

## Reading Guide for Ezekiel 38-39

Chapters 38 and 39 comprise a single unit built around the theme of the Lord's protection of His people and their city. At the time this oracle was given, Judah had just suffered a devastating judgment in the form of Babylon's conquest of their land and the destruction of Jerusalem (in 586 B.C.). This oracle turns to a more optimistic future, where God's people dwell securely. Just how secure they are is powerfully illustrated in the description of Gog, a ruler from the north, who gathers with him a large army of many nations in order to attack the dwelling place of God's people. Despite Gog's overwhelming forces, the Lord defeats them utterly.

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### Message-reception Formula (38:1)

The first section begins with a command to prophesy to Gog, indicating this is an oracle against him. It is the Lord Himself who will lead Gog and his forces toward the mountains of Zion (v. 4). In addition, Gog will come up with many nations (vv. 5-6). Finally, Gog is told to await the Lord's summons until the people return to the land and dwell securely (vv. 7-9).

### Gog's Assault on the Mountains of Israel (38:2-9)

Command to Prophecy (vv. 2-3a)

Oracle to Gog (vv. 3b-9)

*Quotation Formula (v. 3b)*

*Challenge Formula: The Lord Against Gog (v. 3c)*

*The Lord will Lead Gog and His Army to the Mountains of Israel (v. 4)*

*The Nations Assembled with Gog (vv. 5-6)*

*Gog to Await the Summons of the Lord to Attack the Land (vv. 7-9)*

The next oracle continues the address to Gog, with additional details. It begins with a glimpse into Gog's own evil intentions for the attack (vv. 10-13), something that was not expressed in the previous oracle. Also included is a description of Gog's assault (vv. 14-16). Finally, we are given the details of how he will be defeated (vv. 18-22). Twice in this section, we see that the Lord's purpose in delivering His people is to reveal His holiness.

### Gog's Evil Intent (38:10-13)

Oracle to Gog

*Quotation Formula (v. 10a)*

*Gog's Evil Intentions (vv. 10b-12)*

*The Nations who Hope to Benefit (v. 13)*

### A Description of Gog's Assault (38:14-16)

Command to Prophecy (v. 14a)

Oracle to Gog (vv. 14b-16)

*Quotation Formula (v. 14b)*

*Address to Gog Concerning His Assault (vv. 14c-16a)*

*Specification of Time (v. 16b)*

*Divine Purpose: Recognition and the Sanctity of God's Name (v. 16c)*

### Reference to Past Prophecy (38:17)

Oracle to Gog

*Quotation Formula (v. 17a)*

*Rhetorical Question Referencing Gog as Fulfilment of Prophecy (v. 17b)*

### A Description of Gog's Defeat (38:18-23)

*The Rousing of the Lord's Wrath (vv. 18-19a)*

*A Great Earthquake (vv. 19b-20)*

*A Sword Summoned (v. 21)*

*Pestilence and Bloodshed (v. 22a)*

*Flooding Rain, Hailstones, Fire, and Brimstone (v. 22a)*  
*Divine Purpose: Recognition and Sanctity of His Name (v. 23a)*  
*Recognition Formula (v. 23b)*

This next section recaps much of what was described in 38:2-9 with a repetition of the challenge formula and the Lord's summons to Gog. However, where that section lacked the outcome of his defeat, this section details that Gog and his armies will be defeated on the mountains of Israel and his hordes will be left as food for the birds and the beasts.

**Gog's Defeat on the Mountains of Israel (39:1-5)**

Command to Prophecy (v. 1a)

Oracle to Gog (vv. 1b-5)

*Quotation Formula (v. 1b)*

*Challenge Formula: The Lord Against Gog (v. 1c)*

*The Lord will Lead Gog to the Mountains of Israel (v. 2)*

*Description of Gog's Defeat (vv. 3-5)*

More additional details are added to Gog's judgment in this section. Magog, spoken of in 38:2 as the land of Gog, is included in the judgment. Additional emphasis is also given for the divine purpose for Gog's judgment and Israel's salvation.

**Fire Against Magog and the Coastlands (39:6)**

*Pronouncement of Judgment (v. 6a)*

*Recognition Formula (v. 6b)*

**Vindication of the Lord's Name (39:7)**

*Divine Purpose: Recognition and the Sanctity of His Name (v. 7a)*

*Recognition Formula (expanded) (v. 7b)*

**Affirmation of Gog's Defeat/Reference to Past Prophecy (39:8)**

*Divine Affirmation (v. 8a)*

*Reference to Past Prophecy Fulfilled (v. 8b)*

The defeat of Gog and all his horde inevitably leaves a massive number of people dead. This section describes the burial of Gog's defeated army for the purposes of the purification of the land.

**Aftermath 1: Destruction of Gog's Weapons (39:9-10)**

**Aftermath 2: Burial of the Army for the Purification of the Land (39:11-16)**

The command to the birds and the beasts to partake of the sacrificial feast of the slain picks up from the section that ended in 39:5. Gog's army that had appeared to be so threatening has now met an ignominious end. This is followed by another statement of divine purpose (vv. 21-22). The Lord will be glorified as the nations see the judgment that befell Gog and his horde. Israel too will recognize the Lord's power through His judgment.

**Command to the Birds and Beasts to Gather for the Sacrificial Feast (39:17-20)**

Command to Prophecy (v. 17abc)

Oracle to the Birds and Beasts (vv. 17d-20)

**Divine Purpose: Recognition and the Sanctity of His Name (vv. 21-22)**

*The Nations will See the Lord's Judgment (v. 21)*

*The House of Israel will Know Yahweh is God (v. 22)*

This final section serves as an epilogue of sorts, returning to the theme of restoration that has been the subject of Ezekiel's oracles to the exiles since chapter 33. The people were exiled from their land because of their sin, but they will return by God's mercy.

**Israel's Sin as the Reason for their Judgment and Exile (39:23-24)**

**Restoration and Forgiveness (39:25-29)**