

Coming Soon: The One Day War

Current Events are Worrisome

Western European energy policies have put these countries in a dangerous place. Their dependence upon Russia for oil and gas, weather conditions and power plant closures will make for a long, cold, dark and expensive winter. With residents and industries starving for energy, will the leaders respond with wisdom, integrity and courage, or otherwise? Will other factors make things even worse?

Russia has plenty of gas to meet the needs of Western Europe, but uses it to further its territorial and political ambitions (e.g. Ukraine) while profiting economically. It manipulates the European leaders. Iran uses the proceeds from oil sales to pursue the destruction of Israel and the Western world. Iran's nuclear weapons development continues even as it dangles a revived nuclear "deal" before the gullible European and American leaders. Turkey is nominally a member of NATO, but seems to drawing closer to Russia.

Israel has large off-shore natural gas reserves that might help Europe, but it has not been able (or willing?) to do much for Europe. America's national energy policy and foreign policy are a mess. America has taken a wrong turn and the country is now an inadequate supplier of energy for Europe and a questionable ally for Israel.

These all suggest that the war against Israel, described by the prophet Ezekiel around 2,600 years ago, may be right around the corner. When he wrote this prophecy (following God's direct instructions), the nation of Israel did not exist. But the nation of Israel was restored in 1948. The Bible book of Ezekiel (chapters 38 and 39) describes an upcoming one-day war in which Iran, Turkey, Libya, and Russia will team up with other nations to attack Israel.

The Bible also tells of the upcoming End Times event (the Rapture) where all believers in Jesus Christ are instantly taken up to Heaven by Him, protecting them from the horrors of the seven-year Tribulation. But the Bible does not provide an explicit timeline for the sequencing of the Ezekiel 38 war relative to the Rapture.

All of this is occurring in a time of massive corruption within the essential institutions of modern civilization (e.g., government, judiciary, medicine, science, business, education, military, organized religion and communications).

Though the Rapture and Ezekiel 38 War each take just one day (or less), they will have world-wide impact. They will come suddenly; current world conditions and trends suggest that will be soon. Many people will die during these events- if they have not already accepted Jesus as savior, they won't get a second chance. Billions of people will be left behind after the Rapture to face the terrors of the Tribulation; they will have a very limited-time opportunity to turn to Jesus.

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That's the reason for the "Tribulation Pilgrims' Progress" series of novels. My premise is that reader-friendly novels with an interesting storyline are an effective way to teach about the End Times Bible prophecies and how they are connected to us and the era in which we live. I hope you will enjoy "Twilight of the Church Age" and "The Great New Deal" even as you gain understanding about the significance of these prophecies to our time and your future. More information on the books is available at www.markctredecim.com.

The End Times Events from the Bible

The War. Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 describe the upcoming one-day war, with Iran, Turkey, Libya, Russia (and some lesser nations) teaming up to attack Israel. The Bible describes how God intervenes in this war, shielding Israel and bringing massive destruction upon the powerful attacking forces.

The modern nation of Israel has a great win-loss record in the several wars since it was established in 1948 (it is undefeated). It is believed to have dozens of nuclear weapons, a capable air force and air defense system. Israel also historically has had close ties with the United States (generally considered the most powerful country in the world).

Today, Iran, Libya and Turkey do have close relationships with Russia. Considering all this, would these four nations really dare to attack Israel? That may seem unlikely now, but their military planners and autocratic leaders may already have developed such a plan, "just in case, for just the right time." The current weakness of Western leaders may seem to offer the opportunity to implement this plan.

One powerful motive- preservation of the current European dependency on oil and natural gas from Russia and the Middle East. Another major motive is the antisemitic dogma of the attackers.

But why launch such an attack when the Bible tells how badly it will turn out for them? The leaders of these nations may not be aware of the prophecy. Either way, they don't believe it- why worry about a 2,600-year-old prophecy telling of such an unimaginable defeat?

If they believed this Bible prophecy, they wouldn't be running their countries as they are. Instead, they would see their need to repent, turn to Jesus as savior, and turn away from their current paths. Have you seen or heard reports of that happening among the leaders of Russia, Iran, Libya and Turkey?

The Rescue. The Bible tells of the upcoming event that we call the Rapture, where all believers in Jesus Christ are instantly taken up to Heaven by Him, protecting them from the horrors of the seven-year Tribulation described in the Bible.

Revelation chapters four and five describe a brief Interlude between the Rapture and the Tribulation, as all of Heaven glorifies God and celebrates the qualifications of Jesus to launch the judgments of the Tribulation. We don't know the duration of this heavenly event from the perspective of those still on the Earth, but it seems to be relatively brief.

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The Horror. The Interlude will be a terrible time on Earth. Human society will be greatly disrupted by the removal of all Christians in the Rapture (on top of the “usual” wars, crime, plagues, natural disasters and famine). Even so, the Interlude is just a pale preview of the horrific Tribulation.

The exact moment when the Interlude ends and the Tribulation begins may not be clear to humans left behind on the Earth. But in Heaven, that moment is very clear- Jesus opens the first seal in the scroll given to Him by God the Father and launches the Tribulation judgments (Revelation chapter six).

Satan’s minion (the Antichrist) isn’t running a one-world government at the instant the Tribulation begins. He will be working to establish himself, watching for the opportunity to take control. The Antichrist’s rise to power becomes evident when he successfully negotiates a seven-year peace treaty between Israel and many other nations. From that point, his power grows over the whole world (until he is totally defeated by Christ at the battle of Armageddon, ending the Tribulation).

The willingness of the parties to enter into the peace treaty with Israel strongly suggests the peace treaty comes soon after the decisive one-day Ezekiel 38 War. The speed, nature and extent of Israel’s victory (thanks to God) brings the parties to urgently pursue peace. This phony peace treaty provides the vehicle for the rise of the Antichrist and it comes early in the Tribulation.

The Bible does not provide an explicit timeline for the sequencing of the Ezekiel 38 War relative to the Rapture. God is all-knowing and all-powerful. He already knows how this will unfold but has kept this sequencing as a mystery to us. His plan for the End Times is the perfect plan.

What is the Order of These Events?

In the novel “Twilight of the Church Age,” a fictional study group called “EZE38” discusses three potential alternative timing scenarios (all fit with Bible prophecy but only God knows the actual details).

1. **The Ezekiel 38 War occurs before the Rapture.** After the war, the Antichrist works on the peace treaty. The Rapture occurs while that work progresses.
2. **The Ezekiel 38 War occurs on the very same day as the Rapture.** Scenario 2 is a variation on the Scenario 1 analysis, with the separation between the Ezekiel 38 War and the Rapture minimized to zero days. God has infinite power and wisdom and could choose to have both occur on the same day.
3. **The Ezekiel 38 War occurs after the Rapture during the Interlude or at the start of the Tribulation** (fitting with the first two seal judgments of Revelation 6:1-4). With the Christians and the Holy Spirit removed from the earth, Satan may influence the leaders of Iran, Turkey, Libya, and Russia to attack Israel. Or this scheme may come unaided from their own sin-filled hearts.

All three timelines fit with Bible prophecy. God has already determined the schedule for these events and how they will unfold, but it is interesting to consider how the sequencing may impact Christians and nonbelievers. The three scenarios are graphically depicted below. Please note:

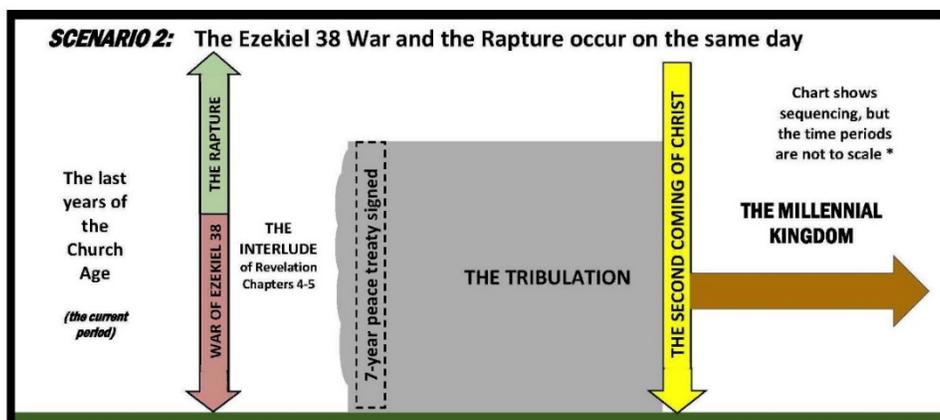
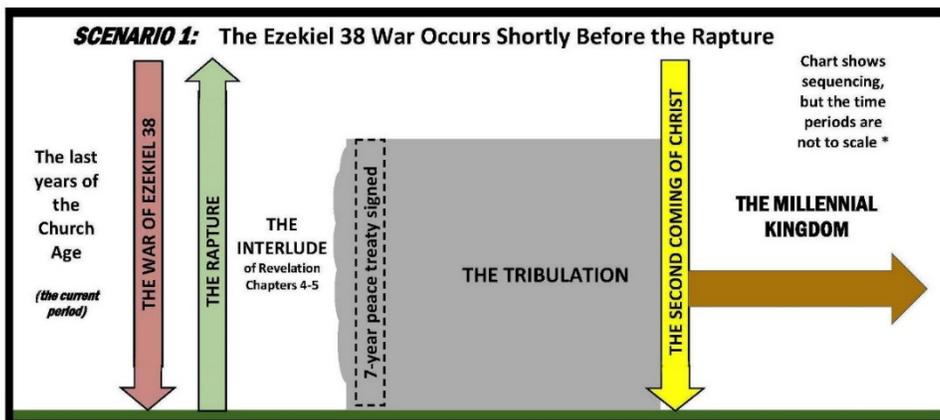
- The three timelines reflect the possible sequencing of events. But the time periods are not drawn to scale. If a consistent temporal scale was used, the Tribulation and Millennium would be much greater than shown; each timeline would need to be extended horizontally to a width of miles.

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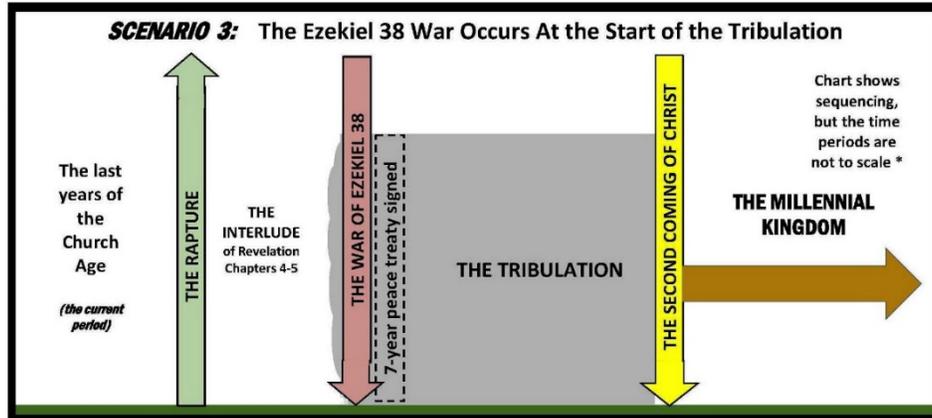
- The War of Ezekiel 38 is a one-day event.
- The Rapture is even faster. It occurs in an instant, the twinkling of an eye.
- The Bible does not provide the duration of the Interlude from an Earthly perspective. It has a clear start (the Rapture) and ends on the day the Tribulation begins. People left behind on earth may not recognize the exact moment when the Interlude ends and the Tribulation begins. In “The Great New Deal” the Interlude is portrayed as a period of a few months; it may be much briefer.
- The “Second Coming of Christ” on the charts refers to the day of His return, ending the Tribulation and defeating the Antichrist and his hordes at Armageddon.

The charts illustrate:

- (1) how God can accomplish much in one day or less (the Ezekiel 38 War, the Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus),
- (2) the gravity of His judgment and the great mercy of God’s last call to come to Jesus, as seen in the comparatively long seven-year period for the terrible Tribulation, and
- (3) God’s power, love and holiness as seen in the Second Coming and the 1,000 years of the Millennial Kingdom, when Jesus will rule perfectly as King and fulfill all of God’s promises to the nation of Israel.



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* See the discussion on the previous pages regarding the temporal scale for all three charts.

The Authors Weigh In

- A. Some prominent Christian authors have written best-selling books that place the Ezekiel 38 War sequentially before the Rapture and Tribulation (i.e., Scenario 1). This group includes best-selling authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (the “Left Behind” series), Hal Lindsey (numerous works), and Joel C. Rosenberg (“The Ezekiel Option”).
- B. The fictional storyline that begins in “Twilight of the Church Age” and continues into “The Great New Deal” reflects Scenario 3 (i.e., the Ezekiel 38 War occurs after the Rapture).

As I drafted “The Great New Deal” in late 2020 and early 2021, I opted for Scenario 3 after considering this question, “what might embolden Iran, Turkey, Libya, and Russia to attack a nuclear-armed Israel so closely backed by the United States?” That seemed too risky of a move for them (yet the Bible says this war is coming).

The answer to my hypothetical question was “the Rapture.” The Rapture will remove all Christian people of good conscience from the governments of Israel’s enemies and allies. The U.S. will be more significantly disrupted by the Rapture, as compared to Iran, Turkey, Libya, and Russia. These two effects of the Rapture could embolden these nations to quickly launch an attack upon Israel, thinking that the U.S. would be unable or unwilling to protect Israel.

In “The Great New Deal,” the character “Solomon” warns his friends to watch for the announcement of a seven-year peace treaty and the emergence of the Antichrist. Perhaps the Ezekiel 38 War will be a central theme for a future book in the “Tribulation Pilgrims’ Progress” series.

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The Ezekiel 38 War Draws Even Closer

The weakness and incompetence shown by the Biden administration in virtually all matters (e.g., economics, domestic security, national defense and foreign relations) has made Scenarios 1 and 2 increasingly credible. Foreign opponents of the U.S. now routinely mock the United States and its leaders, threaten its allies and take advantage of the situation in international negotiations.

The American media and big tech try to hide this from the American public, but our enemies have lost their respect and fear of America the superpower (one nation under God, the land of the free and the home of the brave). Instead our opponents see the land of the weak and the home of the woke. The leaders of Iran, Turkey, Libya, and Russia may see this weakness and incompetence as an opportunity to launch an attack against Israel, wanting to do so while the U.S. still has the current poor leadership.

I still think and hope that the Rapture will precede the Ezekiel 38 War, as shown in Scenario 3 and dramatized in “The Tribulation Pilgrims’ Progress” novels. But recent developments suggest a strong possibility that this war may come before the Rapture (or be simultaneous with it, as God chooses), as depicted in Scenarios 1 and 2. The weakness and incompetence of the current U.S. administration suggest that **any** of these three Ezekiel War/Rapture sequences may begin very soon.

The Fiery Red Horse From Revelation Chapter Six Looks Toward America

*Under any of these scenarios, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Red China and other enemies of America will observe a greater disruption from the Rapture in the U.S. as compared to their own country. They may decide this is their big chance to attack the U.S. or to attack other U.S. allies, like Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the countries liberated from the Soviet Union after the Cold War. Such events would likely distract the U.S. from responding to any attack launched against Israel.**

** Note: This essay was originally published on December 5, 2021. It was updated on August 29, 2022 to reflect the recent publication of “Twilight of the Church Age.” However, this italicized paragraph is exactly as published on December 5, 2021. The actions of Russia, Iran, North Korea and Red China since December 5, 2021 suggest a growing likelihood of post-Rapture attacks by these bad actors.*

The disruptive impact of the Rapture, combined with possible attacks upon the U.S. and the many cataclysmic events of the Tribulation, provide credible explanations for why Bible prophecy does not describe any American superpower during the End Times events- the prophecy focuses on Israel and adjacent lands. The fiery red horse from Revelation chapter six is gnawing at its bit, waiting to be released:

“When the Lamb broke the second seal, I heard the second living being say, “Come!” Then another horse appeared, a red one. Its rider was given a mighty sword and the authority to take peace from the earth. And there was war and slaughter everywhere.” (Revelation 6:3-4, NLT)

Get ready, the End Times events described in the Bible seem to be coming very soon. Remember, God remains in control of everything through all of this. He will use these events to fulfill His perfect plan. He will secure all who are believers in Jesus Christ and offers the opportunity for nonbelievers to change their path and join Him. God will eradicate sin and restore His creation. His victory is already recorded in the history of the future.