

ANALYSIS: Jewish Gog and Magog vs. Christian Gog and Magog

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Described in Ezekiel 38-39, the War of Gog and Magog is a concept shared by Judaism and Christianity which refers to the end-of-day conflict in the New Testament Book of Revelation.

This Christian perspective was clearly evident when tele-evangelist Pat Robertson made a special appearance on the 700 Club in February 2022 and declared that Russian President Vladimir Putin was “being compelled by God” to invade Ukraine in order to follow God’s plan to instigate “armageddon.” Citing the Book of Ezekiel, Robertson stated that Putin’s plan was to create a land bridge via Turkey in order to lead a multi-nation army against Israel.

In Jewish eschatology, Gog and Magog lead a confederation of enemies who rise against Israel. The war will be devastating but the armies of Gog and Magog will ultimately be defeated by the king of Israel, ushering in the Messianic era.

Rabbi Pinchas Winston, a prolific end-of-day author and speaker, explained the Jewish perspective.

“The war is like a final pre-Messiah clean-up, which is why we can mitigate it,” Rabbi Winston said. “It depends on how effective we were until then in bringing people to the One God and doing mitzvot.”

“One purpose of Gog and Magog is that when it is over, evil will be entirely defeated,” he said. “There will be no more evil in the world. Since Mount Sinai, the Jewish people have been rectifying certain things since creation. We are preparing the world so that it gets to the point where everyone says that they recognize the Biblical God as

One. We never completed the task so Gog and Magog is the final point where everything comes together.”

Rabbi Winston emphasized that the final rectifications also include changes within the nation of Israel. He compared it to King David’s battle against Goliath.

“Goliath comes from the word ‘galut’ (exile),” Rabbi Winston said. “King David defeated Goliath and subsequently the Philistines but the defeat had a huge impact on the Israelites. Many of the Jews who saw Goliath being defeated so dramatically had a sudden blinding revelation of faith in God. It was cataclysmic for them.”

“The same is true of the War of God and Magog,” Rabbi Winston said. “It will bring many from the nations to believe in the One God. But there will also be many Jews who will be deeply shocked and suddenly believe in God. We saw this after the Six Day War when even the secular Jews in Tel Aviv danced in the streets, describing the military victory as the Hand of God.”

Rabbi Winston related this to what was taught about Gog and Magog by the Polish rabbi Israel Meir Kagan (1838-1933) who revealed before he died that the war would be fought in three stages. The first stage that Rabbi Kagan experienced in his lifetime was WWI, which began in 1914. Rabbi Winston believes that WWII was the second stage.

“That was so shocking to the nations that they declared Israel as a Jewish state,” Rabbi Winton said. “It was even more shocking for many Jews who, even though they didn’t become religious, suddenly believed in the prophecies about God returning the exiles. The final stage of Gog and Magog will be so shocking to the nations that they will declare God as One.”

Ezekiel’s description of the final war is horrifying but Rabbi Winston explained that Jewish tradition related to this with equanimity.

“It depends on our merits, whether we have served God with the commandments faithfully,” Rabbi Winston said. “If we have not, then it will be horrible.”

He cited a parable from the 18th century Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. “It is like a king who gets angry at his son and sentences him to be stoned to death. The son repents but the father cannot repeal a royal decree. So he orders the stones to be shattered into pieces before being thrown at his son. It is not pleasant but the son does not suffer nearly as much.”

Rabbi Winston suggested that as descendants of Esau, Christians emphasize the aspect of judgment to a degree that Jews, as descendants of Jacob, do not.

“Esau was entirely red, the color of judgment, which is why Isaac, who embodied judgment, favored him,” Rabbi Winston said. “They are focused on Heaven and Hell as a result of a final judgment. They talk about judgment day as the culmination of the battle with Satan. They believe in Apocalypse. Judaism does not believe in this level of judgment. Jews do not believe that God will ever judge the world and destroy it.”

A different perspective was offered by John Enarson, the Christian Relations Director for Cry For Zion. Enarson also noted a difference in how Jews and Christians view this aspect of the end-of-days.

“Christianity is using the same Biblical scenario as Judaism for Gog and Magog but I think we paint a more dire image,” Enarson said. “For Christians, it is an apocalyptic nuclear holocaust. But Jews see past that and see the final redemption that comes after.”

Enarson noted that both religions base their eschatology on the same Biblical literature though they come to different conclusions.

“I think the difference comes from Christians trying to be very honest readers of the Bible,” Enarson said. “Jews do to and the prophecies are disturbing any way you read them. But as the ultimate judgment,

it's more fearful for the nations than it is for Israel. We see Gog and Magog as God's judgment on the nations. It is also a judgment on Israel but not a final judgment."

He also noted that according to the prophecies, the final stages of the war will be fought in the Holy Land, making it a far more local concern to the Jewish people.

"In Christianity, we have the concept of the Rapture," he explained. "Some Christians believe that they will be raptured before the beginning of the War of Gog and Magog. It makes speaking about the war a spectator sport. Pop media has adopted the Christian perspective of Gog and Magog, sensationalizing it while at the same time remaining almost uninvolved in a direct way."

Enarson described a different approach for Christians that was depicted by Zechariah as being the aftermath of Gog and Magog for Israel-friendly nations.

All who survive of all those nations that came up against *Yerushalayim* shall make a pilgrimage year by year to bow low to the King lord of Hosts and to observe the festival of *Sukkot*. [Zechariah 14:16](#)

"Ideally, the Christian perspective should be based on the survivors from the nations coming to celebrate Sukkot in Jerusalem with the Jews," Enarson said. "This should be the model guiding how they view Gog and Magog in the future and also how they relate to Israel in the present."

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