "It is tempting to connect the *Mushki*, on the one hand, with the Georgian tribe of *Mes'chi* (known from the 5th century CE, around Lake Cildir beside the present Russo-Turkish frontier), and on the other hand, with tribes recorded by the Greeks as *Moschi* and *Tibarani*, who dwelt beside the iron-working Chalybes, near the Black Sea coast around Cerasus, the reputed home of the Amazones, and the 'Moschian Mountains.'" *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1973), 2, part. 2, 420.

¹²¹Diakonov, *Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 116, citing Melikišvili, *Notes on the History of Ancient Georgia* (Tbilisi, n.p., 1959), 72. This appears to be close to the pronunciation, if not spelling, of the Septuagint for Ezekiel's Meshech.

¹²²A. A. Kharatian, "The Newspaper, 'Meshak' during the Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78" [Armenian], *Istoriko-Filologicheskii Zhurnal* [U.S.S.R.] 4 (1979), 103-13.

¹²³McCadden, "Meskhi," 7. A more recent and lengthy report on the disposition of the Meskhi appears in Svetlana Chervonnaya, "The Problem of the Repatriation of the Meskhet-Turks," Appendix to the Fact-Finding Mission of the FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) delegation to Georgia, November 1998. <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/MINELRES/min/meskh/FUEN_Meskh.htm> Nana Xazaraze, *Ethno-political Problems of the Ancient History of Georgia: (The Moschi)* [In Georgian, with summaries in English and Russian]. (Tbilisi: "Mec'niereba": 1984).

¹²⁴E.g., by Edwin Yamauchi, who asserts: "Though the identification of Gog and Magog still remains disputed, the identifications of Meshech and Tubal have for a long time not been in doubt. All informed references and studies acknowledge that the association with Moscow and Tobolsk is untenable." According to Yamauchi, at the time of Ezekiel, Meshech and Tubal were located in what is now eastern Turkey, and there they remained. *Foes from the Northern Frontier: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1982), 20-25. He makes a similar point in an earlier article: "Meshech, Tubal and Company," *JETS* 19 (Summer 1976), 239-47. Also, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, KY: J. Knox Press, 1990), 184: "[Rosh] has no more connection with Russia (a name of Norse extraction) than Meshech has with Moscow."

¹²⁵Diakonov, *Prehistory of the Armenian People*, 118. For an ethnographic history of the area: R. Zh. Baiazitov and V. P. Makarikhin, *Vostochnaia Meshchera v srednie veka: k voprosy etnogeneza tatar v Nizhegorodskom krae*. Nizhnii Novgorod: [s.n.], 1996. A. M. Orlov, *Meshchera, meshcheriaki, mishare*. (Kazan': Tatarskoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1992.) Archaeological investigations have shown that the Meshcherians lived in the plain south of modern Moscow at least as early as the 5th to 8th centuries CE. Other scholars believe they appeared there several centuries earlier. They appear to be Finno-Uralic (having migrated originally from the East). "The first state on the North-West Russian land identified by the Western and Islamic sources was the Volga Rus Khagan State. It was founded in 830 and its capital was near the present-day Ryazan. If it is true, the Meshchera were one of its main ethничес groups (if not the majority)." So, Alexei Markov, Senior Lecturer, Modern University for the Humanities <<http://www.saulalahti.fi/~kokov/mesher/>> See also, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, <[http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=55033&tocid=0&query=moksha](http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=55033&tocid=0&query=moksha>)

¹²⁶*Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed. 2:417-18.

¹²⁷"Eastward and southeastward [of the central city of Moscow] the surface equally gradually merges into the vast, almost completely flat and very swampy clay plain of the Meshchera Lowland, which extends far beyond the city limits." "Moscow," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=115590andsctn=2>> [Accessed 10 December 1999].

¹²⁸See the map insert in Paszkiewicz, *Origin of Russia*, at the end of the volume. Other names in the area of Moscow, hinting at the extent of this tribe: the Novo-Moscow River on the Dnieper; the Mescha River, a branch of the Dvina River; the Moksha, flowing into the Oka River; the towns of Mosch-Aisk Borodino, Moschok, Mo-

scharki, Mesch-Tschenskaia, Mischetski, Mischiritschi and Mesch-Tschowsk, and Meschk-uze. See Adolf Stieler; H Kehnert; and Hermann Habenicht, *Karte des Europäischen Russland und Nord-Skandinavien in 6 Blättern aus Stielers Handatlas*, 9th ed. (Gotha: J. Perthes, 1913), *ad loc.*

It is worth noting that the Soviets were notoriously secretive in producing maps out of fear of espionage, often omitting or misplacing names. Hence, older maps are quite valuable in preserving place names that the Soviets would have excised.

¹²⁹“The Finno-Ugric family...migrated to the area of the eastern Baltic, Finland, and Karelia before 400 CE—probably between 100 BCE and 100 CE, though some authorities place the migration many centuries earlier” [italics mine]. “Finnic,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=34920>> [Accessed 4 June 2002].

¹³⁰R. W. Alexander, *Isaiah-Ezekiel*. Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 6, 930.

¹³¹The Phrygian toponyms of Tubal are also discussed in Chapter 3.

¹³²Vernadsky, 7.

¹³³On the other hand, the definitive study on the early history of the city of Tobolsk, whose name reflects its situation on the Tobol River—*Historical Data on Tobolsk* [Russian]—offers no hint of the Tobol / Tubal connection or to that of the ethnic make-up of the Andronovo culture. The investigations, however, focus no earlier than the 16th century CE origin of the town or of its name. E. P. Martynova, *Tobol’skii istoricheskii sbornik: sbornik nauchnykh trudov*. (Tobol’sk: Tobol’skii Gosudarstvennyi Pedagogicheskii Institut imeni D.I. Mendeleva, 1994), Vol. 1, ch. 1. Arkheologiiia i etnologiiia — Vol. 2, ch. 2. Rashid T. Abdeev, *Tobol’skii Khranograf* (Omsk: Omskoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1993). E. P. Martynova, *Tobol’skii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut imeni D.I. Mendeleva* (Novosibirsk: “Nauka”, Sibirskaia izdatel’skaia firma RAN, 1995). Tobol River Region (Kazakhstan and Russia) Tobol River. N. P. Matveeva, *Sargatskaia kul’tura na Sredнем Tobole* (Novosibirsk: VO “Nauka”, 1993). Rossiiskaia akademiiia nauk. Sibirske otdelenie. Institut problem osvoenii severa. Iron age — Tobol River Region (Kazakhstan and Russia) Excavations (Archaeology). V. A. Zakh, and A. V. Matveev, *Poselok Drevnikh Skotovodov na Tobole* (Novosibirsk: “Nauka”, Sibirskaia izdatel’skaia firma RAN, 1995).

¹³⁴Britannica Online. “Altaic Languages.” <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=1194-63&sctn=2>> When the Seljuq sultan Al-Arslan defeated the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 CE, he opened the way for a mass migration of millions of Turkics into what is now eastern Turkey. Earlier this same group had penetrated broadly across eastern Russia and what is now Ukraine where they assimilated. *Britannica Online*, <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?idxref=522175>>

¹³⁵J. Prichard, *Ancient Near-Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1962), 318. See Maps 1 and 2.

¹³⁶Luckenbill, *Ancient Records*, 2:138.148 Parpoli, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, 353-54.

¹³⁷Cambridge Ancient History, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Pr. 1977), 2/2: 422.

¹³⁸Diakonov, *Pre-history of the Armenian People*, 98.

¹³⁹“Rosh,” John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1867-87), IX: 135.

Chapter 4

What Is, and What Is to Come

It is appropriate, at the beginning of this final chapter, to remind the reader that the purpose of our study is to show, first, that the list of the nations mentioned in the Gog passage of Ezekiel's prophecy in 38:2,3 and 39:1, with special reference to *Rosh*, involves real people. Second, it is to show that while there are spiritual and symbolic dimensions to understanding this passage, the specifics involved require an application to events in observable history—perhaps even to our own immediate history.

I. Summary of the Research

In summarizing the work of our research, we would like to briefly review, chapter by chapter, the material which demonstrated the historicity of the biblical proper name *Rosh* found in Ezekiel 38 and 39, as well as its identification, in one way or another, with modern-day Russia.

After an Introduction to the issues of significance and scholarship of Ezekiel's Gog prophecy, showing the impact of Ezekiel's Gog prophecy, Chapter 1 introduced various interpretive approaches to the Gog passage, in addition to some underlying premises, some variations within each approach, and some of the weaknesses of each. In defense of our futurist/literal position, we reviewed the religio-political developments and events on the Middle Eastern stage throughout the final decades of the 20th century, and made an attempt to demonstrate the striking parallels between the specifics within the prophecy and current events.

We also discussed the grammatical argument of the passage, showing the improbability of an noun-adjectival syntax for interpreting the Hebrew word “*rosh*” as “head/chief,” but demonstrating, rather, its correct usage as a proper name, *Rosh*.

Chapter 2 covered the results of extensive research into contemporary evidence for the historicity of Rosh and the other nations mentioned by Ezekiel as identifiable people-groups within their approximate locales. The chapter offered evidence of toponyms related to Ezekiel's Rosh and the other northern nations—not only from the Bible, but also from ancient Egyptian, Ugaritic, Hittite, Urartian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Greek literature.

Chapter 3 endeavored to establish an historical link between Ezekiel's Rosh (and his other northern nations) and modern Ukraine and Russia. There are two ways in which this link can be made. First, one can show that the melting pot of peoples that make up the nation of Ukraine, Russia and her other erstwhile satellites are descended from several of Ezekiel's northern nations—Gomer and Meshech—with Meshech, Tubal and Togarmah not only located in the former satellites of the Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia, but throughout the expanse of Russia as well.

Second, it is possible to find at least a phonetic resemblance between the named nations and geographical locations. Of course, one can only surmise where the numerous “rus/ros” nations described in Chapter 2 eventually settled. On this point, it must be admitted that the link between the scattered candidates for Rosh in the Ancient Near-Eastern sources and those candidates north and east of the Black Sea during the first Christian centuries has not been clearly established. However, while the link to Russia from the Ancient Near East is tentative, one can argue even more convincingly that, historically, the very name of Russia was presented to the world by the Byzantine Christians *in conscious connection with the prophecy of Ezekiel's Rosh*.

Here one need not show the genetic or even the cultural connection between Ezekiel's nations and Russia, but only that the name was *given* (like America's name, and that of so many other nations), and that the name stuck!

The other northern nations of Ezekiel 38-39, with varying degrees of certainty, inhabit or at least border on the nation of Russia—indicating that the earlier location of these northern nations of Ezekiel (as indicated in modern Bible atlases and commentaries) was both temporary and only partially located in eastern Anatolia (modern Turkey).

II. The Gog Prophecy: Summary and Key Themes

This prophecy, which has shaped history as well as foretold it, has been applied in a variety of directions, and for a variety of motives. Of course, no examination of Scripture is without presuppositional bias, particularly passages as explosive in their implications as this one. Nevertheless, the follow-

ing is an attempt to allow the passage to speak with its own emphases. Our final task will be to apply those emphases to our historical situation. At this point, it will be easier to follow the argument if you open your Bible to Ezekiel 38-39. The Gog prophecy has been elegantly outlined by Block in his commentary, as shown in the two panels below.¹ (The following Summary section, B, is the author's.)

Outline of the Gog Prophecy: Ezekiel 38-39

1. Panel A: The Defeat of Gog	38:2c-23
Frame 1: The Conscription of Gog	38:2c-9
Frame 2: The Motives of Gog	38:10-13
Frame 3: The Advance of Gog	38:14-16
Frame 4: The Judgment of Gog	38:17-22
Interpretive Conclusion	38:23
2. Panel B: The Disposal of Gog	39:1-29
Frame 1: The Slaughter of Gog	39:1-8
Frame 2: The Spoiling of Gog	39:9-10
Frame 3: The Burial of Gog	39:11-16
Frame 4: The Devouring of Gog	39:17-20
Interpretive Conclusion	39:21-29

B. Summary of the Gog Prophecy

1. The Nations Involved: The Gog prophecy begins with God calling Ezekiel to express an oracle against a specific list of nations which we have already identified in the previous chapters: the northern nations, Gog of the land of Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah—all from the north—with other nations which perhaps represent the other three areas of the earth: Persia (the area of Iran) in the east, Cush (northern, Muslim Sudan) from the south, and Put (the area of Libya) from the west—all indicating a globally-based invasion. Still other nations, that seem to agree with the invasion, or at least do not oppose it, are similarly located: Sheba (Yemen), Dedan (area of Saudi Arabia), and Tarshish (far west) with all its “merchants” (Heb. *soch^arey Tarshish*)—an “economic union”). All of these will be driven by greed and envy (38:12,13; 39:10).

2. The Intended Victim: The People of the Lord in the Land of Israel: The invaders’ target is the people of the Lord, Israel, who “had been brought out from the nations,”—“even many nations,” who by war have recovered a land that had long been empty and desolate. This desolation, now become the “*resettled* ruins” (abandoned cities or villages), has been changed to prosperity with the accumulation of “much cattle and goods,” by an Israel

who now feels it is “living in safety,” “peaceful and unsuspecting, all of them living without bars or gates.”

This “desolate” Land, which had formerly held no interest for anyone, now becomes extremely vital to the invaders, much as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem remained virtually unmentioned and unnoticed by Islam until taken by the Jews in 1967, when it was suddenly proclaimed to be “Islam’s third-holiest shrine.” The invasion envisioned by Ezekiel, then, seems to be driven by greed and envy—greed for a tiny sliver of land, long ignored, and envy that its new inhabitants have caused it to bloom and prosper.

3. The Universal Onslaught against Israel: The text emphasizes the overwhelming force of the universal worldwide invasion against this unsuspecting little nation.² The fact that “all nations” will come against Israel is specifically confirmed in Joel 3:2; Amos 9:9; Zechariah 14:2; Matthew 24:9; and Luke 21:24. Gog comes, and “all [his] troops,” and “many nations” with him from every direction, “a great horde, a mighty army . . . advancing like a storm, like a cloud that covers the land,” all of them well equipped militarily. The text does *not* describe the people of Israel defending them.

4. The Lord’s Actions against the Invaders: The crushing, apocalyptic defense against the invaders is entirely the action of the Lord: “When Gog attacks the Land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused” (38:18b). God’s anger will be expressed in a huge earthquake, after which He will “summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains.” Perhaps it is the swords of the invaders turned against each other (38:21), followed by “torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning sulfur” pouring down upon the invaders. These responses were clearly beyond the capabilities of human agency—at least until the recent development of apocalyptic weapons. In any case the Lord takes charge of the battle and executes it Himself.

5. The “Sacrificial” Disposal of the Invaders: The largest portion of the Gog prophecy—27 of the 52 verses in chapters 38-39—describes the terrible defeat of the invaders. Their weapons are struck down (39:3); their corpses feed the scavenger birds and animals (39:4); and their own homelands (and perhaps those of others) are counter-attacked with fire (39:6). The natives of Israel will spend seven months burying the huge number of dead, and will then begin a program of cleansing the Land (39:12-16). Astonishingly, *after the burial* of the invaders, the call goes out to scavenging birds and animals for a huge “feast” of human sacrifices. Rather than being a section “out of sequence” in the narrative, could this represent instead a hellish scene from the afterlife? Could it be that the invaders (“millions of martyrs”)³ who offer

their lives as a “sacrifice” for their cause, ironically and horribly, find themselves in exactly that destiny but in a totally unexpected setting?

6. The Lord’s Interpretation of the Action: Finally, a long concluding passage makes clear the meaning of this cataclysmic defeat of all the nations (“nations” can be translated “gentiles”) against Israel. First, all the nations and Israel will take a lesson from the failure of the invasion: The defense of Israel was an act of the Lord God of Israel (39:20-22). Second, the nations will learn that Israel served as a prototype for the punishment of the nations. God “hid His face from them” (39:24) for a season because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord. Now, as often prophesied, He hides his face from the nations. Similarly, the Sovereign Lord says (36:22-23):

It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I show myself holy *through you* [italics mine] before their eyes.”

The point of this is that Israel contributes to the holiness of the Lord, not *because of its righteousness* but *in spite of its unrighteousness*. Thus, the very act of regathering the people of Israel “to their own Land” after their exile among their enemies is another way of demonstrating the holiness of the Lord to all the world (39:25-28; cf. Chaps. 36 and 37): He is keeping His word regardless of what His people may choose.

Having completed this regathering, God will ratify his covenant with Israel by pouring out his Spirit upon them (39:29). Here the prophecy refuses to vindicate the “righteousness” of the people of Israel. On the other hand the prophecy refuses to allow anyone to deny Israel’s right to existence and its right to the Land God promised them.

The crucial point is this: since the people of Israel, as God’s “light to the nations,” *represent the revelation and the holiness of the Lord on the earth*, they are attacked by all the powers of Darkness through its human and other instruments, the nations-without-God; however, at the same time, the God of Israel defends His people by His overwhelming power.

Just as satanic rituals seek to deface and destroy the image of God in human beings—by sexual perversions, mutilations, and human sacrifice—so this invasion of the nations includes this, but represents a further step. Now, the forces of evil move beyond simple mass murder-suicide/human sacrifices⁴ to an all-out attack of “all nations” against the symbol and expression of God’s revelation to the world—Israel, His “light to the nations,” and Je-

sus, “the Light of the world”—hoping to extinguish that light “as a cloud covering the land.”

In a profound irony, the nations’ compulsive need for human sacrifice on a horrific scale results not in their hoped-for sensual feasting in Paradise, but in their being *feasted upon* as the sacrificial last supper for the scavengers of Hell.

C. Key Themes in the Gog Prophecy

While this outline gives the material of the prophecy in order, because of space considerations we will concentrate on some striking themes found throughout the text that suggest its relevance for today:

1. History is shaped by God, beyond natural or social forces.
2. The existence of modern Israel is highly significant in God’s plan.
3. The invaders are identifiable nations.

Let us examine each in turn. [Please note that “Lord” is substituted for the Tetragrammaton, the four-consonant unpronounceable name of God, in the following Scriptures and in my references to them, following the convention of most English versions of the Hebrew Scriptures.]

1. History is Shaped by God beyond Natural or Social Factors

The Gog prophecy centrally portrays not merely a clash between military powers, but a primal clash between spiritual worldviews. One worldview we might call the “CNN Syndrome,” the prevailing modern view which strips away any possibility of God’s involvement in historical events. Conflicts of religions may be mentioned, but these must be viewed as clashes between human groups vying for supremacy. In this view, no objective reporter or historian would dare to suggest that spiritual forces could be the driving force behind human events. All history, according to the CNN mentality, is shaped by economic, political, social, and even human “religious” forces, but never by supernatural beings—whether demonic or heavenly or, ultimately, God Himself.

The opposing view is that of Ezekiel (and of Scripture generally), *viz.*, that history is “His story,” and that Almighty God shapes not only the course of nature, but also the affairs of mankind. Specifically, the most emphatic point of the Gog prophecy is that though “all nations” make their blind invasion against Israel, God’s purposes will be made clear by it. This is stated repeatedly and emphatically in our passage:

You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land.
In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my Land, so that the nations

may know me when I show myself holy *through you* [italics mine] before their eyes (38:16).⁵

And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord (38:23).

. . . and they shall know that I am the Lord. I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the Lord am the Holy One in Israel (39:6c-7).

The final passage in the prophecy spells out in much greater detail the purpose for the invasion (39:21-29):

I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay upon them.

From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God.

And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword.

I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name.

They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their Land with no one to make them afraid.

When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations.

Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own Land, not leaving any behind.

I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.

The catastrophic defeat of the invaders will show powerfully that the Lord is utterly sovereign in the affairs of men. It will be known by “all nations,” not only by “the house of Israel,” that He is the “Lord of hosts,” that is, the “Lord of armies”! In these passages, as above, the point is pounded home that a new way of looking at history is required. The secular “CNN mentality” has utterly missed the point about the meaning of human events: It is the Lord who shapes history, not mankind.

Moreover, the text is emphatic that the invasion and its consequences have been foreseen long before. “After many years you will be called to

arms. In future years you will invade . . ." (38:8). "I will bring you against my Land" (38:16). "This is what the sovereign Lord says: 'Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them'" (38:17). "It will surely take place," declares the Sovereign Lord. "This is the day I have spoken of" (39:8).

Indeed, the whole Gog prophecy appears in the form of a prediction: "Son of man, set your face against Gog . . . and prophesy against him" (38:2). Thus, as the events transpire, the Lord will be seen as the One bringing them about. Certainly the language is emphatic about the Lord's direct involvement in the invasion: "I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army" (38:4; 39:2). The term, "turn you around" probably is a horseman's expression, "wheel around"; the rider forces the horse to rear up on the two hind legs while turning toward a different direction. The "hooks in your jaws" could refer to a painful bit in the horse's mouth. The idea here is of someone overcoming the will of another.

This picture of God's aggressive control in motivating the attacking nations stands in sharp contrast to their own perception: "thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme" (38:10). Those observing the invasion seem to echo, if not support, the plot: "Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?" (38:13).

From the human point of view, this invasion is a carefully considered, opportunistic, surprise attack against a nation with limited defenses, but substantial wealth. The text contrasts these viewpoints to clarify the great gap between the utter failure of human political and spiritual perception versus the reality of God's total control of history. The Lord's control of history involves the destinies of very real nations, particularly the destiny of Israel.

2. The Existence of Modern Israel in Its Own Land Is Central to God's Plan

The Gog prophecies, including the two chapters leading up to it, 36-37, are emphatic about the rightful status of the people of Israel in relation to their Land. The section begins in chapter 36 with a prophecy to the "mountains of Israel." Here it is affirmed that even though Israel had sinned against God and, as a result, had been scattered throughout the nations of the world, God nonetheless will regather His people to the "mountains of Israel."

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because they ravaged and hounded you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people's malicious talk and slander . . .

Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and the deserted towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you; this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my Land their own possession so that they might plunder its pasture land (Ezekiel 36:3-5).

.....

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn. But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel.

The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because people say to you, You devour men and deprive your nation of its children, therefore you will no longer devour men or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign Lord.

No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign Lord. (Ezekiel 36:6b-15).

.....

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own Land. (Ezekiel 36:23b-24)

In the process of the return of the Children of Israel to their Land, they will endure “malicious talk and slander,” being “ridiculed” with “taunts” and the “scorn” of the surrounding nations, who “with glee and with malice in their hearts [have] made my Land their own possession.” Here we see Israel’s return to their Land is hotly contested by the surrounding nations. Despite this resistance, God’s promise remains: “I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back to *your own Land*” (36:24; also 37:21; 39:28).

Moreover, the return to the Land will result in prosperity: the population of people and livestock will “be multiplied” or “increase” (36:10-1). The Land will be “fruitful.”

I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine (36:29-30).

The modern world reflects the dynamics of this prophecy in that Israel faces not only the “taunts” and “slander” of its enemies—the nations—but the world’s rejection of its very right to exist, even to the point of promoting Israel’s annihilation by the surrounding nations.⁶

3. The Invaders are Identifiable Nations Who Have the Potential to Fulfill Ezekiel’s Gog Prophecy

In Chapters 1, 2, and 3, we have already examined the hermeneutical, Ancient Near Eastern, and post-biblical dimensions of identifying the nations of the Gog prophecy. We focused on the northern nations Ezekiel listed—not only because their relative obscurity demanded a study clarifying their identification, but also because the future-literal hermeneutic of this passage highlights the current problem of identifying these nations with Russia and its close neighbors.

Now that “peace has broken out” in the former Soviet Union, some Bible prophecy experts have noted what seems the dimmer prospects of an invasion coming specifically “from the uttermost parts of the north.” However, some respected analysts of the world scene are projecting a resurgent expansionism and aggressiveness from Russia (Ezekiel’s Rosh) and the related nations.⁷ For example, Russia has recently entered into agreements with Iran, Sudan, and Libya to supply military arms.⁸ These nations, now occupying the areas of Ezekiel’s nations of Paras, Cush, and Put, appear to represent the other three directions (east, south, and west, respectively) of Gog’s universal invasion.

These agreements have the potential to draw an expansionist Russia into an invasion, particularly since the ordinary citizens of Russia—and of Russia’s close neighbors, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova—experience most of the same economic and social problems as did pre-Nazi Germany: hyperinflation, high unemployment, a feeling of betrayal and shame at the loss of super-power status, a loss of national identity, and strong anti-Semitic scapegoatism.

The difference is that Russia still maintains a huge stockpile of nuclear weapons and the means for launching them (silos, submarines, planes). Such weapons are felt to be “the great equalizer” by any nation with feelings

of inferiority and insecurity. And these weapons would provide a “nuclear umbrella” for any adventure deemed worth the risk. Certainly America, as the defender of Israel, would not pause long over a forced choice between the survival of, say, New York City or Tel Aviv.⁹ This is not far-fetched. An invasion by Russia could preserve an unpopular regime by diverting internal discontent to an external crisis or enemy.

Indeed, among the Arabic and Islamic dictatorships, this latter strategy has been the norm over the centuries. Through these countries’ state-controlled media, the rage of their exploding populations of unemployable and frustrated young males have been fanned into a frenzy of religious hatred against Israel.¹⁰ For these regimes, promoting hostility toward Israel has its upside: it diverts attention and resentment away from the corruption and misery at home. At the same time, these Islamic dictators can heighten their prestige among the Muslim faithful even as they rid their corrupt regimes of these dangerous, radical youths by way of a suicidal war against the “infidels.”

This tension can survive only so long without action. If leaders sense growing discontent with the strategy of fomenting rage at Israel without acting on it, then increasing pressure will develop for the great Jihad against Israel to begin. If this ultimate sacrifice fails, however, thereby causing the nations to “know the Lord of Israel,” the outlook for radical Islam is not bright.

D. The Criteria for Fulfillment: What Is, and What Is to Come¹¹

If the findings of this study are correct—that is, if the Gog prophecy was intended by its Author to be fulfilled more or less literally—then what are the clear criteria for this fulfillment in terms of identifiable nations and events? We submit to the reader’s judgment the following list of criteria, which are based on the textual elements of the prophecy:

1. At the present time, do all the identifiable nations listed in the prophecy (Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah, Paras, Cush, and Put, and probably, Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish), exhibit hostile intent toward Israel?
2. Are Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah, identified by Ezekiel as coming from the “farthest parts of the north,” in fact, from that area?
3. Are all these invading nations currently a military threat, well equipped, and numerous?¹²

4. Do the criteria of the prophecy describe the modern State of Israel, for example:
 - a. Was Israel regathered from *many* nations? “from *every* land / quarter” (36:24; 37:21)? Brought back from their graves (37:12-13)?
 - b. Was Israel regathered to a Land that had been desolate for a long time? Has Israel been restored from ruin?
 - c. Is the Land now abundantly productive (36:33-36)?
 - d. Is modern Israel now living in “unwalled” villages or cities, “without bars or gates” (38:12)?

Is the nation of Israel “no longer two nations or divided into two kingdoms” (Judea and Samaria, 37:22)?

 - f. Is the regathered Israel taunted, slandered and even attacked by the surrounding nations (36:15)?
 - g. Has modern Israel been cleansed “from all that defiles” it (36:25)? from the taint of all [its] idols (36:26)?
 - h. Have the people of modern Israel been given “a new heart and a new spirit” to keep God’s laws (36:27-28; 39:29)?
 - i. Does the “one shepherd,” “David,” now rule over Israel?

We are suggesting that the modern fulfillment of the actual invasion has not yet occurred, thus its spiritual cleansing that is the war’s aftermath has not yet occurred. So, at this point in time, only the first few features of the prophecy (a-f) may be said to have been fulfilled, *e.g.*, the return of Israel to their own Land, and the resurrection of the Land from desolation and ruin, and the possible first stages of the key nations’ coalition for the invasion beginning to coalesce.

Could it be that chapters 36, 37 and 38/39 are three more-or-less parallel passages, each emphasizing a different aspect of Israel’s return up to the very end of history? If this is the case, then chapter 36 describes the *reasons* for the dispersion of Israel, and the *prediction of the return*, *i.e.*, the prophecy to the mountains of Israel. Chapter 37 stresses the human impossibility of Israel’s revivification as against the *miraculous restoration* of Israel’s “dry bones” into a renewed nation. And chapters 38-39 introduce the huge, *worldwide retaliation* against God’s regathering of Israel, which culminates in the rule of “David” and *Israel’s moral and spiritual completion* by the Spirit of God.

III. Implications of this Study

If you have a role of influence in the religious or academic communities, we hope you will consider the following:

Biblical translators could consider that the natural grammatical structure of the text need no longer be mangled to fit the mistaken perception that a people of Rosh has no external historical basis.

Biblical commentators may wish now to face the problems of this passage head-on. Ignoring the problems only leaves the field to those who are less responsible in protecting the flock of God from undisciplined (and lucrative!) speculations about the application of Scripture to today's world. This includes some reckless apocalypticists on the right, and the cultured despisers of predictive prophecies of the Bible on the left.

We submit that the implications of this thesis go far beyond the field of biblical studies, extending to the fields of modern foreign affairs, politics, and personal well-being. Accordingly, we conclude with four important questions regarding major issues touching these findings:

How far should we apply this biblical knowledge and these research results to areas that concern our personal sense of peace and security?

How does one respond to the military-industrial complex as either a deterrent to—or a precipitator of—a very real apocalypse?

How does one respond to the nations addressed in Ezekiel's prophecy, specifically Russia, the Arab nations, the Persians/Iranians, and Israel?

As for the Church, how far should one's literal approach to Bible prophecy and its fulfillment influence our actions? Should we "jump start" apocalyptic events, helping God, in a sense, by taking a hard line in the Middle East—an already troubled area? Or should we strive to be peacemakers—postponing the evil day as long as possible? Would our efforts either way change the prophetic timetable of God? Is it possible that peacemaking efforts could avert the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible altogether? Are these messages entirely deterministic or are they conditional?

Conventional wisdom in evangelical scholarship about the location of Ezekiel's northern nations has been colored by embarrassment at the extremes of some leading figures in the Bible prophecy movement. Thus the available historical data has not been given its due, perhaps because the extravagant interpretations of some of their fundamentalist spiritual forebears drove many modern evangelical academics to accommodate to a culture that has little patience for apocalyptic speculations.

As we move into a "post—" postmodern era, however, some evangelicals have rediscovered the value of their "cradle faith." Having given over to

sterile rationalistic academics for a season, they now find that the loss of a perhaps-naïve apocalyptic fervor with its tangible applications to real life has proved to be vaguely unsatisfying.

Could it be that the “outlandish” predictions of fundamentalism represent the “foolishness” of the Gospel, which is grounded in a deep, primal, and ultimately correct immersion in the real world of the Divine? Could it be that God *does in fact* shape the destinies of nations (Acts 17:26)—not in some nebulous (and safe) dimension of “supra-history,” but in the specifics of the biblical prophets, and with the power of the Apocalypse? In the world of Bible believers, nations are judged by real war, that is, by the real blood, suffering, death, refugees, and deportations described as history and prophecy. And it is done by a God who is “a man of war; Lord is His name,” (Exodus 15:3). He does *not* apologize for His actions.

The true prophetic perspective, on the other hand, does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. There is no room in the Christian worldview for viewing the calamities described in this prophecy as entertainment, seen from the safety of some imagined grandstand. There is no grandstand: “all nations” will be involved when this prophecy becomes history.

Prophecies such as these serve as comfort to those suffering tribulation, reminding them that the Lord is in charge of history. However, the same verses serve also as warnings to those whose heart is far from God—those who may affirm a correct, but dead orthodoxy. There is, after all, always the danger that the *spirit* of Ezekiel’s Gog might hail from our own hometown.

Chapter 4 Notes

¹Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 431-32. Block's commentary is probably the best in print, superior even to the classic work by Zimmerli.

²Some sense of this universal attack against Israel today derives from its isolation and rejection within the United Nations. See "The U. N.'s Record Vis A Vis Israel." <<http://www.cdn-friendsicej.ca/un/record.html>>.

In 1991 the office of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir commissioned Shai Ben Tekoa to do a statistical analysis of U. N. voting on Israel. The study showed an amazing one-sided hostility toward Israel during this period. More recently this trend has only intensified. See "U. N. Resolutions" at: <<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/un/resolutions.html>> Shoshana McCrimmon, "How the U. N. Betrays Israel," Shoshana McCrimmon – 6 April 2002 WorldNet Daily <<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/un/betrays.html>>. Arnold Beichman, "U. N. Lynching Prelude," Hoover Institution, 2 May 2002. <<http://cdn-friends-icej.ca/un/lynching.html>>.

³Yasser Arafat's own words illustrate the mentality of the invaders: "They [the Israelis] decided to take me as a prisoner, a deportee, or to kill me. No. I say to them '[that I will be] a martyr, a martyr, a martyr, and a martyr....And they will be in the front line until Judgment Day....and one of their martyrs [who falls in the battle for Jerusalem] is worth 40 martyrs....Allah, give me martyrdom in...[Jerusalem]....This is our destiny. This is a divine decree..."

"Let those far and near understand: None, among the Palestinian people or the Arab nation, will be willing to bow and surrender. But we ask Allah to grant us martyrdom, to grant us martyrdom. To Jerusalem we march – martyrs by the millions. To Jerusalem we march – martyrs by the millions. To Jerusalem we march – martyrs by the millions. To Jerusalem we march – martyrs by the millions." Interview with *Al-Jazeera* TV/Palestinian Authority TV, 29 March 2002. <http://216.26.163.62/2002/me_palestinians_04_01.html> (*World Tribune*).

⁴The type of mentality underlying this "sacrificial" or suicidal attack can be found in contemporary Islamic nations. "For those millions engaged in an Arab/Islamic war against the West, violence and the sacred are always inseparable

"Arab/Islamic terror against the United States is, at its heart, a manifestation of religious worship known as 'sacrifice.' This is the truest meaning of Arab/Islamic terrorism against our country. It is a form of sacred violence oriented toward the sacrifice of both enemies and martyrs. It is through the purposeful killing...that the Holy Warrior em-

barked upon Jihad can buy himself free from the penalty of dying. It is only through such cowardly killing, and not through diplomacy, that ‘Allah’s’ will may be done.

“When America has understood that terrorism is only a tactic, and that it is a tactic related to Islamic sacrifice, it will be able to confront a particularly lethal enemy, one that already has within its capabilities the capacity to kill hundreds of thousands or even millions of American men, women and children. Until now, this is an understanding that has lent itself to insubstantial theorizing. Now, immediately, Arab/Islamic terrorism should be recognized, at least in part, as a bloody and sacred act of mediation between sacrificers and their deity.” Louis Rene Beres, “Correlation of Forces and Coming War in the Middle East: Terrorism and the Global Clash of Civilizations,” 1 October 2001. Beres is Professor of Political Science, Purdue University. <http://www.israelinsider.com/views/articles/views_0149.htm>.

“In the view of many scholars of Islam ...the Arab-Israeli conflict has been transformed in Muslim culture from a political, nationalist and territorial battle into a cosmic war between religions and, indeed, between good and evil.” Susan Sachs, 27 April 2002 “Anti-Semitism Is Deepening Among Muslims.”<<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/27/arts/27ANTI.html?todaysheadlines>>

⁵Translation: *The New International Version.*

⁶On Muslim Anti-Semitic propaganda, see note 11, below. “Just before the Arab nations launched their war of aggression against the State of Israel in 1967, Syrian Defense Minister (later President) Hafez Assad stated, ‘Our forces are now entirely ready ...to initiate the act of liberation itself, and to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland...the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation.’ On the brink of the 1967 war, Egyptian President Gamal Nassar declared, ‘Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel.’

“Yasir Arafat has never been less than clear about his goals—at least not in Arabic. On the very day in 1993 that he signed the Oslo accords—in which he promised to renounce terrorism and recognize Israel—he addressed the Palestinian people on Jordanian television and declared that he had taken the first step ‘in the 1974 plan.’ This was a thinly-veiled allusion to the PLO’s ‘phased plan,’ according to which any territorial gain was acceptable as a means toward the ultimate goal of Israel’s destruction.

“The recently deceased Faisal al-Husseini, a leading Palestinian spokesman, made the same point in 2001 when he declared that the West Bank and Gaza represented only ‘22 percent of Palestine,’ and that the Oslo process was a ‘Trojan horse.’ He explained, ‘When we are asking all the Palestinian forces and factions to look at the Oslo Agreement and at other agreements as “temporary” procedures, or phased goals, this means that we are ambushing the Israelis and cheating them.’ The goal, he continued, was ‘the liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea,’ *i.e.*, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea—the east and west borders of all Israel.

"To this day, the Fatah wing of the PLO has as its official emblem the entire state of Israel covered by two rifles and a hand grenade—another fact that belies the claim that Arafat desires nothing more than the West Bank and Gaza." Cited in Bill Bennett, Jack Kemp, and Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Twenty Facts about Israel and the Middle East," *Jewish World Review* 21 May 2002. <<http://www.NewsAndOpinion.com>>. The denial of Israel's right to exist is essentially universal in the Muslim world.

⁷E.g., Ariel Cohen, "Is Russia Likely to Become an Antagonistic Power? Yes," in John T. Rourke, ed., *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 78-91. For an opposing, though less convincing, position see Anatol Lieven's article, *ibid.*, 92-100. See also Amy Knight, *Spies Without Cloaks: The KGB's Successors* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), who documents clear trends toward Russian expansionism. On recent Russian Anti-Semitism, Yevgenia Albats, "The 'Strong Hand' of Anti-Semitism," (*Moscow Times*, 23 November 2000). <<http://www.ripnet.org/strategies/religions/stronghand.htm>>

⁸"Iran is said to be Russia's best arms client in the Middle East and an element in what officials term record arms exports. Moscow has also sold weapons and systems to Algeria, Greece and Libya. Negotiations are currently being held with Egypt and Syria." *MiddleEast News Line* <http://www.menewsline.com/stories/2001/august/08_31_4.html>

The CIA has announced that Libya has received support from Russia for the development of a medium-range missile, capable of reaching Israel—a long-term goal of the Libyans. *Middle East News Line* <http://www.menewsline.com/stories/2001/february/headline02_28_1.html> The Russians are presently active in Sudan as well, selling the most advanced MiG 29 jets with Russian pilots. Sudan occupies the area known to Ezekiel as "Cush." Present Russian military agreements with these three most extremely anti-Israel nations is suggestive of the alliance described in the Gog prophecy.

⁹For a thorough survey of the problem, Bill Keller, "Nuclear Nightmares," *New York Times Magazine*, 26, 26 May 2002. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/26/magazine/26NUKES.html>>

¹⁰Bernard Lewis, "Muslim Anti-Semitism," *The Middle East Quarterly* (June 1998) <<http://www.meforum.org/meq/june98/anti.shtml>>

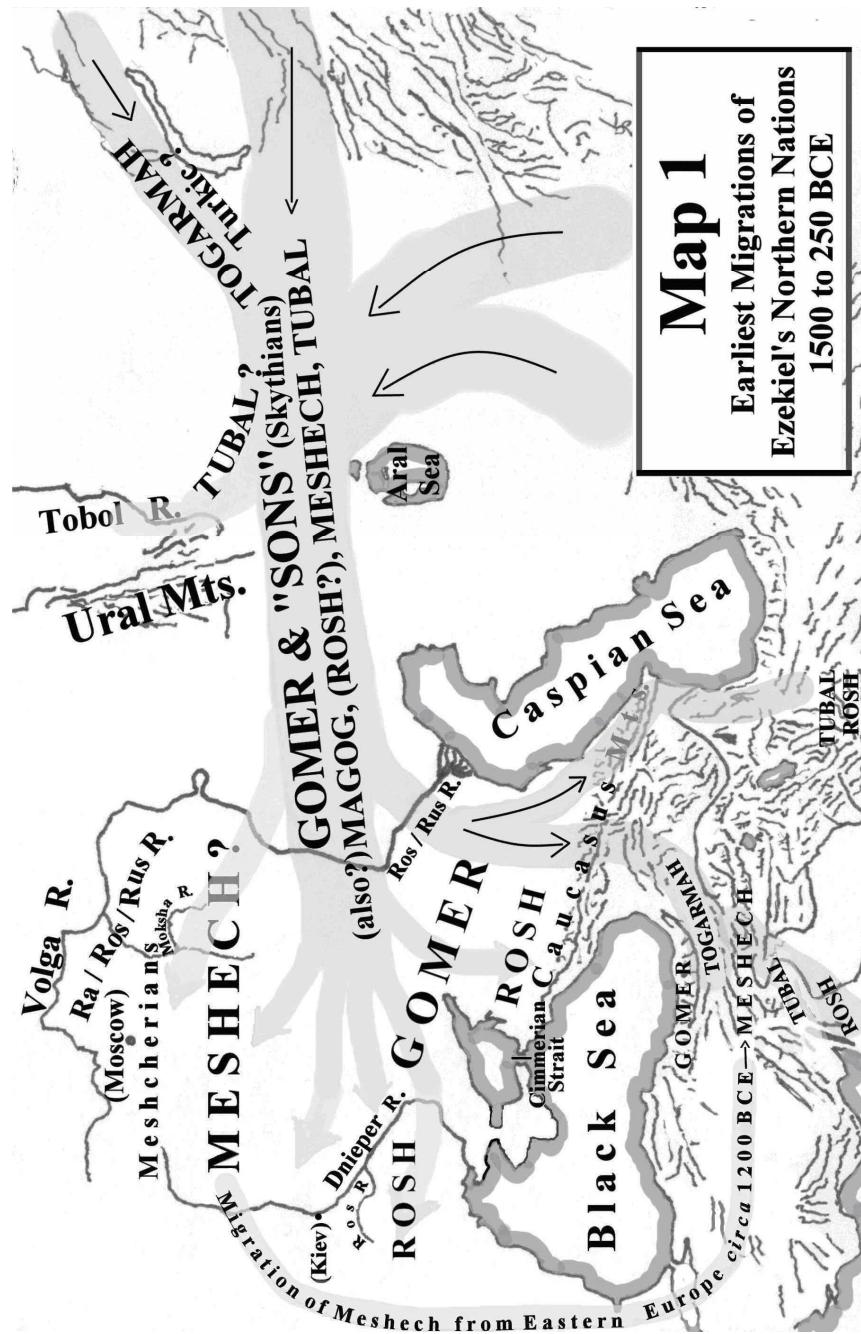
One example is Fatma Abdallah Mahmoud, "[Jews] Accursed Forever and Ever," [Egyptian government sponsored daily, *Al-Akhbar* cited in The Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series, No. 375, 3 May 2002 "Columnist for Egyptian Government Daily to Hitler: "If Only You Had Done It, Brother."]

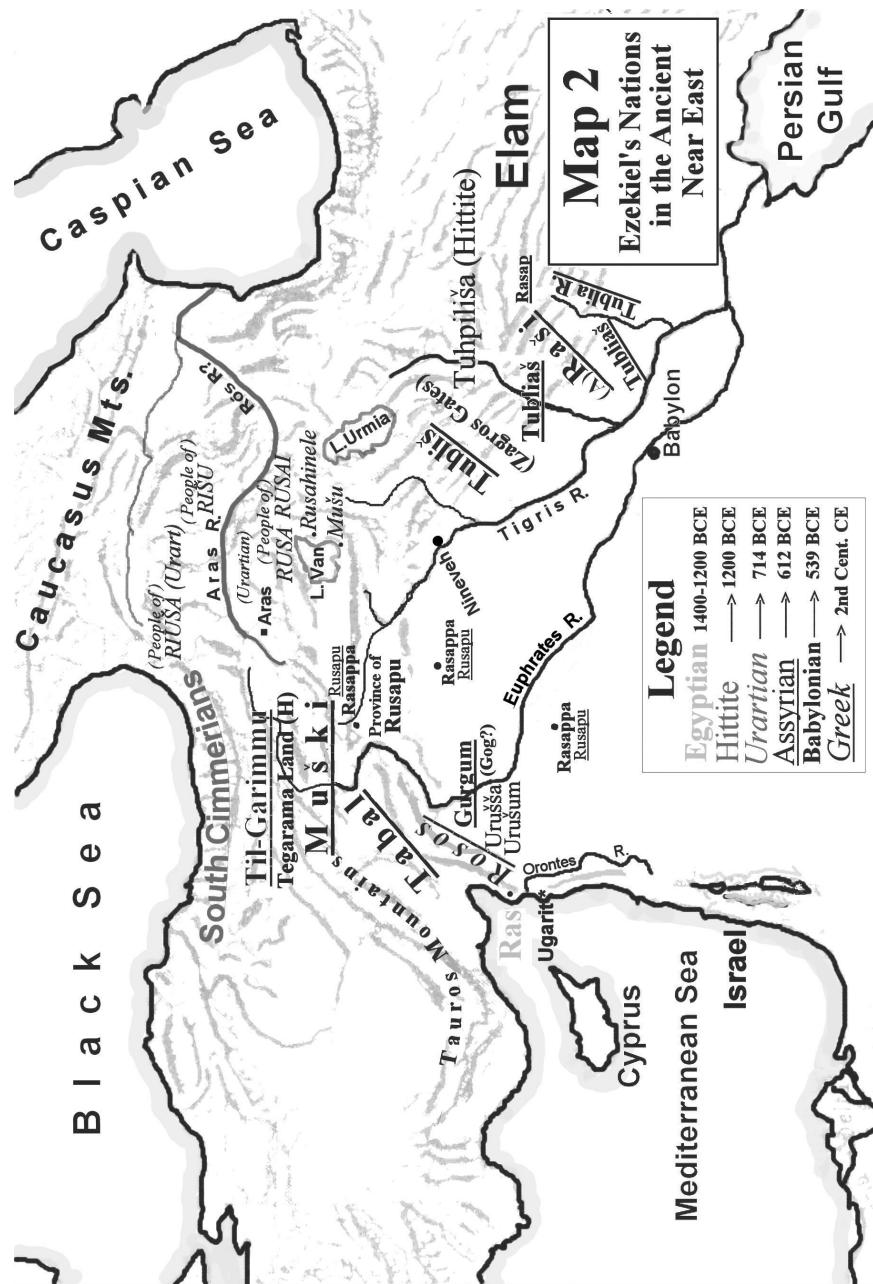
The column, among many other charges, accuses Israel of fabricating the Holocaust to extort reparations from the Germans. "But I, personally and in light of this imaginary tale, complain to Hitler, even saying to him from the bottom of my heart, 'If only you had done it, brother, if only it had really happened, so that the world could sigh in relief [without] their evil and sin.'" <<http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP37502>> For further studies on the Arab media's anti-Semitism, see also, <<http://memri.org/antisemitism.html>>

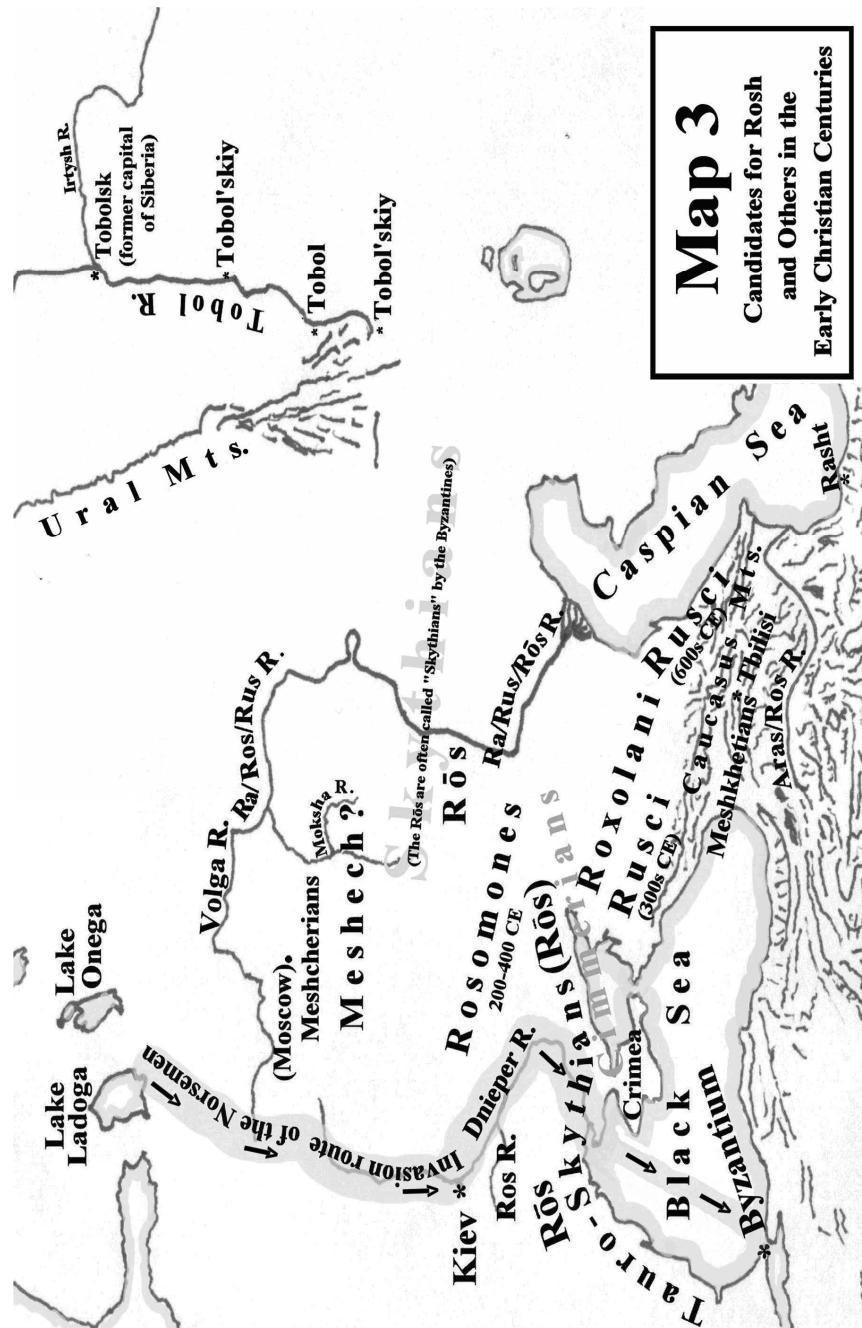
¹¹For a collection of continuously updated information relevant to the fulfillment of these criteria, see the web site based on this book: <<http://prophecyshapinghistory.org>>

¹²To be consistent with a future/literal interpretation of this passage, what does one do with the description of horses, bows and arrows, swords, lances, bucklers and shields (38:4-6; 39:3,9)? Does the literal description of these weapons rule out the possibil-

ity of a well-equipped military in the future from Ezekiel's standpoint? First, modern police and military units use items that are modern versions of these. Then, too, one might reply that from Ezekiel's point of view, just as he describes the nations from what he knows of them at the time of the prophecy, so he also describes their intimidating armament—that is, in terms his first readers would understand.







Bibliography

The purpose of this bibliography is to offer a starting point for further research in this field, since our study of Ezekiel's nations has been merely exploratory. The author encourages comments and feedback on this work from its readers as a way of adding to the body of information on this fascinating subject. The email address is: ruthven@regent.edu

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The Prophecy That Is Shaping History

Millions of Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe that a 2,500-year-old prophecy is about to be fulfilled: a global, apocalyptic *jihad* of many nations against the tiny state of Israel, whose recent re-emergence in its traditional land has sparked unrelenting rage and attack. Repeated resolutions passed in the United Nations reflect world-wide and nearly unanimous hostility against the so-called “Zionist entity”—even to the point of denying its right to exist.

Most news media and political analysts seem unaware of the ancient prophecy that not only predicts this apocalyptic war, but also, amazingly, how this prophecy by Ezekiel (chapters 36–44) provides the scenario for numerous best-selling books in *both* the English-speaking *and* Muslim worlds! These best sellers not only *describe* this great conflagration, but actually also motivate their readers to *prepare* for it!

The Prophecy That Is Shaping History represents a major advance in research and scholarship in examining the historical and contemporary impact of Ezekiel’s prophecy on world events. This academic monograph also offers a wealth of new evidence in tracing the identities, origins, and ultimate destinies of the key nations of Ezekiel’s prophecy who are seen to participate in what millions believe will be the most horrific battle the world will ever witness.



Jon Mark Ruthven, Ph.D., is a professor of systematic theology at Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia. He has published a number of articles on theology and a book, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (Continuum Books).

Dr. Ruthven received his Ph.D. from Marquette University, with further studies at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. The author specializes in the study of apocalyptic movements in history and in contemporary societies.

