

[Timing Gog-Magog: Identifying Rosh](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

In this series of articles called [Timing Gog-Magog](#), we are looking to the Bible to discover when the great battle the prophet Ezekiel described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is going to take place.

We've identified the nations in the Gog-Magog Battle as a coalition of nations against the nation of Israel. Ezekiel states that the invading coalition consists of nations from the ancient territories of Rosh, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Gomer and Beth-torarmah ([Ezek. 38:1-6](#)). We've also gone to the history books and tracked down what the modern equivalents are to Ezekiel's list of ancient national lands. The nations that inhabit those lands now are:

1. Rosh = Russia
2. Magog = Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan (and possibly Afghanistan)
3. Meshech + Tubal + Gomer + Beth-togarmah = Turkey (and possibly Azerbaijan, Armenia)
4. Persia = Iran
5. Ethiopia = Sudan
6. Put = Libya (and possibly Algeria, Tunisia)

Before continuing on with looking at the different views in the timing of the Gog-Magog Battle, though, I want to revisit Rosh being claimed as modern-day Russia. Because Russia doesn't seem to fit into the Islamic national identity that the other coalition nations now share, the historical debate over the identity of Rosh, and the questions readers have been asking, it is important to identifying the timing of the Gog-Magog Battle that we look at why Rosh is indeed properly identified as Russia. We'll look at the research given by Dr. Ron Rhodes in his authoritative book on the topic called *Northern Storm Rising* (Harvest House Publishing, 2008), and I'll add some of my own points.

The Translations

Looking at [Ezekiel 38:3](#) in the New International Version, the King James Version, the English Standard Version and others — the word "Rosh" is missing from the list. If one looks at the New King James Version, New American Standard Version, Amplified Version, the Darby Translation and others — Rosh is present in the list of nations. Why the differences in translation?

The difference, Dr. Rhodes reports, is the challenge for the translators to interpret the word "Rosh" or "Ros" as a noun based on the actual land, or as an adjective based on the Hebrew word "Rosh" which means "head," "top," "summit," or "chief" (p.105). The NAS translators went with the noun form of "Rosh," while the NIV translators went with the adjective form. Translations based on the Greek Septuagint (LXX) follow the noun form, while those based on the Latin Vulgate follow the adjective form.

Support for Rosh = Russia

While I love studying in the NIV, for the following reasons I believe that the noun interpretation of "Rosh" as a distinct land that is modern-day Russia is the valid interpretation.

- 1) Various Hebrew scholars such as G.A. Cook believe the noun form of "Rosh" is true to the original Hebrew (p.106).
- 2) The Septuagint (LXX) translation predates the Latin Vulgate by 700 years and is only three centuries removed from the time of Ezekiel, making it a translation more contemporary with Ezekiel.
- 3) Tenth Century Byzantine writers such as Ibn-Fosslan identified a group of Scythian's dwelling in the northern parts of Taurus upon the river Volga as the Ros (p.108).
- 4) Ninth Century B.C. Assyrian texts that predate Ezekiel's time also refer to the Rosh or Rashu (p.108).

- 5) Even farther back in time as early as 2600 B.C., ancient Egyptian and other Middle-Eastern B.C. inscriptions and texts such as in Sargon's inscriptions, in a cylinder by Assurbanipal, in an annal by Sennacherib, and five times in Ugaritic tablets record the existence of the Rosh/Rash/Reshu people (p.109).
- 6) The early Byzantine Church claimed that the Ros peoples are the people who live far north of Greece in the area today we call Russia (p.109).
- 7) [Ezekiel 39:1-2](#) claims Rosh to be *"from the remotest parts of the north."* No other nation exists more directly north and is more remote than modern-day Russia.
- 8) Current news reports repeatedly show that Russia has very quickly solidified economic and military ties with the nations involved in the Gog-Magog coalition. Russia is building a nuclear reactor in Iran and arming Islamic nations. Russia has also made known their expressed interest in getting a foot-hold into the Middle East to help control its vast oil reserves. Israel's newly found gas deposits are a direct threat to Russia's hold over the natural gas supply line.
- 9) Russia nationally has a long and historic violent streak of Anti-Semitism that God won't leave unresponded to.
- 10) When all arguments for or against Russia as being Rosh are put on the table, pure "Vulcan" logic would dictate that Russia can be the only logical descendent of the Rosh people.

We will continue exploring more views on the specific timing of the Gog-Magog Battle in the next installment of this series titled [During the Tribulation](#).