

Chapter 17

Winners, Losers, and Wannabes

Thermonuclear war has no winners, only losers and survivors. Unlike the black death in medieval Europe, which killed a similar proportion of the population, this plague—the War of Magog—will affect not only people, but infrastructure. And unlike “conventional” world wars, this conflict will destroy not only buildings but the planet’s very ecological balance. There will be far more to “getting over it” than burying the dead and rebuilding the cities. It puts a whole new slant on the saying, “Third time’s a charm.”

World War III has the potential to kill the vast majority of life on earth, between the blasts themselves and the famine, disease, and altered weather that will inevitably follow. But Yahweh, in limiting the carnage to one quarter of the earth’s human population, is following through on a promise. After He had sent a worldwide flood to cleanse the earth of man and beast, **“Yahweh said in His heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.’”** (Genesis 8:21-22)

You can almost hear the sigh in His voice. Yahweh knows that the great flood is going to get the job done, but only barely. Even though Noah and his sons were true to their God, within a single generation man would once again begin to fall away. Three millennia later, the promised Redeemer would visit an oblivious world, our salvation suspended upon the thinnest of threads. Here in Genesis, Yahweh states His intention to protect the earth until His plan is fully accomplished. “While earth remains” implies that there will come a day when this fragile orb will no longer exist in its present form (something that is flatly predicted elsewhere). But until that time comes, nothing will be allowed to happen to it (like meteor or asteroid collisions) sufficient to fatally disrupt the earth’s orbit, axis, or rate of revolution.

Wrath from Yahweh short of earth’s total annihilation, however, is predicted thousands of times in scripture, beginning with the oldest book in the Bible: **“Be afraid of the sword for yourselves; for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment.”** (Job 19:29) Even Job knew that God’s wrath could come dressed as man’s sword—or nuclear tipped missile, as the case may be. God repeated this message of “repentance or judgment” so many times, many don’t even hear it any more—it has become like a constant droning noise in the background of our lives. But to ignore His warning is sin (not to mention stupid). **“All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, who say, ‘The calamity shall not**

overtake nor confront us.' (Amos 9:10) Our being in denial about God's coming judgment doesn't make it any less inevitable.

Speaking for Israel, the prophet Micah addressed his nation's enemies—Magog included: **"Do not rejoice over me, my enemy. When I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, Yahweh will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of Yahweh, because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness. Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, 'Where is Yahweh your God?' My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets."** (Micah 7:8-10) Gog will attack Israel because he perceives her to be weak and defenseless—a "land of unwalled villages." The European leader—the Antichrist—has assumed Israel's defense, prompting Gog to ask the Jews, **"Where is Yahweh your God?"** Gog is about to find out where Yahweh is, ironically enough, through the sword of the Antichrist as much as through the direct judgment of God.

To review, the World War III scenario as I see it plays out something like this. First, as we have seen, Gog and his Muslim allies begin preparing for an all-out offensive against the poorly defended (and indeed indefensible) state of Israel. But Egypt and Syria jump the gun and invade the Land in a coordinated north-south pincer action. (It must be habit forming; they've done this twice before.) Antichrist and his "peacekeeping" forces retaliate, stopping Syria cold and overrunning Egypt and several other Muslim nations (alluded to but unnamed in scripture) in a humiliating rout.

This is all the further previous Arab-Israeli wars have ever gotten. At this point, what usually happens is that the Israelis gain some ground (which they get talked out of later—they're far better soldiers than they are negotiators) and a truce is called. Some new lines are drawn on a map, and everybody goes home to lick their wounds.

The last time they played this game, in 1973, every nation they fought against had a "secular Islamic" government; that is, although nominally Muslims, their leaders were either kings or dictators who ran their nations according to their own self-perceived national (or personal) interests. But on January 16, 1979, Iran's Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was driven from his kingdom, relinquishing the reins of power to a previously exiled Ayatollah named Ruholla Khomeini. For the first time in modern history, a fundamentalist Islamic state was formed—ruled not by politicians or potentates, but by Muslim clerics. The Qur'an and the Sunnah, or Hadith, became the basis of law; the attitudes of Muhammad, not the interests of

the Iranian people, now underpinned the government's agenda. And what drove Muhammad? First and foremost, hatred for Jews and Christians.

The bottom line is that since 1979, Iran has been the one Islamic nation positioned to lead the others into holy war against Israel. The prophet Ezekiel, you'll recall, described just such a nation, calling it "Magog." Its leader, called Gog, is a good match for a charismatic military/spiritual leader Muslims are told will appear in the last days, one called the Imam Mahdi. This Gog is called the "chief prince" of other, more moderate, Muslim nations. What makes him the chief prince? His unquestioned religious authority, which other national leaders professing the same faith, concerned for their souls, feel at some level they must heed. The historian Josephus linked the Magogites to the Scythians, whose southern branch settled near the Caspian Sea—in present-day northern Iran. Coincidence? I think not.

Is it possible that some other nation could be Magog? Sure, but it would have to meet some rather improbable requirements. Besides being the modern homeland for some of the descendants of the Genesis 10 historical character Magog (a broad swath of territory potentially stretching from the Danube to India), Ezekiel's Magog must qualify as the "chief prince" of several areas that are undeniably in Islamic hands, and have been for over a millennium. In order to qualify as the "chief prince," this nation would have to be in a position to unify a major portion of the Muslim world and afford to equip them for battle. Iran could do this: they sit on the world's fourth largest known oil reserves (after Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates—all of which are much too far south to be considered Magog's long-lost kin, besides the fact that they are primarily Semitic peoples—descendants of Shem—not Japhethites, the line from which Magog—and its chief prince, Gog—descends). There is also no rival (at present) for Iran's status as the most devotedly religious Islamic nation on the planet, even though they are ruled by the minority Shiites. Presented with an "all-expenses-paid" chance to eliminate the Jews once and for all, the Sunnis might gladly set aside their age-old differences and take up arms with the Shiites—just my opinion, of course. If I had to make a second guess as to the identity of Magog, I would have to choose Iran's neighbor, Turkey: no less than four of the participants in the Magog federation are in or near Turkey, and they have shown increasing fundamentalist tendencies as of late. But they are not a particularly wealthy nation, nor do they have the long-standing reputation as serious Muslim fundamentalists that Iran enjoys. My money, therefore, is solidly on Iran.

On the other hand, the Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophecy focuses on (and against) Gog—the personal leader of Islam's hordes—not on his land (although Magog and its allies will get toasted in retribution—39:6). Iran (Persia) is specifically named among the combatants, so their participation and support is assured. But it

is Gog, the Imam Mahdi, who will covet Israel's land and possessions (38:10-12), lead his armies (38:14-16) to ignominious defeat (38:21-22). And it is Gog whose rotting corpse will be among those picked clean by carrion birds and wild beasts on the mountains and fields of Israel (39:3-5). Though Gog will lead Iran, he doesn't have to be Iranian-born to fulfill the prophecy. A birthplace anywhere near the Caucasus region will fulfill the prophetic requirement.

Getting back to our hypothetical but Scripture-consistent World War III scenario, we find this "Gog of the land of Magog" uniting the Islamic nations of the Middle East in a combination rescue of Egypt and Syria and invasion of Israel. The war at this point escalates from a local to a regional conflict—the entire Middle East becomes embroiled in it. As the Antichrist's forces are busy subduing Egypt, the armies of the Magog federation sweep in from the north, covering the land of Israel "like a cloud" with an invasion force of unprecedented size. This news is said to "trouble" the Antichrist (don't you just love Biblical understatement?) and he reacts violently, intending to annihilate Magog and its allies. But as this immense multinational Muslim force closes in on Jerusalem, Yahweh Himself suddenly enters the fray, destroying the armies of Magog on the mountains of Israel with a combination of fratricide, floods, disease, hailstorms, fire and brimstone, and an intense earthquake.

This leaves Antichrist with a good news/bad news story. It's good that the Muslim forces have been beaten within the country he swore to protect, but *his* armies had nothing to do with the victory, and everyone knows it. The Jews—many of them—perceive the hand of Yahweh in Magog's defeat, and that could pose an unexpected wrinkle in the Antichrist's forthcoming plans to declare himself the Messiah. But nobody actually *saw* God doing all that damage, so in a bold move worthy of the demon who will possess him, the Antichrist decides to attack the nations of the Magog federation with nuclear weapons. This, he calculates, will (1) rid his "protectorate," Israel, of the Muslim threat forever, making *him* their national hero, (2) confuse the issue of who was responsible for defeating the Muslim forces within Israel's borders, and (3) give him the military credibility he so desperately needs to buttress his imminent Messianic unveiling—something we'll discuss in a later chapter. This is the very sort of thing the first-century Jews expected to see from the Messiah: fire from heaven raining down upon Rome and its legions. If Yahshua had done *that*, instead of going to the cross, he would no doubt have gained a loyal and enthusiastic following among the Jews of His day. ('Course, we'd still be lost in our sins, estranged from the God who made us—His *real* mission would have been a colossal flop.)

It's my guess (SF7) that Antichrist will use *Israeli* nukes (not the E.U.'s or NATO's) on his foe. It's not only more poetic that way, there's always the factor of plausible deniability if things get terribly out of hand—*Hey, the Jews nuked*

'em. I had nothing to do with it! The European leader is nothing if not shrewd. He figures that if the need arises (i.e., if the Jews prove uncooperative), he might someday have to use the “warmongering Israelis” myth to elicit the support of all the world in a united effort to kill every Jew on earth—essentially what Gog wanted to do. (Not to let the cat out of the bag, but this is precisely what *will* happen.) The likely outcome of his tactical nuclear war, on the other hand, eludes him entirely. Although Satan knows exactly how the rest of the world will react, the Antichrist plows ahead with his plan apparently oblivious to (or merely unconcerned with) the fact that the most advanced nations on the planet—including his own—will surely be incinerated in the unpleasantness he has foolishly unleashed.

The key to global nuclear escalation is Russia. It matters not what sort of government they have when this all takes place—they’ll still have nearly half of the world’s nuclear weapon inventory. The Russians may have problems, but they’re not stupid. They’ll know the Israelis didn’t unilaterally nuke Tehran, Baghdad, Istanbul and Damascus on their own—it was that pompous EuroThug with the Israel fixation who spends half his time in Jerusalem. They’ll know that without the nations of *dar al-Islam* to trade with (much of it for their weapons and nuclear technology), their economy, which wasn’t much to begin with, will collapse. (Moving from a Communist economy to private sector capitalism was a bust in Russia—they merely switched from one kind of criminal to another. It demonstrates what I’ve always theorized: capitalism will only work in societies driven by Judeo-Christian values.) Moscow’s leaders will know that if they don’t do something—and soon—Mother Russia will soon find itself on the Antichrist’s hit list.

So because restraint is a thing of the past, and because they feel cornered and threatened, Russia launches what is for them a preemptive nuclear strike, not against Israel (which they know has been a meaningless pawn ever since they signed the Antichrist’s peace treaty) but against Europe, the kingdom of the madman who brought the world to the point of no return and beyond. *Treaties? Disarmament? Peace? Nyet! What does this man know of peace? At the first sign of trouble, he panics and sends nuclear weapons raining down upon his enemies. He did not have to do that to win his little war. But now he will see what it’s like to taste fear....*

Remember World War I, when one nation after another joined the fracas because their allies were threatened? History is about to repeat itself. Although Europe has chafed for decades under the shadow of the swaggering Americans, they’re now glad they didn’t dismantle NATO all together. The Americans, for their part, are gratified to see the pretentious Europeans, especially the French,

come crawling back *again* begging for help—until the bombs start falling on *them*.

Like the Russians, the Americans have seen their conventional military might wither up to the point of semi-uselessness (SF7). Much of their armed forces were deployed to the Middle East several years before under U.N. auspices—to keep the peace in Israel. The subsequent invasion of Magog left the Americans staggering and bloodied. Not a few of them lost their lives in the “natural” disasters that swept away Magog’s armies as they approached Jerusalem. And now this bombastic EuroTrash has gone and opened Pandora’s nuclear box. In uncharacteristic disarray, the American forces are spread so thinly throughout the world that fighting a conventional war, NATO against Russia, would seem impossible even if the nukes weren’t already in play. But since they are, there’s only one thing left to do: fight fire with fire. The generals holed up in the Pentagon figure *that* out in about five minutes. Faced with universal and unwavering military advice and unrelenting public pressure, a reluctant American President—who, like WWI’s Woodrow Wilson, was voted into office on a “peace” platform—authorizes a nuclear strike against Russia.

The first-tier targets—for both sides—are the largest cities and the most important military installations. The immediate problem for the Russians is that fully half of America’s nuclear strike capability is mobile: Ohio-class missile submarines—known as “boomers”—the most stealthy and survivable platform in the American arsenal—each capable of launching twenty-four missiles with multiple nuclear warheads (MIRVs). Just one of our missile subs (or one of their similar Typhoon-class subs) is capable of raining down more destructive power upon the earth than all of the bombs dropped during World War II—by *both* sides.

Fighting a post-cold war nuclear battle is not as easy as it sounds. In the U.S., the vast majority of static launch sites—missile silos—have been decommissioned. Some of America’s eighteen missile submarines have been retrofitted to launch Tomahawk cruise missiles instead of their original nuclear-tipped Trident IIs. Worse (or better) is the fact that the atomic weapons themselves need to be constantly maintained. The more time that goes by, the greater the chance is that the bomb will be a “dud,” that it will fail to detonate. The triggers must be periodically recharged. Most of these bombs and warheads are over a half-century old.

For these reasons, I don’t foresee a ’60s-style scenario with clouds of ballistic missiles darkening the sky, flying over the north pole and North Atlantic in both directions on their way to their hapless targets in Russia and America. Rather, after the initial salvo, I expect a mad scramble among military brass and technicians on both sides (or should I say, *all* sides) to re-activate the aging

nuclear arsenals they never thought they'd need. Even if the first volley cuts the head off the snake, its body will continue to twitch for some time. Submarines will be recalled to their home ports to re-arm. Missile silos that can be will be hastily reconditioned and pressed back into service. In the end, I suspect many of the nukes will be delivered the same way the very first one was: dropped from an airplane. The order of the day will be: deliver the bombs as fast as you can, however you can. Accidents, of course, will happen. "Friendly fire" mishaps could kill millions. This war won't necessarily be over in a few hours, as the pundits predicted back when such a holocaust was actually expected. It will drag on for month after terrifying month—with no assurance that any particular location will be spared—until no one is left alive who knows how to deliver or detonate these diabolical instruments of death.

When it's finally apparent that the last bomb has fallen, the Jews in Israel will look at each other, pinch themselves, and wonder aloud, "How in the world did we escape all that? If there were no God protecting us, we'd all be dead right now." The words of David, their greatest king, will ring in their ears as if they'd been spoken yesterday: **"Yahweh is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; the God of my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence...."** *Yes, they'll agree: from the worst sort of violence. First millions of Muslims descend upon us bent on finishing what Muhammad started, and then this European madman launches nukes from our back yard toward their biggest cities, pushing a good portion of the world into nuclear war—yet we're still here, alive and breathing. "I will call upon Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies...." Not to mention my friends.*

For the first time in several thousand years, maybe *ever*, the Jews will realize what Yahweh's promises really mean. **"When the waves of death surrounded me, the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon Yahweh, and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry entered His ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth. Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet. He rode upon a cherub, and flew; and He was seen upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness canopies around Him, dark waters and thick clouds of the skies...."**

You've really got to wonder what David had been shown when he wrote this. It fits none of his recorded victories (literally, at least), and yet it's a perfect, if somewhat poetic, description of Israel's deliverance through World War III. **"From the brightness before Him coals of fire were kindled. Yahweh thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice. He sent out arrows and scattered them; lightning bolts, and He vanquished them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were uncovered, at the rebuke of Yahweh, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils."** (II Samuel 22:2, 5-16) David by all accounts wasn't much of a seafarer, but the Spirit informed him that in these dark times, the ocean currents would actually become visible. How?

John reports (Revelation 8:8-9) that a third of the sea will become "blood," and he implies that everything in that same one-third portion of the oceans will die. The Atlantic Ocean with its adjacent seas and gulfs is about a third of the earth's total water area. It is growing about one inch wider each year as the North American tectonic plate moves west and the Eurasian plate moves east. The crack between these moving tectonic plates is defined by the Mid-Atlantic Ridge—a huge underwater "mountain" range running the entire length of the Atlantic, formed by magma seeping up from the earth's interior as the gap widens.

What would it take to split open this mid-Atlantic rift? A few hundred megatons worth of nuclear warheads? Yeah, that would do it, if detonated directly over the rift. Between the explosion and the radiation, it could easily cause the kind of death of a third of the world's oceans spoken of in Revelation 8. Such a blast could conceivably rip the fissure open all the way down to Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic, causing earthquakes, tsunamis, and an underwater volcanic hell—nothing short of the death of the Atlantic Ocean. That's what it means for **"the foundations of the earth [to be] uncovered."** (It's worth noting that the scientists who designed the very first atomic bomb were genuinely concerned that it might crack the earth's crust.) The ocean currents, the "channels of the sea" that circumnavigate the globe, would carry the color of death with them. Even though the color shift would be barely perceptible from onboard a ship, the space satellites orbiting overhead would "see" everything quite clearly. Was David really that smart, or do you think he might have been getting help with this?

Now put yourself in the shoes of Russia, trying desperately to prevent the launch of American nuclear weapons from a dozen Ohio-class submarines in the North Atlantic (or is it the other way around?). Would it be so hard to figure out that if you nuked the *ocean* you could eliminate this entire submerged threat at a single blow? Of course, if you scored a direct hit, the atomic warheads aboard the target vessel—up to 192 of them—could conceivably all detonate at once. This is but one of many possible ways David's prophecy could be realized: **"From the brightness before [Yahweh] coals of fire were kindled,"** leading to **"the foundations of the**

world [being] uncovered” and “the channels of the sea [being] seen.” I’ll let you speculate on other possible modes of fulfillment. Just remember this: it *will* happen.

David’s not done: “He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me; for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but Yahweh was my support. He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.” (II Samuel 22:17-20) “Waters,” you’ll recall, is a picture of the gentile nations among whom the Jews have been dispersed. No one has ever hated the Jews like Muhammad’s followers hate them, but it doesn’t matter how strong Islam grows; Yahweh will deliver his people. The Hebrew word for “broad place” is *merchab*, which carries with it the concept of spaciousness or roominess, and implies comfort, safety, and freedom. Apparently Yahweh disagrees with Israel’s agreement to give away land to the Muslims in exchange for hollow promises of peace. He will restore everything they’ve lost at the negotiating table, and then some.

“It is God who avenges me and subdues the peoples under me; He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Yahweh, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name. He is the tower of salvation to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore.” (II Samuel 22:48-51) Here we see a hint of how the thing will ultimately get turned around: Israel will be lifted up in stature among all of the nations of the world. This is a theme we’ll see over and over again. And how does Yahweh intend to show “mercy” to David? By placing his direct physical descendant, Yahshua, God’s anointed One, upon the throne of Israel—forever.

The deliverance, redemption, and restoration of Israel is an oft repeated theme in the Old Testament. These passages gain new poignancy when reviewed in light of the Magog-War prophecies. **“Let the redeemed of Yahweh say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.”** (Psalm 107:2-3) While publicly celebrating one’s redemption is always a good thing, it will be especially timely when the Jews who have been regathered to the Land are miraculously rescued from Magog by the direct hand of Yahweh. As we shall soon see, however, crediting God with their deliverance will be the very thing that transforms the Antichrist from their wannabe savior into their worst persecutor. His true colors are about to be hoisted.

Again we read, **“Behold, all those who were incensed against you [Israel] shall be ashamed and disgraced. They shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them—those who contended with you. Those who**

war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing....” Be honest, now. That has never happened in the history of Israel (in any short-term sense, anyway). But it is precisely the fate predicted for the nations of the Magog federation. If Isaiah is a true prophet of Yahweh (and his Messianic prognostications prove that he is) then you can count on this coming to pass.

He continues his report: **“For I, Yahweh your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you. Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I will help you,’ says Yahweh and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth. You shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff. You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them. You shall rejoice in Yahweh, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.”** (Isaiah 41:11-16) Here again we see Yahweh’s plan to infuse the men and women of Israel with valor far beyond their own native abilities. He knows the Jewish nation is but a “worm.” That’s the whole point: His strength is made perfect, complete, in our weakness. If you think about it, that must really drive Lucifer nuts.

A few chapters back, I predicted that a universal persecution of Jews would break out after the rapture, and many of them would seek shelter in Israel. But that doesn’t mean that they’ll still have the spirit of timidity that let Hitler walk all over them. The same sort of inner strength that Isaiah predicted for the Israelis is prophesied as well for those Jews still scattered among the gentile nations: **“Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from Yahweh, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver. Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off.** (Micah 5:7-9) I read into this that when the Jews do emigrate to Israel, they’ll do it on their own terms. They’ll come because they want to come, not because they were driven out of their native lands. They’ll come because Yahweh is drawing them. But until they emigrate, they’ll be anything but passive victims; they’ll be the guys you don’t want to mess with if you know what’s good for you. Hitler would not have recognized them.

Here’s how Yahweh explained it to Ezekiel. **“When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, ‘These are the**

people of Yahweh, and yet they have gone out of His land.” The nations in their ignorance have had a hard time honoring a God whose “chosen people” are so idolatrous. **“But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am Yahweh,” says the Lord Yahweh, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.””** (Ezekiel 36:17-23) And how does Yahweh propose to become “hallowed,” to be made holy, in Israel before the eyes of the gentile nations? By utterly destroying an impossibly large and determined enemy—the Magog federation. Ezekiel relates that prophecy just two chapters later.

There are several reasons why Yahweh has chosen to deal with Magog this way (beside the fact that Islam is a major stronghold of Satan). First, He wants to draw Israel back to Himself. We’ll discuss that in detail in the next chapter. Second, He wants to make it perfectly clear to the gentile nations that there is indeed a “supreme being” who is personally involved in the life of planet earth. After they see what has happened to Magog, they will know that they have a choice—the same choice they have always had: repentance or judgment. **“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.’ The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of Yahweh our God, and shall fear because of You.”** (Micah 7:15-17) The “fear” we see in that last sentence is an interesting study. “Be afraid” is the Hebrew word *pachad*, meaning to fear, tremble, revere, dread, or be in awe of something—the emphasis is on a state of severe distress or a feeling of terror. And the word for “fear” is the Hebrew *pare*, which can carry many of the same “fear” connotations, but leans toward the “respect” or “reverence” shade of meaning. By using both words in the same context, Micah is pointing out that one way or another, the nations will all come to “fear” Yahweh. They will either learn to respect and revere Him—forsaking their arrogance in light of His “wonders”—or, if they remain unrepentant, they will merely be terrified in His presence, trembling at His obvious greatness. We’re told in Revelation that much of mankind will choose not to repent, but at least the choice is crystal clear. They (and we) are without excuse.

“Thus says Yahweh: though they are safe, and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through. Though I have afflicted you [Israel], I will afflict you no more; For now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart.” (Nahum 1:12-13) Nahum was speaking of Assyria’s downfall, but I wouldn’t be surprised to see a secondary fulfillment in Magog’s defeat. Although many prophecies have already come to pass in a primary (and/or partial) sense many centuries ago, I believe that for many of them, their ultimate fulfillment will be played out in this last great war and its aftermath. The more I review this material, the more I become convinced that the prophecies against these neighbors of Israel have not been included in scripture so much for their historical value (reporting what God did, and why) as for the insight they contain concerning the Last Days (warning us of what God is about to do). They are even more relevant for us today than they were when they were written.

They’re relevant for the first-tier participants of World War III as well, the nations of *dar al-Islam*. I believe there’s a reason we aren’t told explicitly in Ezekiel 39:2 whether Yahweh intends to “annihilate” Magog and its allies, or will “leave but the sixth part” of them, as the idiomatic expression *shawshaw* renders it. After all, one sixth of world’s Muslim population is still roughly equivalent to the entire population of the United States—there’s something to work with there, and God knows it. **“Thus says Yahweh: ‘Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. Then it shall be, after I have plucked them out, that I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land. And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, to swear by My name, ‘As Yahweh lives,’ as they taught My people to swear by Baal [or Allah, as the case may be], then they shall be established in the midst of My people. But if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation,’ says Yahweh.”** (Jeremiah 12:14-17) Israel is surrounded by “evil neighbors,” all of them Islamic nations today. But taken in a broader sense, this passage warns any nation (read: America) who has Jews living within it to “learn carefully the ways of Yahweh’s people.” Those “ways” are recorded in the Torah, though not even the Jews understand them today. They, like so many of us, have ceased “swearing by” the name of Yahweh, and instead call on “the Lord,” which is what the name “Baal” means. The bottom line is that whoever calls on any “Lord” other than Yahweh will *as a nation* be “plucked up and destroyed.” But the nation that “swears by the name of Yahweh” shall be “established.”

The Jews were not the only race to be scattered and dispersed by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. All of those empires fell, allowing their captives’ descendants to return. (Not all did, of course.) But there is one empire which has not fallen, one which holds over a billion souls in bondage to this very day. They did not disperse their captives; they simply enslaved them where they

lived. Yahweh has not forgotten about the descendants of the Jews who were swallowed up in Islam's seventh-century advance across the Middle East. Until the very end, He will give Muslims every opportunity to repent from their Satanic doctrine and turn to their Creator, Yahweh. What they do with their chances will make the difference between "leaving but the sixth part" of them and "total annihilation," a difference of over 200,000,000 souls.

With that in mind, let's look at some of the players, these "evil neighbors" to which Jeremiah referred, separately. We shall begin with Egypt, who has always played a significant role in the international life of Israel. Several prophets pronounced judgment upon her in the context of the same enemies Israel and Judah faced (e.g. Assyria and Babylon). But some of those predictions look like they'll slop over into Egypt's fate during the Last Days as well.

"The burden against Egypt. Behold, Yahweh rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst. "I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; Everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom." So far, this looks just like the kind of fratricide in battle predicted for the allies of Magog. **"The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst; I will destroy their counsel, and they will consult the idols and the charmers, the mediums and the sorcerers...."** Could the prophet Isaiah be ultimately referring to the practice of Islam? Egypt is the world's center for higher Islamic learning (if there is such a thing). Moreover, according to the Hadith of al-Bukhari, Muhammad was often referred to by those who knew him best as a sorcerer or magician (and not a very good one at that—he performed no signs or miracles). And worshiping an idol, the black rock of the Ka'aba, is one of the five pillars of Islam. **"The Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,' says Yahweh of hosts...."** (Isaiah 19:1-4) Daniel will later refer to this man as "a king [who] shall arise, having fierce features," who will conquer Egypt—he's talking about the Antichrist. I find it fascinating that although the Antichrist is predicted to **"stretch out his hand against the countries, and Egypt shall not escape"** (Daniel 11:42), Isaiah says here that it is *Yahweh* who is providing his victory.

"The waters will fail from the sea, and the river will be wasted and dried up. The rivers will turn foul; the brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up; the reeds and rushes will wither. The papyrus reeds by the River, by the mouth of the River, and everything sown by the River, will wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishermen also will mourn; all those will lament who cast hooks into the River, and they will languish who spread nets on the waters. (Isaiah 19:5-8) The Nile has always been the artery carrying the life-blood of Egypt. Here we see Yahweh applying a tourniquet. In a future chapter, we will see how God's two witnesses are empowered to call for a three-and-a-

half-year worldwide drought—a drought severe enough to dry up both the Euphrates and the Nile.

But before all that happens, the Egyptian army will flood into Israel, intending to implement Muhammad’s murderous mandate. **“Who is this coming up like a flood, whose waters move like the rivers? Egypt rises up like a flood, and its waters [i.e., its gentile armies] move like the rivers; and he says, ‘I will go up and cover the earth [or land, i.e., Israel]; I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.’ Come up, O horses, and rage, O chariots! And let the mighty men come forth: the Ethiopians and the Libyans [eastern and northern Africa] who handle the shield, and the Lydians [western Turkey] who handle and bend the bow.”** Yep, there are the allies of Magog again, just as Ezekiel listed them. **“For this is the day of the Lord Yahweh of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword shall devour; It shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood; for the Lord Yahweh of hosts, has a sacrifice in the north country by the River Euphrates.”** The headwaters of the Euphrates are due north of Israel, in Turkey; read: Meshech and Tubal. **“Go up to Gilead and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt; In vain you will use many medicines; you shall not be cured.”** Gilead is in modern Jordan. The prophet is saying that Jordan will be unable to help Egypt in her plight, even though she will escape the Antichrist’s grasp. **“The nations have heard of your shame, and your cry has filled the land; for the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty; they both have fallen together.”** (Jeremiah 46:7-12) So it looks like Egypt isn’t going to fare too well in World War III, nor are Gog’s other allies, for that matter. But is all hope for Egypt lost? Are they beyond redemption?

Returning to the Isaiah passage we just left, we find that the answer, remarkably, is no. The grace of Yahweh is unfathomable: first me, then the Jews, and later even the Egyptians. Is there anybody His love can’t touch? Apparently not. It starts with “shock and awe.” **“In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid [charad: to tremble, be startled, be frightened] and fear [pachad, to fear, tremble, dread, be terrified or in awe] because of the waving of the hand of Yahweh of hosts, which He waves over it. And the land of Judah will be a terror [chaga: a state of great fear and confusion] to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid [pachad] in himself, because of the counsel of Yahweh of hosts which He has determined against it...”** The Hebrew language has quite a few words that offer various shades of meaning to the concept of “being afraid,” and Yahweh has used most of them here. (Conspicuously absent is *yare*, the word for reverential fear.) Egypt has done everything it could in recent years to bring Islamic terror to Israel. Yahweh is about to return the favor on behalf of His people. If I were the country known for Islamic scholarship, I’d do some serious reassessments of the power of Allah after I saw the combined Muslim armies get toasted extra crispy by Yahweh in Israel. And apparently, that’s precisely what Egypt does. I’m guessing (SF2) that the following verses describe the Millennium and the days leading up to it: **“In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan [i.e., Hebrew] and**

swear by Yahweh of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction....” Perhaps this city is renamed in memory of the destruction of the armies of Magog. The point is that parts of Egypt are acting like Israeli colonies—a development that is, shall we say, not particularly likely under the current economy.

“In that day there will be an altar to Yahweh in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to Yahweh at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to Yahweh of hosts, in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to Yahweh because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then Yahweh will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know Yahweh in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to Yahweh and perform it. And Yahweh will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to Yahweh, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.” (Isaiah 19:16-22) I realize we’re getting way out ahead of our timeline again, but does the word “wow” come to anybody else’s mind here? Here’s what’s happening: Egypt has invaded Israel, and as a result has gotten itself whopped (a highly technical military term meaning “defeated”) by the Antichrist. The European leader proceeds to rape and plunder his way from Cairo to Khartoum. Then the hapless Egyptians watch dumbfounded as Yahweh and a handful of Jews whup Magog’s vast armies in Israel. The Antichrist’s subsequent nuclear attack is intended as a prelude to his self-proclaimed unveiling as the Messiah (something we’ll discuss in our next chapter). The only problem (for him) is that the Jews don’t buy it—they turn instead to Yahweh and the *real* Messiah, Yahshua.

And Egypt? After languishing under the yoke of the Antichrist for three or four years, and deciding, after due consideration, that the Antichrist’s Messianic claims are every bit as bogus as Muhammad’s were, Yahweh sends someone to rescue them from Antichrist’s clutches. The translators, in capitalizing “Savior” and “Mighty One,” have assumed that Egypt’s champion is none other than the returning Yahshua, and that’s certainly possible, though hard to shoehorn into the revealed timeline. But the capitals aren’t there in the original. Therefore, it’s also possible (SF5), and even more poetic to my mind, that Egypt’s knights in shining armor are *Jews*—perhaps with some angelic assistance—the same heroic sons of Abraham who’ve been fighting a guerilla war against Antichrist ever since his “Messianic” debut at the middle of the Tribulation.

As incredible as their repentance and redemption are, Egypt is not alone in this regard. **“In that day [the Millennium] there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria [which straddled Syria and Iraq], and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom Yahweh almighty shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’** (Isaiah 19:23-25) Like I said, wow.

That isn't the only reference in Isaiah's writings to a "highway" between Assyria and Israel. He also says, **"There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt."** (Isaiah 11:16) Here the highway is seen as a path for the returning Jews to their God-given land, a way of escape from the coming persecution. It is Yahweh's purpose to gather all of the Jews back to the Land of Israel.

I must confess, I searched in vain for back-up prophecies detailing the repentance of Assyria. With the exception of this one cryptic glimmer in Isaiah, the news is uniformly grim. The following prophecies all had initial fulfillments in the downfall of ancient Assyria; it is a matter of conjecture how much of this applies to modern-day Iraq or Syria (Assyria straddled the fence between them). Bear in mind, though, that this territory is described among the allies of Magog that are slated for destruction.

"Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; your nobles rest in the dust. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them. Your injury has no healing, your wound is severe. All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you, for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?" (Nahum 3:18-19) One might be tempted to read the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime into this passage. I'd resist that temptation: the prophet has bigger fish to fry.

"And it shall come to pass in that day that Yahweh will whistle for the fly that is in the farthest part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. They will come, and all of them will rest in the desolate valleys and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all thorns and in all pastures. In the same day Yahweh will shave with a hired razor, with those from beyond the River, with the king of Assyria." (Isaiah 7:18-20) These esoteric verses are a direct parallel to the Daniel 11:40 passage describing the pre-Magog pincer attack against Israel. God considers Egypt and Assyria nothing more than insects, but ones useful for His purposes: the fly who bites and the bee that stings. The last sentence could be a reference to Gog, who—with Assyria (Syria or Iraq, called the king of the north by Daniel)—is a "hired razor," a surrogate instrument of judgment in the hands of Yahweh, the means by which Israel will be brought to its life-saving epiphany. Shaving the head and beard were preliminary to the taking of special vows. Here Yahweh Himself is "vowing" to follow through on His promises of redemption for Israel.

"I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched

out over all the nations. For Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:25-27) The "Assyrian" here, in the context of future fulfillment, could be a metaphor for, or representative of, the entire Magog federation. And even if it isn't, we have ample scriptural evidence that Syria and Iraq are slated for destruction in this conflict. As Ezekiel reports, Gog's armies will be broken within Yahweh's Land—just as Sennacherib's 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were "broken" while besieging Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:36). Isaiah prophesied the final performance, and then he was an eyewitness to the dress rehearsal in the days of Hezekiah's reign. But note that what happened to Sennacherib's Assyrian attackers is "purposed against the whole earth." This is further confirmation of the World War III scenario we have deduced from other passages. Assyria/Magog represents only the beginning of Yahweh's wrath.

Isaiah's not done with them. **"Yahweh will cause His glorious voice to be heard, and show the descent of His arm, with the indignation of His anger and the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of Yahweh, Assyria will be beaten down as He strikes with the rod. And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, which Yahweh lays on him, it will be with tambourines and harps; and in battles of brandishing He will fight with it. For Tophet [the place of burning] was established of old; yes, for the king [Gog, in the immediate sense, but in the broader picture, perhaps Satan's fate is indicated] it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood. The breath of Yahweh, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it."** (Isaiah 30:30-33) Here again, the description of Assyria's downfall precisely matches that of Magog's future, though it's a poor fit for the recorded destruction of Sennacherib's armies in Hezekiah's time (when fire, tempest, hail, and the voice of God had nothing to do with it). Naturally, when Yahweh destroys the invaders, the response among the Israelis will be unrestrained celebration—"with tambourines and harps" (drums and guitars?). These guys know how to party—and more to the point, *why* to party.

Since Assyria overlaps both Iraq and Syria, let's look at the prophecies that home in on Syria's capital, Damascus—the oldest continuously occupied city in the world. **"The burden against Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap.... The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria. They will be as the glory of the children of Israel,' says Yahweh of hosts."** (Isaiah 17:1, 3) So much for "continuously occupied." Most cities in the region have been "ruinous heaps" at one time or another, but Damascus has never "ceased from being a city." Ephraim was the northern portion of Israel—bordering Syria. The only way the "fortress will cease from Ephraim" is for Syria to cease being a threat. This all conspires to suggest that Syria, and Damascus in particular, will be on the Antichrist's nuclear hit list. It also goes a long way toward explaining why, during the Millennium, the Golan

Heights—so critical for Israel’s defense today—are not included within her formal borders. Their strategic high ground will no longer be required for Israel’s security, for Syria is no longer a menace.

Isaiah goes on to explain: **“In that day his strong cities will be as a forsaken bough and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel; and there will be desolation....”** I can’t help but see a more universal application than just Syria in this passage. America would do well to heed its warning. **“Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, therefore you will plant pleasant plants and set out foreign seedlings; in the day you will make your plant to grow, and in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; but the harvest will be a heap of ruins in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.”** (Isaiah 17:9-11)

Jeremiah offers more information. **“Against Damascus. Hamath and Arpad [cities to the north of Damascus] are shamed, for they have heard bad news. They are fainthearted; there is trouble on the sea; it cannot be quiet [or, ‘They are disheartened, troubled like the restless sea’ (NIV)]. Damascus has grown feeble; she turns to flee, and fear [Hebrew *retet*: trembling caused by utter panic] has seized her. Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in labor. Why is the city of praise [or renown] not deserted, the city of My joy? Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day,”** says Yahweh of hosts. **“I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad.”** (Jeremiah 49:23-27) I envision more in this passage than the primary context—Syria’s impending conquest by Nebuchadnezzar—would suggest. In my admittedly overactive imagination, I can see the outlying areas of Syria stunned, shaken, and wallowing in misplaced guilt (“Why were *we* spared?”), because Damascus has been the target of the Antichrist’s nuclear attack—perhaps his first, since Damascus is so close and so threatening to Israel. Worse, Damascus had seen it coming—she had gotten advance warning—and yet was in such denial (or such terror) that no efforts were made to evacuate the city. So Syria’s entire defense structure (“wall”) and political leadership (“palaces”) have been wiped out with the push of a button.

If there is a victim among the nations of *dar al-Islam*, it is surely Lebanon. Never a nation to stir up trouble on her own, Lebanon has until quite recently managed to escape the ravages of life under Islam. It has a large nominally Christian minority, and for the first six decades of the twentieth century was considered the jewel of the eastern Mediterranean. But since then, it has been a

war zone; Beirut has become a metaphor for a shell-pocked city under siege. What happened?

In the late '60s, the myth of Palestinian homelessness was exposed for the fraud it is (though nobody in the mainstream media was sharp enough to catch it): the descendants of the Arabs who had voluntarily left Israel in 1948 had become a *majority* in Jordan. Yasser Arafat and his “Palestinian Liberation Organization” (a misnomer if ever there was one) decided it was time for regime change. But after a year-and-a-half-long struggle for power with the government of King Hussein, the PLO and its political party, Fatah, were finally evicted. The terrorist organization Black September derived its name from the PLO’s September 1970 defeat. And where did Arafat go (besides to hell, a casualty of AIDS)? To Lebanon, yesterday a stable and peaceable Mediterranean paradise—today a war-torn wasteland, thanks to the Palestinians (with a lot of help from Syria).

Throughout the Bible, Lebanon is used as a metaphor (or a direct example) of a fruitful, pleasant place. We need to remind ourselves that the Lebanon we see today is only temporary: if you’ll recall our discussion of Israel’s promised borders, virtually all of Lebanon is included in Israel’s geographical future—restored to its former glory. There is very little direct prophecy concerning Lebanon’s future, but there are a few nuggets, like this one: **“Behold, Yahweh of hosts will lop off the bough with terror. Those of high stature will be hewn down, and the haughty will be humbled. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.”** (Isaiah 10:33-34) If any nation has ever been taught a lesson in humility, it is modern Lebanon. In ancient times, Lebanon was considered a paradise on earth. It was known for its magnificent cedars—tall and proud—which in turn became a metaphor for pride among men and angels (cf. Ezekiel 31), something Yahweh hates. So I’m not suggesting that the current debased state of the country is the primary fulfillment of this prophecy, but it certainly fits. If Yahweh can use scum like the Antichrist and Gog as tools with which to achieve His goals, He can certainly use Yasser Arafat (though I tend to choke on the concept) to bring about His long term objectives.

Okay, so Lebanon has been humbled. Now what? **“Is it not yet a very little while till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest? In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in Yahweh, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel....”** Here again, we’re peeking ahead a bit into the Millennium. We see Lebanon restored to her former glory, those who troubled her “brought to nothing,” and the Holy One of Israel being worshiped—all things that look next to impossible as things stand today, but like I keep saying, Yahweh loves doing the impossible—if saving the world were easy, any god could do it. **“For the terrible one is brought to nothing, the**

scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off—who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just by empty words.” (Isaiah 29:17-21) Whatever other fulfillments this prophecy has seen, the prophet’s description of “all who watch for iniquity” fits Lebanon’s Palestinian parasites to a tee. “In the gate” means “in matters of government.” The deceitful rhetoric and terrorist agenda imported into Lebanon by Yasser Arafat’s PLO made responsible and stable government impossible. But their reign of terror won’t last forever: Beirut and Damascus have radically divergent futures.

We have seen how Jordan manages to avoid invasion by the Antichrist during the first phase of the war. That’s not to say that she becomes some sort of Middle Eastern Switzerland—a neutral party, straddling the fence. On the contrary, Jordan has a big—and surprising—role to play in the Last Days. And as the neighbor sharing the longest border with Israel, we shouldn’t be surprised to find that the Bible has a great deal to say about her fate.

The Scriptures don’t call this territory “Jordan,” of course. It’s identified by the three principal people groups that settled the land. Let’s do a quick geographical review. South of Aram (Syria) on the east side of the Jordan River is the land of Ammon. (Depending on what historical time frame you’re looking at, Gilead lies between them.) South of Ammon—at the latitude of the Dead Sea—lies Moab. These two nations were descended from the children of Abraham’s nephew, Lot (a sad, sick story related in Genesis 19). If you’ll recall, the Israelites who were to enter the Promised Land under Joshua were told to keep their hands off both Moab and Ammon (Deuteronomy 2), as well as the third Jordanian group, Edom. Never great at following instructions, half of the tribe of Manasseh, plus Gad and Reuben (in that order, north to south) invaded Ammonite and northern Moabite lands, pushing them further east. But these lands were never allocated by Yahweh to the people of Israel.

Edom is an interesting case, from a geographical point of view. This nation’s patriarch was Esau, Jacob/Israel’s twin brother. Originally Edom was due south of the Dead Sea. It is often identified with Mt. Seir, which is in the mountain range just east of the Arabah (the rift valley running north and south between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba). So their origins are definitely within modern-day Jordan. But if you’ll check a good Bible atlas, you’ll notice that the nation slowly crept west, then north, as time went on—eventually supplanted geographically by the Nabataeans. By the time of Christ, the name Edom had morphed into Idumea, and their territory extended from Gaza (only a few miles from the Med) to the

Dead Sea (now its *eastern* border). In other words, it ended up smack in the middle of ancient Judah. But for the sake of the prophecies, I think we can safely place Edom in its original location, within the borders of Jordan.

Scripture usually handles them separately; therefore so shall we, beginning with Edom. The Last Days prophecies concerning the children of Esau go all the way back to Moses' day. Balaam speaks: **"And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, while Israel does valiantly. Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, and destroy the remains of the city."** (Numbers 24:18-19) The "One" he refers to is none other than the Messiah, who will destroy Edom not in its prosperity, but its "remains." This isn't the last we'll hear of that connection. It is but one of many hints of Edom's bleak fate during the Last Days.

Note that Balaam compares the fate of Edom to that of Israel. So does Obadiah: **"The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; They shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau, for Yahweh has spoken."** Lest we come to the conclusion that the prophet is only talking about a people group, and not necessarily about the inhabitants of their geographical location who moved in afterward, the prophet continues: **"The inhabitants of the South (i.e. the Negev—he's talking about Israelis) shall possess the mountains of Esau, and the inhabitants of the Philistine lowland."** Not only will Israel again possess the Gaza strip (the Philistine lowland), they will own southern Jordan—the mountains of Esau. **"They shall possess the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria."** Read: the West Bank. **"Benjamin shall possess Gilead (northwestern Jordan). And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath (midway between Tyre and Sidon, in today's Lebanon). The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad (location uncertain—possibly in today's Iran—but about as far removed from Jerusalem as you could imagine; the reference is apparently to the Jewish exiles scattered all over the earth in the Last Days) shall possess the cities of the South. Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's."** (Obadiah 17-21)

The prophet Jeremiah seems to have something to say about most everybody; Edom is no exception. **"Against Edom. Thus says Yahweh of hosts: 'Is wisdom no more in Teman [a city near Mt. Seir]? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished? Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths [of the Arabian desert], O inhabitants of Dedan! For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will punish him."** This isn't looking good. Dedan was located in the northwestern Arabian peninsula—three or four hundred miles south of Edom. Whatever they're being warned to flee from is going to affect thousands of square miles. **"If grape-gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, would they not destroy [only] until they have enough? But I have made Esau bare; I have uncovered his secret**

places, and he shall not be able to hide himself. His descendants are plundered, his brethren and his neighbors, and he is no more.” (Jeremiah 49:7-10) Like Obadiah, Jeremiah predicts the total annihilation of Esau’s line.

“‘I have sworn by Myself,’ says Yahweh, ‘that Bozrah [an Edomite city north of Mt. Seir] shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes.’ I have heard a message from Yahweh, and an ambassador has been sent to the nations: ‘Gather together, come against her, and rise up to battle! For indeed, I will make you small among nations, despised among men.’” (Jeremiah 49:13-15) The prophet goes on to say that the nations will fight against her. This can’t refer to Antichrist’s push to gather territory, however, because Daniel specifically reports that Edom will escape (11:41). The prophecy was fulfilled with the Babylonian and Persian conquests. (The Greeks and Romans didn’t have much influence there.) Under these regimes, Edom was “made small among nations,” but was not yet wiped out.

But what was that about a curse? In Romans 9:13, Paul refers to a Malachi prophecy concerning Edom that placed it in the same “on-its-way-out” position that Jeremiah had: **“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ Says Yahweh. ‘Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.’”** It is fascinating to me that the Biblical personality the Islamic scriptures try to pass off as “Jesus”—one who will return in the Last Days and support Imam Mahdi—is not Yahshua, but rather someone named Isa, that is, Esau, the one man Yahweh declared that he “hated.” **“Even though Edom has said, ‘We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,’ thus says Yahweh of hosts: ‘They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom Yahweh will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, “Yahweh is magnified beyond the border of Israel.””** (Malachi 1:2-5) So we see that by the close of the Old Testament canon, Edom was still alive and kicking. Though impoverished, it was still proudly self-sufficient, too stubborn to turn back to the God whose heritage they had once shared with Jacob.

Yahweh, through Jeremiah, now informs us why Edom is slated for destruction. It’s an old, oft-repeated theme, one that America would do well to heed: **“Your fierceness has deceived you, the pride of your heart, O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, who hold the height of the hill! Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there,’ says Yahweh....”** There’s very little that Yahweh hates more than pride. It leads us into all kinds of sin, not the least of which is the attitude that we’re so great we can afford to ignore the will of Almighty God. Are we any better than Edom? I think not.

“Edom also shall be an astonishment; everyone who goes by it will be astonished and will hiss at all its plagues. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their

neighbors,' says Yahweh, 'No one shall remain there, nor shall a son of man dwell in it. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain of the Jordan against the dwelling place of the strong; but I will suddenly make him run away from her. And who is a chosen man that I may appoint over her? For who is like Me? Who will arraign Me? And who is that shepherd who will withstand Me?...'” The primary fulfillment of this passage was in the displacement of Edom by the Nabataeans, who, as we have seen, drove them west and north.

“Therefore hear the counsel of Yahweh that He has taken against Edom, and His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman: surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; surely He shall make their dwelling places desolate with them. The earth shakes at the noise of their fall; at the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea. Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, and spread His wings over Bozrah; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.” (Jeremiah 49:16-22) Once again, this demonstrates that it’s not quite over yet for Edomite lands: Bozrah will be the starting place for the returning Messiah’s “campaign” against the armies of the earth assembled against Him at Armageddon. I probably would have missed that one, but Isaiah speaks of the very same thing: **“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments [i.e., stained with blood] from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save....”** (Isaiah 63:1) We’ll cover the whole passage in detail a few chapters hence; this sneak preview is merely to point out that Edom will be involved.

Like Jeremiah, Isaiah has quite a bit to say concerning Edom. **“Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of Yahweh is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them; He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out. Their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll. All their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree....”** He begins by warning *all* nations of the coming judgment, a warning we would do well to heed. But almost immediately, he gets down to cases—beginning with guess who.

“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment....” There’s that curse again, but in context it appears as if Edom is symbolic of all nations deserving of judgment because of their unbelief: he is not only the estranged brother of Israel, but also the estranged child of Yahweh—he represents all of unsaved mankind. **“The sword of Yahweh is filled with blood. It is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young**

bulls with the mighty bulls. Their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness...." I realize that it's hard for us to appreciate the metaphor of sacrifice here. Try to put yourself in the sandals of a Jewish prophet seven centuries before Christ: the temple still stood, and in times of celebration or national repentance the altar would run red with sacrifices to Yahweh. Solomon, for example, was said to have offered up 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep on the occasion of the dedication of the temple. But whereas sheep were indicative of the coming sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Yahshua the Messiah, and goats stood in for the sins of the people, the offering up of bulls represented a forsaking of false gods. Isaiah is saying here that the false god of Edom—the Allah of Muhammad's evil imagination—will die a bloody death.

Yahweh's sacrifice, here, is not the slaughter of bulls, sheep, and goats, but of those who stood in the way of the "cause of Zion:" **"For it is the day of Yahweh's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion."** Note that according to scripture, Yahweh is a Zionist. **"[Edom's] streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste. No one shall pass through it forever and ever. But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. and He shall stretch out over it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness...."** This is getting heavy. Clearly, this prophecy has seen no fulfillment in history—which means it is yet to be, for the Word of Yahweh cannot fail. The words "confusion" and "emptiness" ("chaos" and "desolation" in the NIV) are the same words used to describe the unformed earth in Genesis 1:2: *tohu* and *bohuw*. This is no metaphor; it will actually happen. And remember, Edom—southern Jordan—is Israel's next-door neighbor on the southeast. It's as if Yahweh wants there to be a horrible physical reminder, one that endures throughout the Millennium, of what it means to turn your back on Him—within a three-hour bus ride from Jerusalem.

Isaiah continues: **"They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in its palaces, nettles and brambles in its fortresses; It shall be a habitation of jackals, a courtyard for ostriches. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, and the wild goat shall bleat to its companion; also the night creature shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs and hatch, and gather them under her shadow; there also shall the hawks be gathered, every one with her mate. Search from the book of Yahweh, and read: not one of these shall fail; not one shall lack her mate. For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them. He has cast the lot for them, and His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line. They shall possess it forever. From generation to generation they shall dwell in it."** (Isaiah 34) Although the land of Edom is uninhabited by man from the time of its destruction at the Battle of Armageddon onward, it is not *uninhabitable*. All kinds of wilderness creatures

will make their homes there. This is not the first time Yahweh has set aside a piece of land for the exclusive use of wild animals because of the sins of man: the great city of Babylon was assigned precisely the same fate. There's a lesson in there somewhere.

Moving north to Moab, we see similar bad news, starting again with the words of Balaam: **"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult."** (Numbers 24:17) This is clearly a Messianic prophecy, and it seems to correspond well to the coming destruction of Edom spoken of by both Isaiah and Jeremiah.

And the reason for Moab's destruction? It's pretty much the same story as for Edom—pride and violence. **"We have heard of the pride of Moab—He is very proud—Of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath. But his lies shall not be so. Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab; everyone shall wail. For the foundations of Kir Hareseth you shall mourn; surely they are stricken. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have broken down its choice plants, which have reached to Jazer and wandered through the wilderness. Her branches are stretched out; they are gone over the sea. Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah, with the weeping of Jazer. I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh, for battle cries have fallen over your summer fruits and your harvest.**

"Gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field. In the vineyards there will be no singing, nor will there be shouting; no treaders will tread out wine in the presses; I have made their shouting cease. Therefore my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab, and my inner being for Kir Heres. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he will come to his sanctuary to pray; but he will not prevail.

"This is the word which Yahweh has spoken concerning Moab since that time. But now Yahweh has spoken, saying, 'Within three years, as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant will be very small and feeble.'" (Isaiah 16:6-13) This is all fulfilled prophecy. (There were *three* Assyrian invasions between 732 and 701 B.C., the time frame in which the prophecy was given—first by Tiglath-Pileser, then Sargon, then Sennacherib.) Yet I can't help but wonder if it will all come around again for another go. There is a subtle difference between Edom's judgment and Moab's. In Edom, all of Esau's descendants are going to be wiped out; on the other hand, Yahweh intends to first break Moab's pride by cutting off the source of her prosperity, which in turn is the source of her arrogance. Moab has refused to acknowledge Yahweh as the source of her blessings; therefore she shall see those blessings removed. (Pay attention, America.) And when she cries out to her false god—these days, it's Allah—nothing will happen, because Allah has no more power to save than any other dumb rock.

That's not to say that poverty will be Moab's only punishment. Isaiah speaks of deserted cities: **"The cities of Aroer [a Moabite town twenty miles east of the Dead Sea] are forsaken; they will be for flocks which lie down, and no one will make them afraid."** (Isaiah 17:2) What used to be thriving communities will revert to grazing land.

And Zephaniah explains why they're deserted. **"I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders."** (Zephaniah 2:8) Here we go again: it's pride, leading to a violent and aggressive attitude—especially toward Israel. The western press likes to refer to the West Bank—more properly the hill country of Judea and Samaria—as the “occupied territories,” as if they had been stolen from their legitimate owner as a prize of war in the Six Day War of 1967. The truth is that it was *Jordan* who “occupied” the West Bank illegally between 1948 and 1967. So when Zephaniah speaks of “arrogant threats against Israel's borders,” he's pointing a finger of rebuke directly at modern Jordan. Note that in the prophecy, we're talking about both Moab and her northern neighbor Ammon now—the rest of Jordan north of Edom. And don't forget, the “Palestinians,” the descendants of those Arabs who voluntarily left Israel in 1948 so that they wouldn't get in the way of the intended Muslim genocide of the Jews, are now the *majority* in Jordan. In other words, there already *is* a “Palestinian homeland.” It's Jordan. Maybe somebody in our State Department—since we're so all-fired anxious to impose democracy on everybody—should point that out.

I'll admit that at first glance, it seemed to me that Yahweh was being overly harsh to Jordan, at least in comparison to nations like Egypt and Syria, who have attacked Israel time after time. *Jordan sat out the '73 Yom Kippur war. And they kicked the PLO out, didn't they? Doesn't that count for something?* Perhaps, but the fact remains: God will curse those who curse His people. Jordan may have laid low and acted moderately (i.e., in her own self-interest) for a few years, but her aspirations haven't changed. Consider this March 31, 1977 quote from Palestine Liberation Organization executive committee member Zahir Muhsein in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*:

“The Palestinian people does not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality today there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct ‘Palestinian people’ to oppose Zionism. For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot raise claims to Haifa and Jaffa, while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem. However, the moment we

reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan.” That’s their plan. Yahweh has other ideas.

It bears mention that the Jews have nobody but Abraham to blame for their Moab-Ammon woes. He was told quite plainly to **“Get out from your country, from your kindred, and from your father’s house.”** (Genesis 12:1) So what did he do? **“Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son”** with him when he left Haran (verse 5). He had been specifically instructed to leave Lot behind. But because he didn’t follow Yahweh’s instructions to the letter, he and his descendants have been dealing with the “Lot” problem ever since.

So what will happen to Moab and Ammon—today’s Jordan—in the end? **“Therefore, as I live,’ says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them.’ This they shall have for their pride, because they have reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of Yahweh of hosts. Yahweh will be awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth. People shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations.”** (Zephaniah 2:9-11) Moab and Ammon will end up as the Israeli “outback,” desolate, inhospitable, practically uninhabited—and the possession of Israel.

That’s it then. It’s three for three. All of the people groups representing modern Jordan will suffer virtual annihilation, their nation decimated and depopulated. The Bible never says precisely how this will happen, only *that* it will. I’d like to offer a suggestion, a plausible scenario for Jordan’s coming perdition. As I write these words, Syria (north of Jordan, for those of you who are still geographically challenged) is said to have one hundred missiles armed with VX nerve gas aimed at Israel. This represents enough nerve poison to kill every living thing in the country, a goal that becomes more and more desirable for Syria every passing day because of its continued swing toward a more fundamental form of Islam. There is absolutely nothing to stop Syria from obliterating Israel except (1) the threat of retaliation, (2) the political repercussions of killing Israel’s Palestinian Arab population, and of course (3) the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit. After the rapture, however, point 3 will no longer be a factor. And as World War III gets underway, points 1 and 2 will evaporate. It will take about a nanosecond for a frustrated Syrian leadership to decide what to do with those chemical weapons.

Then why don’t we read about the obliteration of Israel in scripture? Because it never takes place. Did you ever hear the expression “history repeats itself”? In the case of future history, Biblical prophecy, it happens all the time. The only time the phrase “west wind” occurs in the entire Bible is in reference to a plague—or more precisely, the elimination of a plague: **“Then Yahweh said to Moses,**

'Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.' So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and Yahweh brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them.... So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt." Okay. So far, we have a plague of unprecedented proportions descending upon the nation where the Israelites happen to be living. "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, 'I have sinned against Yahweh your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat Yahweh your God, that He may take away from me this death only.' So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated Yahweh. And Yahweh turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go." (Exodus 10:12-20)

By sending "a very strong west wind," Yahweh removed the plague. Now let's go back to our Syrian VX scenario. What would God do if they actually pushed the button? I submit to you that He would do exactly what he did in Exodus: send "a very strong west wind." Net effect: Israel is spared; Jordan (directly east of Israel) is annihilated.

Just a guess, you understand. Make that one an SF9.

All of this is but a prelude to the fall of the rest of the "gods of the earth," something we have come to group under the umbrella title "Babylon," representing the sum total of man's false worship, religious and otherwise. The few who remain will begin to understand the promise Yahweh made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you."

In summary, let's examine one more cryptic prophecy from Isaiah, one that has not yet been fulfilled: "But they [Judah and Ephraim together, i.e., Israel] shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines [apparently the Gaza Strip] toward the west. Together they shall plunder the people of the East [Jordan]. They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them." (Isaiah 11:14) Whatever else this may entail, it's clear that the "Palestinians" are no longer going to be a thorn in Israel's side. I believe that this is a condition that will persist throughout the Millennium. But when does it start? At the risk of getting ahead of our story, it's entirely possible that a severely depopulated Jordan will become the primary wilderness refuge for the Israelis as they flee from the Antichrist after the middle of the Tribulation, with more hiding out among the ruins of the Gaza Strip. *But the Antichrist is their ally, isn't he? Why would they have to flee?* It's a long story. I'll tell you later.

Arabia is a tough one to figure out. We have seen (in Ezekiel 38:13) that Saudi Arabia, with a few other nations, will lodge diplomatic protests against Gog's belligerence during the opening days of World War III. We have also seen that Jeremiah named several Arabian nations in a list of those who would experience judgment. To recap, **"Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.... Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners; all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; all the kings of Zimri...."** (Jeremiah 25:15-16, 23-24) Because the judgments pronounced extend beyond the actual Babylonian conquest that occasioned the prophecy in the first place, I concluded that these nations (as well as the others on Jeremiah's list, all discussed in the previous chapter) will find themselves on the losing side in the War of Magog.

Despite their diplomatic stance, the Antichrist will know that as a potential threat to Israel (and hence to his own demigod aspirations), Saudi can't be ignored. They've built a sprawling missile base at Sulayyil, about 500 kilometers south of Riyadh, employing a huge staff of Chinese workers installing about 120 CSS2 Dong Feng-3 ballistic missiles and a dozen or more launchers. Each of these missiles can carry three or more nuclear, biological, or chemical warheads. With a range of about 3,500 kilometers, these missiles can reach as far as Libya, Greece, or portions of India—Israel they could hit blindfolded. The Saudis are rumored to have funded Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, so it's not much of a stretch to envision Pakistani nukes atop their Chinese missiles (all paid for with American oil dollars). Therefore, whether or not they actually intend to use their sophisticated weapons against Israel (my guess is that they're not, because they have nothing to gain and everything to lose) the Antichrist will be reticent to take any chances: Saudi Arabia—at least its military installations—will find themselves on the Antichrist's nuclear hit parade.

And yet we find passages like these two in Isaiah that seem to indicate that the nations of the Arabian Peninsula will be among those who in the end turn around and honor Yahweh: **"The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah. All those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of Yahweh. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you. They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory."** (Isaiah 60:6-7) Or how about this? **"Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar**

inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to Yahweh, and declare His praise in the coastlands.” (Isaiah 42:11-12)

This is way more significant than it seems at first glance. Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, the home of that perverse doctrine’s two most revered sites, Mecca and Medina. What’s more, the princes of Saudi have been instrumental in underwriting the financial burden of world Islamic terrorism, a fact to which our geniuses in Washington turn a blind eye in order to keep the black ooze flowing freely. For Saudi to end up honoring Yahweh is kind of like the Vatican announcing they’ve all decided to become Lutherans! It represents a complete about-face. In short, it signals the death of the most vile and destructive pseudo religion on the face of the globe, one that before the bloodbath of World War III held over 1.3 billion souls in spiritual bondage. This is exactly the kind of outcome most Christians would love to see but would never dream was possible. (That’s due to a lack of faith on our part, not to a lack of power on Yahweh’s.) If Arabia turns from Islam to the worship of Yahweh, the mandatory hajj pilgrimage to Mecca—one of the five pillars of Islam—will cease. In short, if you cut off its head, the beast can’t live for long.

Modern Iran is composed primarily of ancient Media, Elam, and Persia. A few chapters back, we discussed the evidence identifying Iran with the nation of Magog, the leading nation of the invasion force whose adventures are detailed so vividly in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Since Magog is a major player in World War III, I half-expected to find a plethora of vituperative prophecies outlining Iran’s demise. I found no such thing. The only nations who are specifically denounced in scripture are the ones whose historic progenitors were antagonistic toward Israel. So the Medes are mentioned only as participants in the overthrow of Babylon. The Persians, partners with the Medes in the Babylonian conquest, are given a bit more press: their eventual ascendancy over their allies to the northwest—and everybody else in the Middle East—earned them a place in Daniel’s prophecies as the second great gentile kingdom. But they were never really an enemy of Israel. They inherited the Land from Babylon and generally treated the Jews well—although there was one close call during the reign of Ahasuerus (a.k.a. Xerxes), detailed in the book of Esther. But that was apparently precipitated by Satanic trickery, not an anti-Israel predisposition. Consequently, scripture has nothing to say about Persia’s specific role in the Last Days.

Likewise, next to nothing is said about Elam. But they must have been part of Israel’s problem at one time, for Jeremiah reports: **“Thus says Yahweh of hosts:**

'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the foremost of their might. Against Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and scatter them toward all those winds; there shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies and before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says Yahweh, 'and I will send the sword after them until I have consumed them. I will set My throne in Elam, and will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says Yahweh. 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,' says Yahweh.' (Jeremiah 49:35-39)

That last phrase, “bring back the captives of Elam,” can be misleading. Some loose English translations take it to mean “restore the fortunes of Elam,” (as in the NIV), but this reading doesn't mesh very well with what immediately preceded it. I would suggest that “captives of Elam” really means “Elam's captives,” i.e., the Jews who were exiled there under Babylon's brutal reign. Consider this parallel passage from Isaiah: **“It shall come to pass in that day that Yahweh shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros [upper Egypt] and Cush [East Africa], from Elam [Southern Iran] and Shinar [Babylon, or Iraq], from Hamath [Syria] and the islands of the sea [most notably, America].”** (Isaiah 11:11) It's clear to me that the imprecation against Elam is a direct result of the shabby treatment the Jews in exile received at the hands of the Elamites.

The bottom line is that for the most part, the nations comprising Iran's heritage had little friction with historic Israel. This explains why Yahweh inspired Ezekiel to use a distinct and ancient name for the region's inhabitants—Magog—when describing the Islamic hordes who would ultimately submit to Satan's command to go and perish on the mountains of Israel.

The aftermath of Gog's invasion of Israel will be a messy, smelly affair. You can't just leave millions upon millions of dead bodies lying around without attracting a few flies. Yahweh, through Ezekiel, describes the whole stinky mess: **“It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog [literally, Gog's hordes].”** (Ezekiel 39:11) Here we have an apparent contradiction. The Dead Sea forms the eastern border of Israel at that point, so how can the burial place be “in Israel” and also “east of the sea?”

There are two possible explanations. First, remember what we covered a few pages back: the area east of the Dead Sea (i.e., Jordan) will be pretty much wiped

out. And these lands will be “owned” by Israel: **“The residue of My people shall plunder [Moab and Ammon], and the remnant of My people shall possess them.”**

(Zephaniah 2:9) So just as dead bodies were always buried “outside the camp,” so will the corpses of Gog and his fallen followers be taken outside for proper disposal.

Maybe. The other alternative to the puzzle is that we have a translation glitch (yes, it does happen.) Although most English translations render it something like the NKJV, the NIV gives us a variant rendering that changes the meaning 180 degrees: **“...in the valley of those who travel east toward the sea.”** Although valleys leading to the Dead Sea are more numerous on the Jordan side, there are a few likely possibilities on the rain-starved western side; my guess is that Hamon Gog could be located in one of the gorges that lead toward Beersheba, south of the Lashon (the peninsula poking out from the eastern shore)—one of the most desolate spots in Israel.

Anyway, **“For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified,”** says the Lord Yahweh. **“They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man’s bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. The name of the city will also be Hamonah [i.e., Horde]. Thus they shall cleanse the land.”** (Ezekiel 39:12-16) Clearing the Land of bodies and processing the equipment and materiel Magog’s armies brought with them will become a boom industry in Israel during the Tribulation, and the people who do the grisly job will become folk heroes of sorts, sort of like our FDNY guys became to us in 2001. The Israelis will apparently have to build a whole new town to house the thousands of workers needed to get the job done—somewhere near the Valley of Hamon Gog. Since Gog’s defeat will have given the Jews a new-found appreciation for the holiness of Yahweh, they will be scrupulous about cleansing the Land, for Yahweh has declared it holy—set apart for His purposes. Every last scrap of human remains must be found and disposed of. I can imagine the search crews scouring the land for bones and body parts, noting the GPS coordinates of each piece they find and flagging the sites for the disposal units that will follow them.

As any forensic anthropologist knows, they won’t be finding whole bodies very long. In a matter of weeks (depending on the time of year), the bodies will have been reduced to skeletons. **“And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord Yahweh, speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: ‘Assemble yourselves and come; gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for**

you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you. You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war,' says the Lord Yahweh." (Ezekiel 39:17-20) Did you ever wonder why God created flies? It was for moments like this. I think the phrase "every sort of bird and...every beast of the field" may refer not only to carrion birds and scavenging mammals, but also to insects and bacteria. Interestingly, the word translated "bird" here (or worse, in the KJV, "feathered fowl") is *tsippowr*, meaning "hopping" (from the primitive root *tsaphar*, "to skip about") hence indicative not so much of vultures as little birds like sparrows—and, I believe, the insects that invariably infest a corpse within hours of death. The bugs of Israel have all received an engraved invitation to the feast.

The bodies won't be the only things being gathered after the unsuccessful invasion. The hordes of Magog will be equipped with the best weapons Iranian oil money can buy. Russian, French, Chinese—even some home-made technology will be left behind. (It's a constant source of fascination to me that the oil-rich Muslim nations, though wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, manufacture very little except for weapons—a legacy of their prophet's pirate past, no doubt—while tiny, beleaguered, resource-starved Israel makes and exports a wide variety of useful and sophisticated products from computer hardware and software, electronic communications and print-graphics technology to the world's best water desalinization equipment. They have the highest ratio of University degrees to population in the world, and fully twelve percent of their workforce holds advanced degrees. Their hundred billion dollar economy exceeds all of their immediate neighbors *combined*. Their per-capita income exceeds the UK, and Israel has well over twice as many scientists and technicians in its workforce per-capita than either Germany or Japan. But despite all this and much, much more, the French Ambassador to England recently intoned, "Israel is nothing but a shitty little country." Excuse his French.)

But I digress—again. In the only vocabulary available to him, Ezekiel described the massive scavenger hunt: **"Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them," says the Lord Yahweh.**" (Ezekiel 39:9-10) Are Magog's armies really going to be using bows, arrows, and spears against Israel? I sincerely doubt it. Ezekiel described what he saw: the weapons of his day. If Yahweh had shown him an Iranian Naze'at-10 450mm rocket in flight or a Zulfiqar main battle tank

(based on the venerable Russian T-72) rumbling through the Negev, what would he have been able to say? Not much. But bows and arrows he knew.

The essence of the prophecy is this: Israel will gather up and use whatever the Horde brings in with them. This in itself is a remarkable commentary on Yahweh's provision. Israel is a very heavy per-capita energy user—on a par with America or Europe. Until the '70s, the nation pursued a program of energy independence based on nuclear power. But since that time, perhaps because of its vulnerability to sabotage, they have abandoned nuclear energy. Today, 98% of Israel's power needs are met through imported fossil fuels, mostly oil (from Mexico, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the former Soviet Union) and coal (from Australia, South Africa, and Columbia). Oil exploration is ongoing (there are some intriguing Biblical clues no one has capitalized upon yet), and some respectable natural gas reserves have recently been discovered offshore.

I mention all that to make the point that Israel has not used wood fires as its basic energy medium in quite some time. They'd have no means for burning wooden weapons for fuel even if they had them—the stocks of AK-47 rifles, for example, couldn't be used to generate electricity or power a bus without some serious infrastructure changes. But the Israelis *could* use oil—precisely the commodity that a modern army runs on. Jet-A for aircraft; diesel for tanks and trucks; gasoline for other vehicles. The Magog federation will come well-equipped with Iranian and Iraqi fuels—knowing that Israel doesn't have vast reserves of oil they can steal. Ezekiel is telling us that the Israelis won't have to import petroleum for seven years after the invasion—which is a good thing, because much of the world's fuel production capacity will be crippled during the war.

Another prophet sheds more light on what's happening: **“Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. (Zechariah 14:14)** It's safe to say that fuel won't be the only thing the Israelis will appropriate from the dead Muslim horde. They will systematically collect and utilize everything of value. Equipment, food, weapons, tools, clothing, vehicles—*everything*. This implies, as I have said, that the destruction of Magog's armies within Israel will come about as a result of something a wee bit less destructive than atomic bombs. If the fuel is to survive while the soldiers die, Yahweh is going to have to be very selective about where He sends fire and brimstone and where He sends floods and hail.

A few of the commentators who have gotten close enough to the subject to analyze this have concluded that the war of Magog must come *before the beginning* of the Tribulation. That's because the Jews are seen still using the leftovers seven years later, and the final advent of Christ, they assume, must change everything—*immediately*. I, on the other hand (because I see the

Antichrist's grubby hands all over this thing) have placed World War III somewhere during the first half of the Tribulation, meaning (horrors!) that the Israelis will still be burning the devil's gas a couple of years into Yahshua's reign. How can that be? Isn't Yahshua going to sweep in and make everything instantly wonderful? Isn't utopia—a sort of Greenpeace heaven where nobody burns anything that might pollute the atmosphere or contribute to global warming—going to instantaneously arrive the moment Yahshua's right foot touches down on the Mount of Olives?

No. Sorry. It doesn't work that way. Remember what Isaiah said about Yahshua's Millennial reign? "The *government* will be upon His shoulders...." At the risk of getting ahead of the story (again), let me explain. Christ's kingdom on earth will be populated by mortal human beings—the Tribulation saints, consisting of newly enlightened Jews, post-rapture "Christians," (who I call the Fellowship of Repentant Laodicea) and their children. As they follow Yahshua's example and instructions—His governance—they will gradually see the earth healed before their very eyes. But *they* will do the work of rebuilding world's infrastructure. *Work?* Yes. That's where the fun is. Even back in the Garden of Eden, Adam had "work" to do. (It's us who turned work into drudgery.) Of course, maybe it's not quite fair to call it "work." Part of what it means to be made in the image of God is that we are creative beings, just like our Father. He has put within us a drive to bring order to the chaos we see around us, for He is a God of order. When we search for knowledge, build great structures, compose music, raise our families—or just clean the toilets and mow the lawn—we are not "working." We are simply following our divinely implanted creative instincts. God won't wave a magic wand and do all of this for us, like Cinderella's fairy godmother—not as long as people still inhabit this world in their corruptible, mortal bodies. The Millennial reign of Christ will teach us what we could have had all along if only we'd all walked with Yahshua all along.

In other words, I see no problem with the Jews continuing to use the war materiel left behind by Gog several years into the Millennium. I have a feeling it will last just long enough, like the oil and flour of Elijah's widowed landlady, to transition Israel into a bright new tomorrow.

In closing, I'd like to revisit a Psalm by Asaph, who prays that the future enemies of Israel will suffer the same ugly fates as those who troubled her in the past. **"Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head.**

They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones.” There have been alliances against God’s people before, but never on the scale of today’s militant Islam. **“They have said, ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’ For they have consulted together with one consent.”** In times past, the point of attacking Israel has invariably been run-of-the-mill nationalistic lust: the invader wanted its wealth or lands (it’s strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa has always made it a target), or Israel just happened to be in the path of a ruler’s grand territorial ambitions (as in the case of Alexander the Great). Even when Rome came in and bludgeoned the place within an inch of its life—twice within seventy years—the point of killing Jews was not merely *killing Jews*. It was putting down rebellion. The Romans just wanted their *pax Romana*, their nice, obedient, profitable, low-maintenance, tax-paying empire. If the Gauls had behaved like the Jews, they would have gotten the same brutal treatment. But Islam is a different kind of beast: Muslims want to **“cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more....”** That’s their only motivation. They hate Yahweh, so they hate His people. They don’t even know why.

Asaph then gets down to specifics. **“They form a confederacy against You: The tents of Edom [Jordan] and the Ishmaelites [Read: Egypt—the Sinai Peninsula. Note that according to Genesis 36:3, Esau (Edom) married Ishmael’s daughter—the two families go *way* back together]; Moab [Jordan] and the Hagrites [an Aramaean, read: Syrian, confederation located in Jordan]; Gebal [Byblos, i.e., Lebanon], Ammon [Jordan], and Amalek [northern Sinai]; Philistia [Gaza Strip] with the inhabitants of Tyre [Lebanon]; Assyria [Syria and Iraq] also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot [Jordan]....”** Today, Muslim territories, one and all.

The Psalmist now prays that they’ll all meet with a bloody end: **“Deal with them as with Midian, as with Sisera, as with Jabin at the Brook Kishon, who perished at En Dor, who became as refuse on the earth....”** Asaph’s example is the story of Deborah and Barak, recorded in Judges 4 and 5, where the army of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, was wiped out to the last man—900 iron chariots: all toast. Sisera, the commander, fled the scene and hid with a lady named Jael, who gave him a nice big glass of milk, made him all cozy under a warm blanket until he fell asleep—and then hammered a tent peg through his skull. Get the picture?

“Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb, yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, ‘Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God for a possession....’” Oreb and Zeeb were Midianite princes whose vast army (described in Judges 7:12 as “numerous as locusts” with “innumerable” camels—later clarified as a force 135,000 strong) were routed by Gideon’s little 300-man commando force (with a bit of help from Yahweh). Oreb and Zeeb lost their heads over the matter—literally. Judges 8 continues the saga: the Midianite Kings, Zebah and Zalmunna,

now down to their last 15,000 troops, were pursued through the countryside by Gideon's little band. Gideon personally put them to the sword and, in a move as prophetic as it is ironic, took the ornaments that were hung around the necks of the Midianites' camels—crescent moons, the very Islamic symbol under which the hordes of Magog will march to their similar doom.

“O my God, make them like the whirling dust, like the chaff before the wind! As the fire burns the woods, and as the flame sets the mountains on fire, so pursue them with Your tempest, and frighten them with Your storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O Yahweh. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth.” (Psalm 83) Notice how closely the Psalmist's description of the battle—whirling dust, fire and flame, tempest and storm—parallels Ezekiel's play by play account of the battle of Magog. And notice that Asaph isn't really praying for their “conversion” here. He wants these armies of Satan to realize before they die that they backed the wrong god. The “Most High over all the earth” has a name, and it's not Allah. It's Yahweh.