### Gog of Magog: Provocative Riddle and Eyebrow-Raising Parody

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The Gog and Magog chapters in Ezek 38–39 raise a series of questions. Who or what and where are Gog and Magog? What sort of material are these chapters? Who wrote them? What was the process of their composition? What did they mean for their author(s) and readers?[[1]](#footnote-1) My suggestion in this paper is that key to an understanding of Ezek 38–39 is that the chapters combine two genres that recur in Ezekiel, the riddle or parable or puzzling symbolic story, and the parodic midrash on familiar scriptural material. Both genres challenge people to think and to expand their thinking, about themselves and about what Yahweh is doing and is going to do.[[2]](#footnote-2)

### I. Parable and Parody

One of the genres that come together in these chapters, then, is the enigmatic, provocative parable or riddle. A series of these is a distinctive feature in Ezekiel: riddles about the wood of the vine (Ezek 15), about a great eagle (Ezek 17), about a requiem for some princes who are lion cubs and whose mother is also a vine (Ezek 19), and about a sword (Ezek 21). Yahweh describes the second of these stories as a חִידָה and a מָשָׁל, a puzzle and a parable, and this could serve as a description for all of them. In each case the message starts like a riddle: Ezekiel tells a story without giving his audience any direct clue regarding what it refers to, though the images are familiar and would have some prospect of working on people’s subconscious. Eventually, however, Yahweh interprets the parable. The wood of the vine is the people living in Jerusalem. The eagle is the Babylonian king. The requiem chapter is more complicated, but it becomes clear that the requiem relates to some princes who are actually alive at the moment. The sword chapter is also complicated, but it stands for the Babylonians who wield the sword but are destined eventually to be its victims.

The second distinctive Ezekielian genre is the retelling of the scriptural story in eyebrow- raising fashion. One such midrash relates the history of Jerusalem (Ezek 16). Building on other prophets’ descriptions of Jerusalem as Yahweh’s unfaithful wife, Ezekiel elaborates the image into a scandalous parody of the city’s entire history. A second example is a revisionist reworking of Israel’s history as a people, from Egypt through the wilderness into their life in Canaan and out into the exile that is coming (Ezek 20). The third concerns both Jerusalem and Samaria (Ezek 23). They become sisters whose whoring goes back to Egypt and continues in their relationships with Assyrian and Babylonian lovers. In each case, Ezekiel retells the scriptural story in a way that parodies the version that his hearers would know.

In Ezekiel 38–39, “a glance at the commentaries will convince the reader of the difficulty of distinguishing between what is ‘primary’ and ‘secondary.’”[[3]](#footnote-3) But not knowing the answer to long-debated questions about the material’s origin does not make it impossible to say things about its meaning. The medieval division of the material into two chapters in printed Bibles corresponds to a broad distinction whereby parable is more prominent in Ezek 38 and parody in Ezek 39, though the chapters begin with parody and end with parable:

38:1–6 more parody: Gog and the hooks in his jaws

38:7–23 more parable: a battle that leads to recognition of Yahweh

39:1–20 more parody: mobilization, bonfire, corpse collection, sacrificial feast

39:21–29 more parable: circling back to plainer confrontation and promise

The chapters have been called a pastiche, a composition bringing together excerpts from a variety of existent works that thus turns them into a new whole,[[4]](#footnote-4) and one can see in them multiple points at which Ezekiel takes up earlier scriptures.[[5]](#footnote-5) There are, in particular, scriptures that lie behind the three curious paragraphs in 39:1–20 describing a seven-year bonfire, a seven-month corpse collection, and a sacrificial feast for birds and animals. Yet by no means do these paragraphs simply combine their underlying scriptures. These scriptures are jumping-off points for something exotic and bizarre. The directly midrashic paragraphs thus bring out a key aspect of the material as a whole. While their starting point lies in the scriptures, they comprise a midrash built on them that has the nature of a parody.[[6]](#footnote-6) And from the beginning Gog himself “is more caricature than character.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Describing Gog as a caricature points to the way the chapters are making fun of Gog, in a most serious way. Strictly, to say that Ezekiel is making a parody of the scriptural text thus involves a catachresis. Ezekiel is using the text in order to make a parody of Gog, in order to get his hearers to imagine the future of the imperial power in a new way, and to laugh at it.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Ezek 38–39 is thus another in the sequence of midrashic parodies in Ezekiel, of which the outstanding examples are Ezek 16; 20; and 23. One way in which it differs from them is that they made their point clear from the beginning, indicating that they were portraying Jerusalem’s outrages, Israel’s history, and the whoring of the northern and southern states. Ezek 38–39 gives no initial clue to its message. But this feature makes for a comparison with those other chapters in Ezekiel where the prophet proceeds by relating a parable or allegory, painting a picture or telling a story, without initially indicating what it refers to. He thereby intrigues his audience, makes them wonder about the point he is making, and hopes to bypass some of their assumptions. In Ezek 38–39 he tells an intricate and fantastical story concerning an entity that no one knows about, that engages in a shameful and implausible project and comes to a horrifying and implausible end. As is also his wont, Ezekiel thus paints a parabolic picture that recalls motifs from predecessor prophets and other scriptures, but exalts them to preposterous heights. While he trailers the significance of his riddle in 38:16, 23; 39:7–8, it is only when his three outrageous quasi-scriptural declarations in 39:9–20 have turned his parable into something that could get no more bizarre, that in 39:21–29 he makes a sudden transition to a cool theological mode of speech in order to interpret his riddle systematically. Broadly, then, the chapters work in a way that parallels other parable chapters, with riddle first and explanation following.

Perhaps the parodic nature of the message encouraged the jerky sequence in the chapters, of which the most notable example is the feast on the victims of the massacre that follows their burial. But the overlap between sections parallels previous units in the book where overlapping messages with a common theme appear one after each other. The implication could then be that Ezekiel or his ghostwriters saw the message’s theme as important for the Judahites and generated messages of this kind for them on a number of occasions, which the chapters combine.

### II. Ezekiel 38–39 in Its Context in MT and OG

Alongside the internal jerkiness of Ezek 38–39 is the external jerkiness of its relationship to its context, which is then complicated by a question about textual history. In Ezekiel MT, the message for Gog of Magog that begins in 38:1 continues straight on from 37:15–28, as 37:15–28 continued from 37:1–14 and 37:1–14 from 36:16–38. As “Yahweh’s message came” to Ezekiel declaring that Yahweh would bring Israel back to life in its country (37:1–14), it then came declaring that Yahweh would make Israel into one there (37:15–28), and it now comes declaring the intention to mobilize Gog for some military action. This is a surprise, in that the consolidated promises in 37:23–28 seemed to bring the book of Ezekiel to something like closure. Yet Ezekiel specializes in surprises, and a moment’s reflection might make his listeners realize that Yahweh’s earlier messages about the wielding of a sword against Babylon, and about taking action against Israel’s neighbors and against Tyre and Egypt, might well mean that there is more that Yahweh needs to do and more that needs to be said, so that any impression of closure conveyed by 37:15–28 was misleading.

But the sequence of chapters would read more smoothly if Ezek 37 led straight into Ezek 40–48, and this is indeed the order of the chapters in Papyrus 967, the oldest manuscript of Ezekiel LXX, which also lacks Ezek 36:23bβ–38. The order of the material here is thus: Ezek 36:16–23bα; Ezek 38–39; Ezek 37; Ezek 40–48.

The absence of 36:23bβ-38 in Papyrus 967 may be an accidental loss or may indicate that its text goes back to a Hebrew version lacking these verses, which might or might not then be an older version of the Hebrew text of Ezekiel. Scholarly debate continues concerning whether Papyrus 967 is the older version of the chapters,[[9]](#footnote-9) or a later version than MT.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Having reviewed this debate, Hector M. Patmore concludes:

The data … make the *Urtext* of Ezekiel a will-o'-the-wisp. Behind the texts of Papyrus 967 and the MT lie two distinct *Vorlagen*, and unless new materials come to light, there is no credible way of establishing the historical precedence or originality of either. But … if authority is to be found in the “most original” form of the text, what ought one do when two versions of a text exist, neither of which provide clear access to the Urtext? If “originality” cannot be used as the yardstick of authority, on what other foundation might authority be built?[[11]](#footnote-11)

Those interesting questions stimulate a number of reflections. Why should one assume that authority lies in the “most original” form of the text? Amusingly, critical and fundamentalist scholarship commonly agree on that assumption, but one might ask whether it is simply an aspect of modern thinking. And why is “authority” the category introduced into the discussion about the oldest form of the text? Suppose that the Papyrus 967 text is the oldest: would one really then want to conclude that the message in 36:23bβ–38 therefore lacks “authority”? That conclusion in itself would suggest that there is something wrong with our categories, or suggest a need to conceive of authority in a different way. Even if 36:23bβ–38 was not part of the original Ezekiel, one might think that its nature indicates that it issued from what Jeremiah 23:18 calls someone being admitted to Yahweh’s council. It surely has authority. At some point an influential Jewish community recognized that fact, which is how it came to be in MT.

Redactional development within Ezek 38–39 as well as the reordering of Ezek 36–39 might reflect theological convictions. Might these developments reflect a desire on the part of a group such as the Pharisees to moderate the apocalyptic tone of the chapters?[[12]](#footnote-12) That suggestion seems to be ruled out by the publication of fragments of a proto-MT version of Ezekiel from Masada, dating from the second century BCE.[[13]](#footnote-13) Might they reflect an equivalent instinct from an earlier period, when Judahites were facing battle with the Seleucids or the Romans and it was important to “rally the troops” so that they would “militarily rise against their enemies” and thus respond to a “call to arms”?[[14]](#footnote-14) This seems to involve considerable reading into Ezek 36–39 MT. There is “heuristic value” in considering possible alternative orderings of these chapters,[[15]](#footnote-15) but such consideration actually draws attention to how lacking is any call to arms or military note in Ezek 38–39, and how lacking is any picture of David as a “military leader … who will lead the nation into victory over their enemies.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

The actual lack of explicit or even implicit historical reference in the chapters supports the possibility that insight on Ezek 38–39 will more likely issue from a consideration of the form of the chapters as riddle and parody than from a quest for the chapters’ historico-political function. Whether Ezek 38–39 issued from the inspired imagination of Ezekiel or a later figure in the sixth century or some subsequent time, or from a sequence of such figures curated by a redactor, such authors or redactors invited their readers not to think in terms of the historico-political context of their work but to think in Ezekielian terms of riddle and parody.

### III. Enigmatic Parody

Gog and Magog would be puzzles to Ezekiel’s hearers as they are to modern readers. Whereas Meshek, Tubal, Persia, Kush, Put, and Bet-Togarmah have featured among Tyre’s trading partners (27:10–14) and elsewhere, Ezekiel’s hearers are unlikely to have heard of Gog previously. Magog does appear as a person in Gen 10:2 in a context that suggests the area north of Israel, like the present context, and the name may have associations with that of māt Gūgi in Turkey.[[17]](#footnote-17) If Gog’s name links with that of the Lydian king Gugu, then it has been used inventively to apply to an imaginary figure who parallels someone like Nebuchadrezzar as the leader of an empire to the north of Israel.[[18]](#footnote-18) There are many sovereigns in his world, but Gog is the biggest, a “head-sovereign”

(נׇשֹׅיא רֹאשׁ; 38:1). He symbolizes aggressive, expansionist, and ambitious alien power at the edge of the world, in a region stretching east and north of the Assyrian and Babylonians empires that have dominated Judah.[[19]](#footnote-19)

In English, “Gog and Magog” can have humorous connotations, partly because of the alliteration. Names in Daniel such as Abednego illustrate such a scatological approach to names, and it might be no coincidence that the Daniel stories and Ezek 38–39 are set in the same decades and social context of exile in Babylonia. Gog and Magog are the hardest names in Ezek 38–39 to connect with otherwise-known people or places, which encourages the idea that they are made-up names such as provide the first clue that Ezek 38–39 is a parody as well as a riddle. A further indication of this possibility is Yahweh’s statement of intent in 38:3, to “turn Gog around,” an unusual form of the verb (שׁוּב polel—it recurs in 39:2) that elsewhere means “lead stray” (*DCH*) or “lead away (enticingly)” (BDB). It can also denote urging on an animal (*DCH*), after which “put hooks in your jaws” would follow neatly. The phrase repeats Yahweh’s statement of intent regarding Pharaoh, pictured as a crocodile about to be hauled out of the Nile with fish stuck to its scales (29:4). Hooks also featured in the description of the “lion” dragged off to Egypt in 19:4. The subsequent description of Gog’s military corresponds to that of the Assyrian army in 23:12, 24.

Bet-Togarmah is located explicitly in “the remote parts of the north” (יַרְכְּתֵי צׇפוֹן), an expression used more broadly in 38:15; 39:2. Behind Ezekiel’s use of the phrase is the occurrence in Jeremiah (6:22),[[20]](#footnote-20) behind that the use in Isaiah (14:13), and associated with that, the use in Ps 48:3 [2]. But as well as people from the north, Yahweh speaks of people from the south (Kush, Put), from the other side of the Mediterranean, which fits the overlap with accounts of Tyre’s trading associates. A major impetus, perhaps the major impetus, to the acquiring of an empire is the acquiring of wealth, to which trade is key. That is the aim of Gog and his expansionist cronies in undertaking their venture. They aim to form an axis of empire from both sides of Israel’s known world. Gog is not portrayed as monstrous, frightening, mythic, arrogant, godless, or even evil. He is simply threateningly powerful and grossly greedy. Being a global economic power is what is in his mind. At another level of intent, however, unbeknown to himself, he is simply someone “summoned like one who has been conscripted for military service.”[[21]](#footnote-21) For the moment, even as the general of an army, he awaits instructions, making sure his troops are ready to move when bidden.

### IV. Midrashic Parable

Gog, then, is both a puzzle, a riddle, and a cartoon figure, a parody. For the second part of Ezek 38, he ceases to be a parody and becomes simply more of a puzzle, but he also becomes reason for worry. Ezek 38:1–13 had not spoken of Gog attacking Israel, though in MT’s order of the chapters the spread of his coalition to Israel’s north and south would augur ill for Yahweh’s promise of a שׇׁלוֹם covenant for Israel itself (37:25). Such a covenant would cover more than peace but it would surely include peace. In Papyrus 967, the confrontation of Gog follows plausibly on Yahweh’s declaration of intent in 36:22–23bα,[[22]](#footnote-22) though again the mustering of the coalition makes for a worrying continuation of that beginning, as does the announcement that Yahweh’s drafting of Gog will mean conflict and trouble for Israel. In either version of the chapters, the message thus becomes terrifying, rather than giving the impression that Yahweh is simply engaged in a tidying up operation in relation to Babylon, Tyre, and their associates. Yahweh is issuing an announcement of trouble that looks not very different from the announcements that heralded 587, a large-scale attack on Israel by a mysterious northern power and its associates.

When the time arrives and Yahweh wishes Gog to make his move, then, Gog will come “to a country restored from the sword, gathered from many peoples” (38:8), the country that has seen fulfillment of Yahweh’s promises. The Israelites have been able to dwell with confidence in their security in their land: Ezek 38-39 speaks five times of living “in security” (לְבֶטַח). It is not their fault that it will turn out to be false confidence. Gog is going to make it turn out desperately false (38:9). Gog’s victims live in “settlements” (פְּרׇזוֹת), residential communities without walls, and they possess cattle and other property that forms a temptation to Gog (38:11). More of Tyre’s mercantile partners from either side of the Mediterranean appear in 38:13 (see 27:12, 15, 20, 22, 23). They will be interested in trading with Gog’s loot. “These merchants are vultures, hoping to take advantage of the spoils of this war.”[[23]](#footnote-23) It is “as if they will say, ‘Here we are, ready to buy loot from your hand.’”[[24]](#footnote-24) Surrounded by the nations to which Ezek 38–39 refers, Israel sits “at the heart of the earth,” at its טַבּוּר (38:12: the word later means “navel,” but that may be too precise a meaning to assume here). It is located in a vulnerable position on a crucial land bridge and trade route, between Mesopotamia and Turkey to the north and Arabia and Africa to the south. And the aim of the Gog coalition’s expedition will be “to plunder plunder and to loot loot” (38:12). The point is emphasized by the redoubled double expression (taken up with elaboration from Jer 49:30–32).[[25]](#footnote-25)

As happens in Ezekiel’s other riddles, however, something by way of explanation now follows, or at least begins: the explanation will turn out to take the more complicated form of an explanation by stages like that in chaps. 19 and 21 rather than the simpler form in chaps. 15 and 17. While the bulk of 38:14–23 is resumptive, the section adds significantly to 38:1–13. A first distinctive note is that Gog will be going up against “my people Israel” (38:14, 16). In 38:1–13, Israel was named only in the expression “Israel’s mountains.” Here, preceding the occurrence of the name, the expression “my people” is noteworthy. Does it suggest jealousy, or resentment, or commitment, or what? (see, e.g., 11:20; 13:9–23; 14:8–11; 21:17 [12]; 25:14; 33:31; 34:30; 36:8, 12, 28; 37:12–13, 23, 27). Yahweh follows up the expression with a reference to “my country,” which otherwise occurs in Ezekiel only in 36:5 and is rare elsewhere. It indeed suggests something like jealousy. So what is Yahweh doing in getting Gog to come against his country?

I intend, Yahweh says, “to show my sacredness [קָדַשׁ niphal] through you before the eyes of the nations,” who will thereby come to acknowledge Yahweh (38:16). As happens with Ezekiel’s other riddles, then, things start to become clear. The arousing of Gog is not like the arousing of Nebuchadrezzar, a response to Israel’s waywardness. Israel will be the relatively innocent victim of a plan that the nations are to come to see that Yahweh is distinctively God. The promises in Ezek 36 had included Yahweh’s intention to make the name “Yahweh” sacred by taking the people back to their land and thus reversing the impression given by their leaving it. Perhaps ironically,[[26]](#footnote-26) the exact expression in 38:16 occurred in 36:23bβ at the beginning of the material peculiar to MT, though there the plural “you” was Israel. A presupposition of Ezek 38 is that Yahweh has taken the people back to their land. But Gog’s expedition and the imperiling of Israel will now become means whereby Gog and his allies come to acknowledge Yahweh.

In 38:9–16, the description of Gog and his army continues to rework the words of earlier prophets, so that one could describe them as a midrashic parable. Gog and his army are to replay roles that Assyria and Babylon previously played, and Ezekiel uses expressions that other prophets have used of them.

You will go up … like a cloud (38:9)

He will go up like clouds (Jer 4:13)

Like a storm … like a cloud (38:9)

A day of storm … a day of cloud (Zeph 1:15)

You will go up like a storm when you come (38:9)

The storm will come from afar (Isa 10:3)

Words will go up into your mind and you will formulate a dire intention (38:10)

But he does not speak so and his mind does not formulate so (Isa 10:7)

I will go up … to take plunder, to seize loot (38:11–12)

I will send him … to take plunder, to seize loot (Isa 10:6)

What Yahweh is doing finds expression in the subsequent reference “my servants the prophets” (38:17). The phrase recurs in the work of Ezekiel’s contemporaries (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:10; 24:2; Jer 35:15; 44:4), and associates Ezekiel with prophets such as Jeremiah, while also dissociating him from prophets whom Yahweh has not sent and who prophesy out of their minds (e.g., 13:1–16).[[27]](#footnote-27) The implication is not that the great age of prophecy lies in the past—the very words of this prophecy show that they are not. Nor is it that the earlier prophecies have not been fulfilled or that Gog is claiming to fulfill them, either legitimately or illegitimately. It is rather that there is an un-surprising coherence and continuity about the words of the prophets who speak by the commission of the one Yahweh, and thus about the events they refer to. Sennacherib, Nebuchadrezzar, and Gog are all embodiments of the same paradoxical servant of Yahweh, all expressions of the same divine purpose. Further allusions to earlier prophets follow. “My anger and my fury will pour out” (Jer 7:20). Yes, now “my fury will go up in my anger” (38:17). This action will give expression to “the fire of my passion” (Zeph 3:18; cf. 1:8). Yes, “in my passion and in my furious fire I am speaking” (38:19), and thus making things happen by declaring what is to happen. The sequence in Papyrus 967 makes it more evident that Ezekiel had reflected those words of Zephaniah earlier (36:5–6).

In another prophetic echo (38:19–20), Ezekiel picks up a phrase from Jer 10:22 about “a great quaking” that would bring about desolation in Judah, but reverses its significance. While the quaking will happen “on the land of Israel,” its victims will not be the people of Israel. Its affecting fish, birds and animals recalls Zeph 1:2–3, but with a nice irony Zephaniah mentioned them in connection with catastrophe for the world in general and only then came to his real concern with Israel. In reverse, Ezekiel speaks of a potential catastrophe for Israel, but it will become clear that the nations are his actual focus. Ezekiel adds creepers to the creatures mentioned in Zephaniah, which makes his list correspond to Gen 1. Yahweh’s message threatens an act of uncreation, a threat extended in the picture of the fate of mountains, embankments or terraces (מַדְרֵגוֹת), and walls.

Ezekiel goes on to develop the portrait of calamity coming to Gog, using images that speak more of the human side to what Yahweh will cause people to experience (38:21–23). Yahweh will summon hordes of people, in theory to fight in Gog’s army. But they will be such hordes that they will end up fighting each other (cf. Judg 7:22), in a parody of a battle. Ezek 38:23 then sums up “the real purpose of the Gog episode,”[[28]](#footnote-28) with a further reference to Yahweh’s showing sacredness (though here the verb is hitpael). Yahweh is indeed engaged in a mopping up operation, but it is (again typically for Ezekiel) a God-centered one. While the message might first have seemed neutral in its significance for Judahites, and then would have seemed terrifying, it has gone on to indicate that Gog and his forces are not a threat to Judah.

There is a quasi-temporal element in Ezekiel’s explanation of his parable. The instructions to Gog to make his move will come “after many days … at the conclusion of years” (38:8). Neither of these vague phrases suggests a reference to the end of the age or the end of time. More potential of this kind attaches to the declaration that these things will happen “on that day” (38:10). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, this expression can refer to Yahweh’s day or simply to whatever day the document has just referred to. Ezekiel speaks explicitly of “Yahweh’s day” only in 13:5 and 30:3, though elsewhere he uses other expressions that mean something similar (e.g., 7:1–22). Here, “that day” is the day when Gog decides to undertake his expedition, so it might be inferring too much to think that it denotes Yahweh’s day, but it might be inferring too little if we exclude the idea that the “day” is a really important one when the fulfillment of Yahweh’s purpose will happen. Ezekiel will make clear that it is. In 39:22, for “that day” LXX has “this day,” the day of fulfillment in the Seleucid or Roman period.[[29]](#footnote-29) The expression is one that could mean something different in the Second Temple period from its meaning in the Babylonian period.

“Gog’s campaign is not an undertaking like many other wars but is a war at the center point of the world in which there is therefore involved a decisive event of world history,”[[30]](#footnote-30) when a world power takes Israel’s place as the victim of Yahweh’s angry fury. When Gog comes and Israel is subject to great peril, it will become the means whereby Yahweh is revealed, not because Israel does anything, but because Israel goes through what Yahweh makes it go through. Whereas the midrashic parodies in Ezek 20 and 23 turned Israel and Jerusalem into an idolater and a whore in Egypt, this midrash forgets that Israel and Jerusalem had been an idolater and a whore in Canaan.

Following his announcement of Yahweh’s intention to manipulate or command Gog to invade Israel, Ezekiel’s speaking of “that day” could suggest apocalyptic thinking. But the suggestion that Ezek 38–39 represents a toning down of apocalyptic thinking coheres more naturally with its implications—even if one may rather see it as antedating the later development of apocalyptic thinking than as retrospectively toning it down. Ezek 38:10–16 presupposes the same combination of Yahweh’s will and the human king’s will as prophets presuppose elsewhere. This chapter makes the point through its juxtaposition of a strong description of Yahweh’s initiative in 38:1–9 and then a strong description of Gog’s decision-making in 38:10–16. Even if Yahweh’s saying that “things will go up into your mind” implies Yahweh putting ideas into Gog’s head, it need not imply imposing them on him. The form of expression could indicate the intention to float to Gog the idea of an attack on Israel; it would then be up to Gog what he does with the idea. Actually, however, other occurrences of similar expressions to the one in 38:10 (11:5; 14:3–4, 7; 20:32) do not suggest ideas coming to someone from outside but ideas they generate. That fits Yahweh’s going on to picture how Gog will “formulate a dire intention,” make his own plan that will have disastrous implications for its victims. It is possible for someone to have their own aims and intentions but for there to be other forces at work through their decision-making that move in quite different directions.[[31]](#footnote-31) So it is here.

A feature of apocalyptic that Ezek 38–39 does manifest is a lack of reference to identifiable historical events, such as previous chapters in Ezekiel make. It does not express its vision in the terms of “plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality,” as prophets commonly do.[[32]](#footnote-32) Its starting point lies in a somewhat distant future and a time when Israel has been restored from war, has been gathered together in its land, and is living in peace and security. Neither that situation nor the invasion itself ever happened. In this respect, in MT Ezek 38–39 again follows well on 37:15–28, which described a coming reunion of Ephraim and Judah, a resettlement of this reunited people in the land, and a reign of a new David, which never happened. In effect, these two chapters build on that description as if these events had happened, but they had not. And while Ezek 38–39 does not describe Yahweh acting on the historical plane, in itself this does not indicate that the prophet has given up the idea of Yahweh acting on the historical plane. Even though he may be talking about Yahweh’s final victory over the nations, the conflict the chapters describe is not one in which Yahweh fights and defeats all the nations, like the one in Joel 4 [3], nor is it an eschatological conflict like the one in which Gog takes part in Rev 20:7–10.

Another key role of apocalyptic, however, is to be a way of doing theology, of expounding the nature of God and of God’s relationship with the world, by painting an imaginative and imaginary portrait of the future. Ezekiel invites the Judahites to picture Yahweh commissioning and defeating Gog and to reflect on the theological implications of the picture he paints, of the piece of fantasy literature he writes or reads out. More generally, without necessarily bringing in the fantastic, the way prophets speak about the future and the theological implications of their picture parallels the way narrators speak about the past. Prophets no more provide an advance video of coming events than narrators provide a retrospective video of past events. Like movies about the future or about the past, the stories told by scriptural narratives and prophecies are portrayals from which readers can learn in a way that is not dependent on their factuality, even though they may indeed have something to say about the actual past and the actual future. In this sense, they are not so much riddles as parables

### V. Midrashic Parody

In 38:14–23, Ezekiel came to an interim explanation of the puzzle set by his parodic beginning in 38:1–7, and more alarmingly by his enigmatic continuation in 38:8–13. More explanation will follow, but first Ezek 39 segues back and segues more systematically into that other favorite Ezekielian genre, parody, and in particular, parody of familiar scriptures.

Once more Yahweh begins what might be a separate message or might be a continuation that first sums up the message so far (39:1–2). Then Yahweh nuances the nature of the coming action in several ways. It will mean bringing about Gog’s military defeat in a different fashion from the one described in 38:17–23, by making him drop the weapons with which he is aiming to shoot at unsuspecting Israelite villagers (39:3–5). The weapons are now bows rather than swords. Ezekiel has again had his thinking stimulated by passages from the scriptures, and has built on them with his characteristic imagination.

Go look at Yahweh’s acts,

 how he has set great desolation in the earth,

stopping battles to the end of the earth,

Breaking bow and shattering spear,

 burning shields in fire. (Ps 46:9–10 [8–9])

Every boot of someone tramping with quaking,

 and the clothing rolled in much blood,

Yes, it will be for burning,

 consumed by fire. (Isa 9:4 [5])

“You know the picture the psalm gives and Isaiah painted, of Yahweh’s great rescue of Jerusalem?” if Isaiah and the psalm portrayed something of monumental size, Ezekiel makes it even bigger. There will be enough firewood to last seven years, and thus no need to put any effort into acquiring it (39:9–10). Oh, and there will also be plenty of opportunity to reverse the looting operation that the now deceased Gog army thought they were going to indulge in. Yes, people will enjoy themselves “like people dividing up plunder” (Isa 9:2 [3]). The note about plunder extends the link with earlier scriptures and also puts this little midrash into more explicit connection with the wider context of the Gog chapters and their concern with Yahweh taking action against Gog as plunderer.

When the invaders have dropped their weapons, is the assumption that the villagers will then slaughter the paralyzed attackers? Ezekiel describes no such action. More likely it is Yahweh who strikes the attackers down (as in 38:22, in fact). Either way, Yahweh seeks to add to the distress of the potentially doomed military by drawing attention to the inevitable fate of their corpses (39:4–5). They will not join their ancestors in a family tomb and rest in peace, but be consumed on the battle field by creatures of the wild, with no one to protect them (contrast 2 Sam 21:10). They will experience the fate threatened for Israel in Deut 28:26 and lamented by Israel in Ps 79:2. “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather” (Matt 24:28). Then Yahweh will act like a commander undertaking a counter-invasion of Gog’s territory and the territories of his allies, and setting fire to the towns where their people are living in their own false sense of security (39:6). But “the destruction of Gog and his hordes is not Yahweh’s ultimate goal in chaps. 38-39; rather it is the means by which larger goals of crucial importance within the book of Ezekiel will be achieved” as nations come to know Yahweh’s unparalleled sovereignty and power.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The next midrashic parody (39:11–16) presupposes another need for cleaning up, a more serious one from the perspective of the people’s relationship with Yahweh. Once again Ezekiel portrays something that neatly transposes a warning issued to Israel itself earlier. Yahweh had threatened to throw the people’s corpses down in front of their idols and scatter their bones around their settlements (6:5–6). Now there will be a reverse of that.

It is especially clear here that speaking in terms of parody does not imply that Ezekiel disparages the subjects of the texts he takes up, which are in this passage texts that presuppose assumptions about defilement and cleansing. The parody constitutes an imaginative enhancement of the requirement of the rules about cleansing in a situation such as the one described in these chapters, and an enhancement of what the event itself would mean. It might still make Ezekiel’s audience grin.

Any dead body is a source of defilement, and Yahweh therefore gave Israel rules about burial and about how to counteract defilement. The slaughter of Gog and his forces thus raises issues about defilement in the land, and Ezekiel lays down a procedure for dealing with them, without commenting on the relationship between these instructions and the animals’ devouring of corpses (39:4–5). There will be a huge burial place for Gog’s forces, which will appropriately be entitled Gog’s Horde Ravine. The cleaning up operation is one for which “Israel’s household” as a whole, “the entire people of the country,” the entire citizenry, accepts responsibility. But the process also involves the appointing of special people to see that the job is done thoroughly. The “seven months” follows up the “seven years” for the firewood and recalls the importance of “seven” in Israel’s life with Yahweh. Once again, “that day,” the day when Gog comes, is “the day of my getting myself honor,” and Israel’s activity in accepting responsibility for the burials draws attention to its not fighting in the battle. As is the case with the disposing of the weapons, Israel is simply engaged in the clearing up operations, and it gets a name for the way it does that.

In addition, the reaffirmation that this is “the day of my getting myself honor” makes explicit the point about the midrash in the context. The huge task of cleaning up testifies to the magnitude of the destruction that Yahweh has undertaken in acting against the forces of greed ranged against Israel. While speaking most often in these two chapters about manifesting sacredness (38:16, 23; 39:7, 25, 27), Yahweh has also spoken of manifesting greatness (38:23), and here speaks of manifesting honor (cf. 39:21). All are ways of making essentially the same point.

It is impossible to gain a coherent picture of the location and naming of the burial place. Ezekiel is more interested in working with the potential meaning of the names and their associations. The difficulty reflects the message’s nature as a parody. It is like a cartoon. The obvious understanding of the place’s first designation is “The Ravine of People Passing Through” (הׇעֹבְרׅים; so LXX, Vg., Sym.), but there is no reference elsewhere to such a place. But while there is no rationale for inventing such a name, it would make sense to invent a name understood to denote “The Ravine of People Passing On” in death. Oberim is virtually the same as the name of the mountain region that includes Mount Nebo, Abarim (Num 27:12; 33:47–48; Deut 32:49), mentioned by Jeremiah (22:20). It was east of the Jordan and it could thus count as “east of the sea,” if the sea was the Dead Sea, so it would be a great place to dispose of the bodies outside the land of Israel. But Ezekiel locates the burial place “in Israel.” So “east of the sea” seems to imply east of the Mediterranean (though Tg envisages east of Kinneret). The advantage of that location is to make a link between Gog’s Horde Ravine (גֵּיא הֲמוֹן גּוֹג) and the Hinnom Ravine, notoriously a place for offering human sacrifice (e.g., Jer 7:31–32).[[34]](#footnote-34) It was just below the city of Jerusalem, and the subsequent incidental reference to a city named Hamonah might also make people think of Jerusalem.[[35]](#footnote-35) The Hinnom Ravine would be a good place for disposing of the remains of Gog’s army. If they all went there, it would ironically or appropriately mean that the ravine would get so full of the horde of people who had passed on that it would stop other people going there in the future. Ezekiel gives one more association to the expression “the people passing through,” as a reference to the people appointed to pass around the country making sure no bones have been missed (39:14–15).

The third midrashic parody (39:17–20) takes us back to 39:4. It presupposes with yet more clarity that the successive paragraphs in Ezek 38–39 do not work as a logical sequence, in that it reverts to a time when the burying has not yet happened. The sense in which this message is a parody of earlier scriptures again differs from the previous examples. Whereas 39:11–16 was an extreme version of the fulfilling of principles from the Torah, 39:17–20 envisages something contrasting with the Torah. In the festivity that could be an aspect of a sacrifice, drinking blood and eating fat is exactly what people were not supposed to do (e.g., Lev 3:17). Perhaps Yahweh is (ironically) issuing an invitation to a מַרׅזֵחַ, a wake, a festive meal of a semi-religious kind that would be an illegitimate commemoration of someone’s death (cf. Jer 16:5).[[36]](#footnote-36) In this wake, however, instead of human beings gorging themselves on creatures from the animal world, the animal world gorges itself on creatures from the human world, who fulfill the role of the sacrificial animals in the commemoration. In the context of the Gog chapters, one significance of this parody is again to enhance the impression of a slaughter of great magnitude that Yahweh has undertaken among earth’s sovereigns. In addition, in MT “the elimination of the corpses of Gog and his warriors thus contrasts starkly with the divinely perpetuated ‘living’ dead of Israel in 37:1–14, here representing the returning exiles, to whom the land is said to belong.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

There is a further difference in Ezekiel’s lampooning on the basis of earlier scriptures. He is not the first prophet to work with the image taken up in this message, though scholars hold different opinions concerning the date of the relevant passages. The least controversial is again Zephaniah (1:7): “Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice.” Yahweh’s sword “will devour and be full and drunk from [Yahweh’s adversaries’] blood, because the Lord Yahweh has a sacrifice in the northern country” (Jer 46:10). Most extensively:

Yahweh has a sword full of blood,

 gorged with fat,

With the blood of lambs and goats,

 with the kidney fat of rams.

Because Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah,

 a great slaughter in the country of Edom.

Wild oxen will fall with them,

 bulls with steers.

Their country will be filled with blood,

 their dirt will be gorged with fat. (Isa 34:6–7)

This Ezekiel passage is also subsequently taken up spectacularly in Rev 19:17–21, where Ezekiel’s midrashic parody gives birth to another midrashic parody.

### Vi. Parable Interpreted

Ezekiel shifts to generalization in 39:21–22, so sharply that one might wonder whether this is the beginning of another originally separate message that has lost its introduction. Ezekiel in characteristic fashion now provides readers with a more substantial interpretation of the parodies and the parable that he has been telling through 38:1–39:20. The effect of the shift in 39:21–22, then, is to make explicit a relationship between the Gog chapters and their broader context in Ezekiel, and in particular their relationship to the promises that preceded in 37:15–28 MT, with their implicitly incomplete agenda. The dynamic of this relationship differs again in Papyrus 967, where Ezek 37 follows Ezek 38–39.

The entirety of the two chapters, the three parodies in particular, and the wake parody in even more particular, have been concerned with a demonstration among the nations of Yahweh’s honor, or an implementing of Yahweh’s rule (מׅשְׁפׇּט).[[38]](#footnote-38) Like the eventual fate of Assyria, Babylon, or any empire, Gog’s fate as the expansionist aggressor or would-be worldwide dominant power offers insight to the rest of the world, and also draws Israel into acknowledgment of Yahweh. They are the same double aim that Yahweh had in mind in 39:7–8, though here the aim is stated in reverse order. As there, Ezekiel hardly implies that the Israel of Gog’s day does not acknowledge Yahweh, but he likely does imply that Yahweh’s acknowledgment by Israel leaves something to be desired. The phrase “from that day and onward” (39:22) follows up nicely “that is the day I have spoken of” (39:8).

Yahweh’s continuing statement of aims in 39:23–24 further explicates the statement in 39:7–8. Israel in exile threatened the profanation of Yahweh’s name because its leaving the land could give the impression that Yahweh was too weak to hold onto it and keep Israel in possession of it.[[39]](#footnote-39) Subsequent events will show that this would not be a correct interpretation. Yahweh may imply that the great battle will have that effect, or that the subsequent restoration of Israel (39:25–29) will do so. Either way, it is not clear how the nations will make the jump from their understandable but mistaken assumption about Yahweh’s weakness to a realization of the real dynamic behind what happened. But asking such questions is literalist, as it is literalist to query Yahweh’s saying that “all of” the household of Israel fell by the sword (39:23), a favorite hyperbole in Ezekiel. Ezekiel does not really imagine the nations meditating on the implications of the Israelites’ exile. As usual, he makes his point here for the benefit of his own readers, to remind them of the dimensions of their moral and religious failure. He wants them to recall their “waywardness” in walking a different way from the one Yahweh directed, their ”trespass” in ignoring Yahweh’s rights, their “defilement,” the stain that they bore as a result of their bloodshed and other contaminations, and their “rebellion,” their declining to comply with Yahweh’s authority in their political life (39:23–24). In the middle of this powerful and unparallelled combination of images for their wrongdoing, and again at the end, is another description of Yahweh’s reaction that is unparallelled in Ezekiel: “I hid my face from them,” with the implication of withdrawing protection and provision. Israel sometimes asks why Yahweh’s face is hidden (e.g., Ps 44:25 [24]). Here Ezekiel answers that question and reminds his audience that there was good reason why they were in exile. It will not do to assume that the invariable or even regular answer to the theodicy question is that suffering issues from human sin, but this time, it does.

Ezekiel’s subsequent “therefore” (39:25–29) again indicates only a loose connection with what precedes. It makes for a transition in the chapters and it reestablishes a connection of substance, though not of words, with 37:15–28—retrospectively in MT, prospectively in Papyrus 967. The verses serve “to express … the final security of God’s people in the face of the worst of threats, as well as to reaffirm the fundamental promise of return to the land.”[[40]](#footnote-40) An intriguing feature is their combining characteristic Ezekielian motifs and words with untypical ones, as 39:23–24 did. Like hiding the face, having compassion (רׇחַם piel) occurs only here in Ezekiel, who here indicates that “divine compassion lies hidden behind Ezekiel’s icy-sounding rhetoric of God acting solely for the sake of God’s holy name.”[[41]](#footnote-41) The verb “be passionate” (קׇנׇא piel) is also virtually unique in Ezekiel (cf. 31:9), though Ezekiel often uses the related noun (קִנְאָה, e.g., 38:19). He does picture passion as one of Yahweh’s traits and he is concerned about his sacred name. The notion of continuing to carry shame in a way that can have positive significance compares with the notion of continuing to feel some self-loathing in a way that can have positive significance (36:31). And while Ezekiel has often referred to Yahweh’s spirit, the epilogue ends with the striking unique reference to the pouring out of Yahweh’s spirit on Israel. An implication of the epilogue is either that Ezekiel has acquired a string of new expressions or that this passage points to the hand of someone who identifies with Ezekiel’s thinking but introduces expressions from elsewhere that help to give further expression to that thinking.

In Papyrus 967, in the context of Ezek 38–39 with its riddle and parody, the closing line of Ezek 37 with its reference to the nations acknowledging Yahweh as the one who makes Israel sacred offers a final comment on the riddle as well as leading into Ezek 40–48. In MT, that closing line of Ezek 37 constitutes an anticipatory clue to the riddle, and as Ezek 38–39 covers an aspect of how the nations will come to acknowledge Yahweh, its final verses pick up from where 37:28 left readers, and round off the answer to a question they may or may not have asked. “The overriding objective that determines the whole prophecy is the hallowing of the name of Yahweh before the nations, which is emphasized again and again as a result of the divine judgment now to be executed.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

1. See, e.g., Corinne L. Carvalho, “The God That Gog Creates: ‘Drop the Stories and Feel the Feelings,’” in *The God Ezekiel Creates,* ed*.* Paul M. Joyce and Dalit Rom-Shiloni (LHBOTS 607; London: T&T Clark. 2015), 107-31; Corinne L. Carvalho, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ezekiel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023); Paul E. Fitzpatrick, *The Disarmament of God: Ezekiel 38–39 in Its Mythic Context* (CBQMS 37; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 2004); Anja Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Undersuchungen zu Ez 34–39* (BZAW 391; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008); Lydia Lee, “The Enemies Within: Gog of Magog in Ezekiel 38–39,” *HvTSt* 73/3 (2017); Brian Neil Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context:* ***Ezekiel's****Message Understood in its Historical Setting of Covenant Curses and Ancient Near Eastern Mythological Motifs* (Princeton Theological Monograph 182; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012); William A. Tooman, *Gog of Magog: Reuse of Scripture and Compositional Technique in Ezekiel 38–39* (FAT 2.52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The paper is a spinoff from John Goldingay, *Ezekiel*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2025). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. So Tooman, *Gog*. C. A. Strine (“On the Compositional Models for Ezekiel 38 – 39: A Response to William Tooman’s *Gog of Magog*,” *VT* 67 [2017] 589–601) questions Tooman’s exposition of this understanding, but not the concept itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*,111–69. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tooman (*Gog*, 21–23, 181–82, 187–88) discusses the notion of midrash and uses the word *parody* of 39:11–16 and 17–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr “The Book of Ezekiel: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, 10 volumes (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001) 6:1073–1607 (here, 1532). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. On parody, see Will Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords, and Your Parodied Books into Spears: A New Paradigm for Parody in the Hebrew Bible,” *BibInt* 19 (2011) 276–310. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Johan Lust argues for this view: e.g., “Ezekiel 36–40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript,” *CBQ* 43 (1981) 517–33; “Ezekiel’s Utopian Expectations,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar (JSJSup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 403–19; cf. Ashley S. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration: A Textual-Comparative Exploration of Ezekiel 36–39* (VTSup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 207–64; more recently Michael Konkel, “Die Ezechiel-Septuaginta, Papyrus 967 und die Redaktionsgeschichte des Ezechielbuches-Probleme und Perspektiven am Beispiel von Ez 34,” in Jan Christian Gertz, Corinna Körting, and Markus Witte, ed, *Das Buch Ezechiel: Komposition, Redaktion und Rezeption* (BZAW 516; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 43–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. E.g., Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (LHBOTS 482; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 47–48, 212; Henk Leene, *Newness in Old Testament Prophecy: An Intertextual Study* (OtSt 64; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 172–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. “The Shorter and Longer Texts of Ezekiel: The Implications of the Manuscript Finds from Masada and Qumran,” *JSOT* 32 (2007) 231–42 (here 242). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Lust, “Ezekiel 36–40,” 531–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See, e.g., Shemaryahu Talmon, “Fragments of an Ezekiel Scroll from Masada (Ezek 35:11–38:14) 1043–2220, Mas 1D,” ***OLP*** 27 (1996) 29–49; Eibert Tigchelaar, “Notes on the Ezekiel Scroll from Masada (*MasEzek*),” *RevQ* 22 (2005-6) 269–75. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 253–54. Cf. Lust*,* “Ezekiel’sUtopianExpectations,” 417. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48 (*NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1998), 434. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. C. A. Strine (“*Chaoskampf* against Empire: YAHWEH’s Battle against Gog [Ezekiel 38–39] as Resistance Literature,” in *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, ed. Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl [ANEM 7; Atlanta: SBL, 2014]. 87–108) sees Gog as code for Babylon. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Stephen L. Cook, *Ezekiel 38 – 48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 22B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 434; Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, 132–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48,* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*,449. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. David Altschuler, מצודת דוד, in Miqraʾot Gedolot, as posted on Sefaria.org, on the passage. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Tooman, *Gog*, 28, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Crane (*Israel’s Restoration*, 219) suggests deliberately. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*,453. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 204–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Paul D. Hanson*, The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, revised ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 11. Cf. Robert W. Jenson, *Ezekiel* (Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 290–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1523. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. Brian P. Irwin. “Molek Imagery and the Slaughter of Gog in Ezekiel 38 and 39,” *JSOT* 65 (1995) 93–112. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Margaret S. Odell, “The City of Hamonah in Ezekiel 39:11–16: The Tumultuous City of Jerusalem,” *CBQ* 56 (1994) 479–89. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*,99–103. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Francesca Stavrakopoulou, “Gog's Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39:11–20,” *JBL* 121 (2010) 67–84 (here 84). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*,105. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Rashi, in Miqraʾot Gedolot, as posted on Sefaria.org, on the passage. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29; Dallas: Word, 1990), 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM. 1970), 519. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)