

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The War of Gog and Magog

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An important part in the eschatological drama is assigned to Israel's final combat with the combined forces of the heathen nations under the leadership of Gog and Magog, barbarian tribes of the North (Ezek. 38–39; see Gog and Magog). Assembled for a fierce attack upon Israel in the mountains near Jerusalem, they will suffer a terrible and crushing defeat, and Israel's land will thenceforth forever remain the seat of God's kingdom. Whether originally identical or identified only afterward by Biblical interpretation with the battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 4. [A.V. 3]:12; comp. Zech. 14:2 and Isa. 25:6, where the great warfare against heathen armies is spoken of), the warfare against Gog and Magog formed the indispensable prelude to the Messianic era in every apocalyptic vision (Sibyllines, iii. 319 *et seq.*, 512 *et seq.*, 632 *et seq.*; v. 101; Rev. 20:8; Enoch, lvi. 5 *et seq.*, where the place of Gog and Magog is taken by the Parthians and Medes; 2 Esd. 13:5, "a multitude of men without number from the four winds of the earth"; Syriac Apoc. Baruch, LXX. 7–10; Targ. Yer. to Num. 11:26, 24:17, Ex. 40:11, Deut. 32:39, and Isa. 33:24; comp. Num. 24:7 [Septuagint, Γῶγ for "Agag"]; see Eldad and Medad).

R. Eliezer (Mek., Beshallah, *l.c.*) mentions the Gog and Magog war together with the Messianic woes and the Last Judgment as the three modes of divine chastisement preceding the millennium. R. Akiba assigns both to the Gog and Magog war and to the Last Judgment a duration of twelve months ('Eduy. ii. 10); Lev. R. xix. has seven years

A.V. Authorized Version

comp. compare

Sibyllines Sibylline Books

et seq. and following

et seq. and following

et seq. and following

et seq. and following

Apoc. Apocalypse

LXX. Septuagint

Targ. Yer. Targum Yerushalmi or Targum Jonathan

comp. compare

Mek. Mekilta

l.c. in the place cited

'Eduy. 'Eduyot (Talmud)

Lev. R. Leviticus Rabbah

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instead, in accordance with Ezek. 39:9; Ps. 2:1–9 is referred to the war of Gog and Magog ('Ab. Zarah 3b; Ber. 7b; Pesik. ix. 79a; Tan., Noah, ed. Buber, 24; Midr. Teh. Ps. ii).

The destruction of Gog and Magog's army implies not, as falsely stated by Weber ("Altsynagogale Theologie," 1880, p. 369), followed by Bousset ("Religion des Judenthums," p. 222), the extermination of the Gentile world at the close of the Messianic reign, but the annihilation of the heathen powers who oppose the kingdom of God and the establishing of the Messianic reign (see Enoch, lvi.–lvii., according to which the tribes of Israel are gathered and brought to the Holy Land after the destruction of the heathen hosts; Sifre, Deut. 343; and Targ. Yer. to Num. 11:26).

The Gentiles who submit to the Law are expected to survive (Syriac Apoc. Baruch, 72:4; Apoc. Abraham, xxxi.); and those nations that did not subjugate Israel will be admitted by the Messiah into the kingdom of God (Pesik. R. 1, after Isa. 66:23). The Messiah is called "Hadrach" (Zech. 9:1), as the one who leads the heathen world to repentance (הדריד), though he is tender to Israel and harsh toward the Gentiles (חד ורד: Cant. R. vii. 5). The loyalty of the latter will be severely tested ('Ab. Zarah 2b *et seq.*), while during the established reign of the Messiah the probation time of the heathen will have passed over (Yeb. 24b). "A third part of the heathen world alone will survive" (Sibyllines, iii. 544 *et seq.*, v. 103, after Zech. 13:8; in Tan., Shofetim, ed. Buber, 10, this third part is referred to Israel, which alone, as the descendants of the three patriarchs, will escape the fire of Gehenna). According to Syriac Apoc. Baruch, 40:1, 2, it is the leader of the Gog and Magog hosts who will alone survive, to be brought bound before the Messiah on Mount Zion

'Ab. Zarah 'Abodab Zarah
Ber. Berakot (Talmud)
Pesik. Pesikta de-Rab Kahana
Tan. Tanhuma
Midr. Teh. Midrash Tehillim (Psalms)
Targ. Yer. Targum Yerushalmi or Targum Jonathan
Apoc. Apocalypse
Apoc. Apocalypse
Pesik. Pesikta Rabbati
R. Pesikta Rabbati
Cant. R. Canticles Rabbah
'Ab. Zarah 'Abodab Zarah
et seq. and following
Yeb. Yebamot (Talmud)
Sibyllines Sibylline Books
et seq. and following
Tan. Tanhuma
Apoc. Apocalypse

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and judged and slain. According to 2 Esd. 13:9 *et seq.*, fire will issue forth from the mouth of the Messiah and consume the whole army. This indicates an identification of Gog and Magog with “the wicked one” of Isa. 11:4, interpreted as the personification of wickedness, Angromainyush (see Armilus). In Midrash Wayosha’ (Jellinek, “B. H.” i. 56) Gog is the leader of the seventy-two nations of the world, minus one (Israel), and makes war against the Most High; he is smitten down by God. Armilus rises as the last enemy of God and Israel.¹

et seq. and following

Jellinek, “B. H.” Jellinek, Bet ha-Midrash

¹ Singer, I. (Ed.). (1901–1906). In *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 12 Volumes* (Vol. 5, p. 212). New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls.