

The Post-Rapture Gap

When the rapture happens, will the tribulation take place a few days or weeks later? I don't think so. I believe the Bible gives us strong evidence that there will be a gap of at least several decades between the rapture and the tribulation.

One of the passages where can find this is Ezekiel's description of the end-times invasion of Gog, which is found in Ezekiel 38-39. This prophecy hasn't been fulfilled yet, but it will come to pass before the tribulation begins.

How do we know that Ezekiel's prophecy doesn't happen after the millennium? Well, when Gog attacks Jerusalem *after* the millennium in Revelation 20:8-9, he brings people from all nations and his entire army is destroyed by fire. When Gog attacks Israel in Ezekiel 38 the situation is different. In that invasion Gog only brings people from a few nations and the rest of the world condemns his actions. On top of that, Ezekiel 39:2 says that a sixth of his army survives. This means Ezekiel and Revelation are describing two different events. The nations that are involved are different and the outcome is different as well.

How do we know that Gog's invasion doesn't happen during the tribulation? It's because Israel will spend seven years burning the invader's weapons. The reason that poses a problem is because halfway through the tribulation period the antichrist will attack Israel, and those who don't flee for their lives and go into hiding will be killed. This means Israel isn't going to have the opportunity to burn weapons for seven years during the tribulation.

The reason I bring all of this up is because Ezekiel tells us that Gog will invade Israel with horses and ancient weapons:

Ezekiel 38:3-4: "And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers

and shields, all of them handling swords:"

Ezekiel 38:15: "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:"

Ezekiel 39:3: "And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand."

Ezekiel 39:9: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: 39:10 So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD."

Not only does the passage tell us that the battle will be fought with horses and horsemen and bows and arrows and spears, it emphasizes the fact that the weapons are made of wood by saying the Jews will spend seven years burning them! It even says that when this battle takes place the Jews will be heating their homes by going into the forests and chopping down trees, but once Gog invades they will burn his weapons instead.

That means this battle is most definitely *not* fought with modern weapons. It's fought with ancient weapons! Many people claim that Ezekiel was unable to describe modern weapons and therefore used ancient terms, but we need to realize that *most prophecies in the Bible don't mention weapons at all*. The Bible contains many prophecies against many nations, and nearly all of them *have nothing to say about the weapons those battles will be fought with*. After all, the details about what weapons will be used are completely irrelevant! For example:

- Isaiah 15 says that Moab will be laid waste. No weapons are mentioned.
- Isaiah 17 says that Damascus will no longer be a city. No weapons are mentioned.
- Isaiah 19 says that a civil war will break out in Egypt. No weapons are mentioned.
- Jeremiah 48 is a long prophecy against Moab. It doesn't mention weapons.
- Jeremiah 49 has prophecies against the Ammonites, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, and Elam. None of them mention weapons.
- Ezekiel 25 has prophecies against the Ammonites and Edom. There is no mention of weapons.
- Ezekiel 29 is a prophecy against Egypt. No weapons are mentioned.
- Ezekiel 35 is a prophecy against Mount Seir. No weapons are mentioned.

As you can see, there are many prophecies against nations that don't mention weapons at all. Ezekiel's prophecy about Gog is one of the rare prophecies that mention weapons. If this invasion will be fought with modern weapons then it would have been easy to not mention weapons at all – which is what the Bible usually does. However, the text doesn't do that. Instead it emphasizes the fact that the battle will be fought with ancient weapons that *will be set on fire and used for fuel because they're made of wood*. Modern weapons are *not* made of wood! No one can burn a pile of guns in an oven to heat their home.

God could have easily not mentioned weapons at all, but that's not what He did. He's also quite capable of describing modern weapons to Ezekiel in a way that he could understand, but He didn't do that either. Instead these chapters are clear that *this battle will be fought with ancient weapons*.

The passage gives us another interesting clue. The reason Gog-Magog invades Israel is *not* for religious reasons. No, it's because Gog wants Israel's supply of cattle:

Ezekiel 38:11-13: “And thou shalt say, I will go

up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"

When this invasion happens Israel will be dwelling in safety. The nation will no longer have protective walls or gates. Israel is going to be *completely* at peace! Gog will then decide to invade Israel to *steal her supply of cows*, and will use horses and ancient wooden weapons to do it.

Is Israel at peace today? Absolutely not. The country is constantly on high alert due to the ceaseless attacks she experiences from her enemies. Israel's cities are protected by walls that are *hundreds of miles long*. Modern Israel is *definitely* not a nation without walls! On top of that, her enemies are threatening her with modern weapons, not ancient ones – and none of the conflict in the Middle East is centered on Israel's supply of cattle.

In order for this passage to be fulfilled, civilization needs to collapse and modern technology needs to be lost. (It's quite possible this may happen shortly after the rapture.) The world is going to be in a very primitive state when Gog invades. The reason the end-times nations will use ancient weapons to fight one another is because that's all they're going to have. The reason wars will be waged over cattle is because food will be a precious commodity in the end times.

When Gog invades, Israel's situation will be radically different from what it is today. At that time Israel will no longer

feel threatened by anyone. Her protective walls will be gone and she will be both careless and wealthy. That means enough time must pass between now and Gog's invasion to allow modern technology to disappear and Israel to feel so secure that she no longer needs any protective walls. Once the battle is over Israel will spend 7 years burning Gog's weapons as fuel, because modern technology will be gone and heating homes with electricity won't be an option.

That makes me think there will be a long gap between the rapture and the tribulation. It's going to take more than a week or two to transition from the world that we have today to a world where technology is gone, and Israel is so safe that the nation's protective walls are no longer needed. When the world is collapsing because technology is gone, *no one is going to feel safe*. If Israel is safe and secure then that means a lot of time has passed since the end of life as we know it – enough time to allow the world to stabilize. That's going to take a lot of time.

My guess is it will be at least 40 years. That's how long God is going to make Egypt desolate:

Ezekiel 29:10-12: "Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries."

This prophecy has never been fulfilled. For reasons outside the scope of this paper, I believe it will be fulfilled in the events surrounding the rapture. This is a pre-tribulation event! Something terrible is going to happen to Egypt, and both the nation and its cities will be abandoned for *forty years*.

There's also the fact that in the end times the greatest and

most powerful city in the world is Babylon (a city that only exists as a tourist attraction today). At some point Babylon will need to become the center of commerce and political power. That's going to take a long time as well.

The gap between the rapture and the tribulation isn't going to be short. I believe it's going to be quite long. The clues are all there.