

Gog and Magog: Destroyed on the Mountains of Israel?

Joel Richardson

The infamous “Gog” and his hordes of Ezekiel 38-39 are one and the same as the Antichrist, or “Beast” figure of the New Testament. Of course, many students and teachers of prophecy disagree with this view. Among the primary arguments used to support the two being different, one argument in particular, although widely accepted, is very easy to dismantle.

This particular argument holds that Gog and his hordes will be killed literally and very specifically on the “mountains of Israel,” whereas Antichrist and his armies will specifically be killed either in the Valley of Jezreel, near Megiddo, or the valley of Jehoshaphat just outside Jerusalem, depending on who you ask. As such, it is claimed, the two eschatological figures and their armies cannot be the same.

This argument was popularized by Hebrew scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his book, *Footsteps of the Messiah*. According to Fruchtenbaum, the prophetic description of the destruction of Gog and his hordes “upon the mountains of Israel”, means that they will literally die exclusively on top of the actual mountains of modern day Israel. Numerous students of prophecy have since followed this line of argumentation. Nathan Jones of Lamb and Lion Ministries, for example, says of the Battle of Gog of Magog and the Battle of Armageddon, the following:

The locations described for the two battles do not match. Armageddon takes place in a valley — the Valley of Jezreel by the plain of Megiddo (Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chron. 35:22; Zech. 12:11). Ezekiel 38:8 describes the Gog-Magog Battle taking place on the mountains — the "mountains of Israel."

Numerous other prophecy teachers and students could be cited making similar statements. The problem with this view is that the term, “the mountains of Israel” is simply an expression that refers to the whole land of Israel. If we examine the greater context of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, where the term “the mountains of Israel” is used several times, then this becomes very clear. Only two chapters prior, for example, God commands Ezekiel to prophesy to “the mountains of Israel” but then He goes on to define exactly what He means by that expression:

“Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD... Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the forsaken cities which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of the nations which are round about”... Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys... 'I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. —Ezekiel 36:1,4,6,10

So to be clear, when God, says, “mountains of Israel,” He is referring to:

- The hills of Israel
- The ravines of Israel
- The valleys of Israel
- The formerly devastated ruins of Israel
- The formerly devastated cities of Israel
- The “land of Israel”
- The “whole house of Israel”

The phrase “mountains of Israel” is simply another way of referring to all of Israel. There can be no question that the LORD here uses “the mountains of Israel” as a synecdoche to refer to the entirety of the land of Israel as well as its people.

A similar example of synecdoche can be seen in an expression frequently used in modern times with reference to the United States. One might say, for example, that freedom is celebrated “all across the fruited plains.” “The fruited plains” is not a reference exclusively to the plains of the United States. It is a reference to the entire United States. It is an expression that includes the forests, the deserts, and the mountainous regions, as well as the cities, the plains, and the coastlands, etc. In no way would any American hear this expression and understand it with such a wooden literalism as to only mean the actual plains of America. Likewise, neither is the phrase, “the mountains of Israel” only referring to the mountains of Israel alone.

But if the above passage from Ezekiel 36, which so clearly contextualizes the actual meaning of the phrase “mountains of Israel” is not sufficient to prove that the LORD was not speaking exclusively of Israel’s mountains, then it would seem that Ezekiel 39:5 would have put to the issue to rest a long time ago.

There, God states outright that Gog will fall, not on a mountain, but specifically, “in the open field”:

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog... You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.
(Ezekiel 39:1,5)

Obviously, Gog cannot die both in an open field and on top of a mountain. This would be a contradiction.

In conclusion then, any effort to argue that Gog cannot be the Antichrist because one is destroyed in the Valley of Jezreel near Megiddo, while the other is destroyed “on the mountains of Israel” is seen to be a faulty argument not rooted in a proper understanding of the greater context of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

In the end, the evidence for Gog being one and the same with the Biblical Antichrist is overwhelming. As we draw ever so much closer to the actual days when this prophecy is fulfilled, it is essential that students of God’s word pay very careful attention to what He has so clearly stated on these matters. As Jesus said to His disciples, “behold I have told you ahead of time.”