

# **THE PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RISE OF CHINA AS A WORLD POWER**

by  
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The rise of China to become a dominant world political force during the past decade has enormous significance from a prophetic point of view. Many students of prophecy believe it signifies a trend that world geopolitical conditions are shaping up for the worlds last great conflict described over nineteen hundred years ago by the Apostle John when he wrote...

"Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the East might be prepared." (Rev 16:12)

These "kings from the east" have befuddled Bible prophecy scholars for many years, for few mentioned anything about them. That is, until the communist take-over of China during World War II. Since then it has become apparent that this largest of all countries in the world has a prophetic role, however minor it may be, in end time events. We can readily understand that, for China has been content to stay within its vast borders for thousands of years and live pretty much to itself. Their communist dictators have changed all that for they seem to have the same obsession that characterized communists before them - world conquest.

## **AMERICA: COMMUNIST CHINA'S PRIMARY TARGET**

One hundred eighty years ago Napoleon Bonapart said, "When China awakens, the world will tremble." You don't have to be a prophet to recognize that time of trembling has already come to Asia and within one decade will probably come to the whole world.

No longer is China, with the world's largest population the paper tiger she has been for almost five thousand years. In our lifetime she has startled the world and frightened many in the military complex with her enormous economic and military potential. Many observers recognize that within ten or at best twenty years China could very well threaten the entire world even more than the Soviet Union did just a decade ago. She already has the nuclear bomb or will have soon and she has a delivery system that is the fear of every country in the Orient. She is trafficking in arms beyond belief by buying them from Russia and any of the former impoverished satellite countries that will sell them and turning around and selling what they do not want to any of their oil rich allies that can afford them, like Iran, Iraq or even India.

Their aggressive demand for Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Spratly Islands proves they have a strategy to control all of Asia. Whoever controls the Spratlys not only controls the oil check points to the oil dependant countries of the East like Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines - but Australia, Indonesia and Singapore - where 50% of the worlds population lives. Basing their claims to these almost uninhabitable islands to centuries old documents, they are probably more interested in the suspected rich oil fields under them than their location. They know that no country can prosper today or in the foreseeable future without oil.

But it is not just the Orient they are interested in. In 1997 they almost negotiated an incredible coup in the Americas. First it was disclosed they had leased an important pier in Long Beach, California, being vacated by the U.S. Navy for their government owned COSCO company to help speed their enormous imports into the United States. Our balance of payments with them already shows a deficit of \$50 billion dollars and is expected to go as high as \$70 or \$100 billion, a tribute to the greed of American capitalists whose concern for profits exceeds their concern for the safety of our country. Another still amazing effort was their attempt to gain a foothold in the Panama Canal area when the U.S. withdraws from that region before the turn of the century. By long term leases at each end of the canal they could virtually control the shipping through the canal. Some military experts believe this could force the United States to have two separate Navy's, for no longer in emergencies could warships be sent to support our naval forces from one ocean to the other - without China's permission. At this writing neither of these negotiations have been finalized, but it does show the long-range goals of the Chinese Communist government.

Keep in mind, China is not controlled by democracy loving liberals like most countries in the world. Their leaders are among the most dedicated communists in the world. They are not "agrarian reformers" or "progressives" as our liberal media tried to represent them a few years ago. They are a ruthless group of elite gangsters who have stolen the opportunity for freedom from the 1.2 billion freedom loving Chinese people and have never wavered in their plan to use China as a military platform from which to conquer the world. The events of the next two decades, if indeed we have that long, will prove that point. It is obvious that the obsession of America's leadership to appease these ruthless communist leaders will strengthen their position and weaken ours. Liberal American leaders have never been able to deal successfully with communists, much less with Oriental communists. Our leaders have assumed when communist gangsters become dictators or "presidents" of their country that they become nice people whose word can be trusted or for that matter, whose signatures on treaties can be trusted. History shows that is a naive concept. Only former President Ronald Reagan who regarded communists for what they were, "an evil empire," understood them. He dealt with diplomacy backed by force, that is why the Soviet Union finally collapsed.

Appeasement seems to be the watchword of the present leadership in our country - which is why the World Bank, which is controlled and financed by the American Taxpayer, has financed the Chinese economy until all experts expect it to challenge our own economy for world markets in ten to twenty years. When I was in Beijing in 1995 I read the English version of the Asian Press and saw the Chinese government bragging about the fact that they had obtained the highest loans from the World Bank of any country on earth. Twenty-two billion dollars! For several years they allowed American companies to buy twenty-five percent of corresponding companies in China (to gain capitol). If you were to drive through Beijing you would no doubt be dumbfounded to see the names of countless American companies that have affiliates in China. This of course has contributed to our enormous trade deficit that has provided China untold billions to support their socialistic economy.

If further evidence is needed that China has indeed awakened from her centuries old economic slumber that should have been erased for those who saw the TV special recently showing that of the ten tallest building in the world, seven of them are in China! (Not exactly

ideal places to be during the enormous earthquakes prophesied for the coming Tribulation period.)

## **THE GREATEST POLITICAL SCANDAL IN AMERICAN HISTORY**

In a desperate attempt to be reelected in 1996, Bill Clinton took millions of dollars in illegal campaign donations for himself and his party. Much of it came from the Chinese Communist government. It is reasonable to ask - What concessions were promised the communist leaders of China in return? For historically using state money as bribery is an accepted path to obtaining national communists objectives. Renewal of Most Favored Nation (MEN) trading status, which the President asked for and received in 1997, was obviously one objective. In spite of the fact that he ridiculed George Bush in 1992 for granting them the same trading preferences.

Even though fifty-five witnesses have fled the country, pleading the Fifth Amendment, or refusing to testify before congress it is common knowledge that special favors were promised for that early cash that bought the TV ads that guaranteed his reelection in 1996.

The payoff that U.S. veterans find most odious is that after the Clinton administration rejected the U.S. Marines request to occupy a strategic pier in Long Beach, California, being abandon by the U.S. Navy during the downsizing of our military - it was leased to the Chinese Communists instead. Prophecy writer and political analysts, John Wheeler Jr., describes it;

In 1996, Clinton and his top aides met with Long Beach officials to urge the city to make the deal with the Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), which promises to infuse fresh money into the cash-strapped local economy. The Chinese would rent the port facility for \$14 million per year.

The huge 600-ship merchant fleet has long been suspected of various illegal activities by U.S. authorities. In 1992 the Federal Maritime Commission fined COSCO \$400,000 for providing illegal kickback in violation of the 1984 U. S. Shipping Act.

In 1996, U. S. Customs agents intercepted a shipment of 2,000 AK-47 assault rifles aboard the COSCO ship Empress Phoenix, which was docked at Oakland, Cal. The weapons were shipped by the Poly Technologies Group and were intended for sale to street gangs in Los Angeles. The main problem with allowing the Chinese to operate a port terminal in the defense-rich environment of Long Beach involves national security.

"I am astonished that we would be providing COSCO, a known tool of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, with a beachhead anywhere in California, but especially in Long Beach, " said the Heritage Foundation's Asian expert, Richard Fisher. "I can't even begin to imagine the degree or amount of under-the-water, on-top-of-the-water and land-based surveillance that would be needed to ensure that COSCO did not use this port for intelligence gathering, insertion or recovery of agents, or other forms of espionage, " Fisher said.

Rep. Gerald Solomon (R-NY), chairman of the House Rules Committee, urged Attorney General Janet Reno to appoint a special counsel to investigate the plan. "Everywhere we turn, we see China taking active measures to compromise, infiltrate, neutralize or otherwise undermine American economic and security interests," Solomon said. "Is this what China is getting in return for its big contributions to Clinton and DNC campaign coffers?"

A Chinese-American entrepreneur named Johnny Chung made more than 50 visits to the White House during Clinton's first term. Chung took six Chinese officials - one of whom was a COSCO adviser- into the White House in 1996. Chung donated \$366,000 to the Democrats during that period, including a \$50,000 contribution he hand-delivered to Hillary Clinton's aide Margaret Williams at the White House, in violation of federal law. The money was later returned to Chung.<sup>1</sup>

Outcries from irritated citizens and veteran groups alerted the U.S. Congress and the agreement was put on hold temporarily, pending the outcome of the 98 elections. In the meantime the recent red carpet treatment extended to the new dictator of China included an October welcome at the White House usually reserved for kings and potentates of friendly nations could also be considered a pay-off. What has many observers worried is that there may still be other secret agreements that must be met which will further compromise the military and industrial security of the United States.

Of one thing we can be certain, China is not going to go away. Liberal Americans who have a long history of trusting socialists and communists fail to recognize the present leaders of China as the real threat they are to the world – and one billion, two hundred million people will not be denied! More important, John the revelator saw them as players on the world scene in the end times.

## **CHINA AND THE BIBLE**

Very little is said about China in the Bible. In fact, what is said includes more than just China, for the term "kings of the east" really means "kings of the rising sun" which would include Japan and possibly other Asian countries. As Dr. John Walvoord, considered the dean of prophecy scholars living today, writes of this expression;

There has been some tendency to take the expression "the kings of the east" literally, "the kings of the sunrise"-as referring specifically to Japan where the rising sun is a symbol of its political power. However, it is more natural to consider the term, "rising sun" as a synonym for east...<sup>2</sup>

Some Bible teachers suggest that "the Smite" referred to in Genesis 10:17 and again in the prophecy of Isaiah 49:12 is where the "land of Sinim" is located. These "Sinites" along with other peoples evidently settled in the east in what we know today as China, after God scattered them from the Tower of Babel, and became isolated from the rest of the world.

There is little doubt that those earliest settlers carried with them after the great flood the stories of creation and the one true God. One of the things early missionaries to China pointed

out is the truth of God in the Chinese pictographic language. My brother-in-law was a missionary to Taiwan for over twenty years and shared with me that the Chinese name for God is "Shang Ti," which is made up of two pictographic symbols, "above" (or heavenly) and "emperor." The Chinese name for God is Heavenly Emperor. In a country that worships many gods it is interesting that the earliest of Chinese characters (going back as some suggest, 4,500 years ago) means they recognized one that is above all emperors, or gods, as the "Heavenly Emperor."

Chuck Missler writes;

Another example is the word "boat" made up of three Chinese characters; vessel, eight and mouth - which could be a carry over from the eight mouths on the ark. The word "beginning" (of sin) combines the pictographs for "woman, secretly and mouth." The Chinese word for devil combines four words; motion, garden, man, and privately. Even more obvious is the word for "desire or covet." It is made up of two trees and the symbol for woman.<sup>3</sup>

Doubtless there are many other Chinese characters that could be traced to Genesis before the Tower of Babel. Another interesting factor students of China find is that the most ancient Chinese calendars are seven-day calendars. Given their pagan background one can only speculate that too is a carry over from Genesis. Geographically the Euphrates River, one of the first rivers mentioned in the Bible, has served for centuries as the natural dividing line between east and west. It is evident to Bible scholars that Judaism and Christianity had an enormous impact on the world west of the Euphrates River, but very little influence on the east. Instead the Master Deceiver has damned the billions of souls of the peoples of the east with a succession of false religions. First there was Confucianism, then Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and combinations of all of them. The dragon, the official symbol of China, overpowered the primitive Biblical teachings possessed by the first settlers with the polytheistic pantheism they have today. The idea that god is all and all is god is really a rejection of the God of the Bible.

There is little doubt that the early settlers of Asia carried with them the account of the one true God and his early acts of creation, the Garden of Eden, the fall, and the world wide flood in the days of Noah. Unfortunately, the devil, the deceiver of the minds and souls of mankind made the Orient his chief capital for the religions of Babylon. In Rome you have Babylonish mysticism mixed with Christianity. In China you have the pure religion of Babylon - Polytheism - the worship of many god's.

Joseph Lam, who loves China, having been born there to missionary parents who spent most of their lives there, believes the national symbol of China, which is a dragon, is the true symbol of the God of China. In the book of Revelation our Lord called him a "liar and deceiver." The Apostle John calls Satan a dragon, and predicts that when he is cast out of Heaven he will deceive billions of people into taking the mark of the beast and worshipping his image (Revelation 13). During the Tribulation that old serpent the devil will lead billions to reject Christ and worship himself.

The story of how he made China and the Orient his personal religious prison, successfully closing them off to the gospel for almost two millenniums is too lengthy to go into here.

Dr. Henry Morris writes of the Chinese;

For ages they have been dominated by religions (Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and others) which are fundamentally evolutionary religions. That is, they all envision an eternal universe, with no concept of a transcendent, omnipotent, personal God who created all things. Their emphasis is solely on present behavior. To them history consists mostly of interminable cycles, without beginning or ending.

Associated with these pantheistic systems was (and is) always the worship of spirits. Whether these are understood as spirits of ancestors or as the spirits of trees and other natural objects, such worship is in reality worship of demons, or fallen angels. Such religions thus are also commonly associated with idolatry. This eastern religion-whatever specific form it may assume in a particular time or place-is essentially the same old worship of idols which God's prophets continually condemned. Comprising a monstrous complex of evolutionary, pantheistic, polytheistic, idolatrous, astrological, animistic humanism, it is merely a variant of the primeval religion introduced by Nimrod at Babel and promulgated through the world by the confusion of tongues and subsequent worldwide dispersion from Babel. By its very nature it lends itself to control of its devotees by demonic influence.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Lam writes;

The Himalayan Mountains of Tibet and Nepal gave Lucifer the high ground he adores (Isaiah 14:13-14). He dwells in high places like the sacred mountains of Taishan in Shandong province. All his false temples are amazingly similar-reaching upward to heaven. Be it at the Tower of Babel, the pyramids of Egypt, the Inca copies of ancient Ziggurats in Mexico, Egypt, or the stupas of Burma-all exalt the concept of man and demons reaching upward. It is no surprise that so many forms of animism, demon worship, Hinduism, and Buddhism have been born in the Himalayan Mountains.<sup>5</sup>

It is not difficult to see how the master deceiver of the souls of men can easily deceive "the kings of the east" and their followers into making the long trek west to the Meggido Valley to do battle with the King of Kings. Already steeped in humanistic religions for centuries and currently controlled by humanistic communists with an obsession for world conquest-their vision of spreading their might and culture over the entire world will make them easy targets for one last gigantic deception - Armageddon.

## **CHINA SUFFERED THE AFFECTS OF ISRAEL'S SIN**

When God performed a biological miracle on the loins of Abraham and Sarah over 3500 years ago, he created a nation He intended to be his "torchbearers" to bring the light of His grace and truth to the whole world. His blessing on the nation during the early reign of Solomon that caused the queen of Sheba to say, "the half has not been told me" (I Kings 10:7), indicates that God wanted to use Israel as a powerful testimony to the peoples and nations of the world that He blesses those who obey Him. Unfortunately, Solomon later disobeyed God and permitted his wives to bring in their pagan worship. After his death many Israelites followed them to paganism. So many that God finally permitted a pagan nation to take them into captivity and their lamp was almost extinguished. Instead of being a nation blessed of God the centuries

showed they incurred the curse of God for their disobedience. The rejection of their own Messiah was of course the last straw and they were driven from the land for eighteen hundred years.

In all probability, one of the areas of the world God intended them to evangelize was east of the Euphrates. Joseph Lam reminds us;

King Solomon traded with China. The ancient Silk Road superhighway went from the New Testament port of Antioch to Changan (Sian). Silk routes also went by sea from Jerusalem to Ningbo in the Tang and Song dynasties. The caravan land routes went through Baghdad and connected with nearly all the ancient capitals from Babylon to Khanbalik (Beijing).<sup>6</sup>

There were plenty of ways to get the message behind those vast mountain passes if Israel had only been faithful to God instead of worshipping idols.

## **CHINA'S ANTI-CHRISTIAN OBSESSION**

The story of missionary efforts in China is a heroic tale, but not nearly as successful as in other countries where the people are not so exposed to demons and spirits of devils. After over one hundred years of courageous efforts there are estimated to be 60 million Christians in China. We all rejoice at this many born again souls, but that is only one half of one percent of the population. Few countries boast of more continuous persecution of Christians that even today is rampant. It has long seemed to us that the U.S. State Department and the current administration are blind to the human rights violations of Christians throughout the world, especially in China. There is however much more than politics involved, there is a satanic struggle in the Orient today, between the spiritual "powers of the air" - Satan, against the Spirit of God.

When we were in Beijing we interviewed several Christians secretly. They know what it is like to be persecuted and to live under the constant threat of persecution. Several of the Christians we talked with indicated they first heard the gospel over short wave radio through which the Spirit of God witnessed to their empty heart. Several were former Buddhists, another committed communist. All admitted emptiness in their hearts prior to turning on the short wave radio broadcasts out of Hong Kong. There is something satanic to the opposition that Christians are subjected to behind the bamboo curtain. While in their country we learned they had two kinds of churches. 1) The approved or mainline churches that agreed not to teach the forbidden doctrines of the inerrancy of Scripture and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (The two doctrines Satan has always opposed!) 2) The underground or house churches teach the whole Bible until they are discovered and imprisoned. It is in these house churches where thousands are coming to Christ each week.

Joseph Lam puts it in perspective;

In the West, we think of bomb-making instructions on the Internet as dangerous. Not to the dragon. To him, the "most dangerous" message on the Internet is the "Second Advent of Christ." The soon return of Christ is the message the thought-police most want to censor out. In fact, in many areas the police are registering modems and even fax machines in order to keep the end-times message of Christ's return from being circulated. You see, Chinese Christians believe passionately that Christ is coming again, not just someday-but "in this generation." The dragon

knows he must stop this Apostolic message of hope. If somehow he can stop these New Testament-style Bible studies, he knows he will cripple Church growth in China.

The kingdom of God and the Second Coming of Christ are the rarest sermon topics preached in China's government-controlled pulpits... The dragon persecutes the house churches because he is terrified of the end-times gospel they preach. This message liberates the people from bondage to their control and so it has to be denounced as "anti-revolutionary" superstition.

- Christians are consistently forbidden the right to do any public evangelism of any kind. Private worship is reluctantly permitted but gospel preaching is banned.
- Directives to the state-controlled churches warn pastors not to preach the message of Revelation.
- Pastors in congregations of the "Three Self Patriotic movement" skip liturgical readings about the second coming of Christ such as Hebrews 9:28 and Rev. 19 and 22:20-21
- Sunday School teachers are not allowed to discuss the "day of the Lord" predicted in both the Old and New Testaments.
- The Olivet Discourse, recorded in three of the four Gospels is forbidden (the most important outline of prophecy in Scripture)
- Many Chinese hymns of advent, missions, judgment, and the millennial reign of Christ are no longer sung in registered Chinese churches. Such music isn't politically correct. Lam concludes, "Nothing so upsets the dragon as the mention of Christ's return, and nothing so comforts the Chinese church and missions. "<sup>7</sup>

I could not help thinking that in America, where pastors have the freedom to preach anything they please, thousands of churches never hear that Second Coming message. Not because they are forbidden by government, but because they were tricked by seminary professors into thinking it is "confusing" or "not relevant for today." Satan uses different tactics in different cultures-anything that will produce silence on the Blessed Hope of Christ's soon return. Why? Because there is no more spiritually motivating teaching in the entire Bible.

### **THE KINGS OF THE EAST DO NOT INCLUDE EZEKIEL 38-39**

Some writers have fused the emergence of China and "the kings of the east" of Revelation 16 with the destruction of Russia and her Arab allies of Ezekiel 38 and 39. A closer examination of the two passages will indicate that they are not the same in people, mission or in timing. The prophet Ezekiel had what today is considered "the near east" coming down against Israel, while John the Revelator saw the kings of the east joining the kings of the whole world to go down to Israel against Christ the Messiah in the Battle of Armageddon. They are definitely two separate battles - at least seven to ten or more years apart.

### **THE IDENTITY OF "GOD AND MAGOG"**

"Magog" is an ancient name for the nation now known as Russia. "Gog" merely means "the chief prince of Magog," or more literally, the chief prince of "Meshech and Tubal" (Ezekiel



38:2-3; 39:1). Genesis 10 helps to establish the identity of these people. Magog was the second son of Japheth who, according to Josephus, the great Jewish historian, settled north of the Black Sea. Tubal and Meshech were the fifth and sixth sons of Japheth, and their descendants settled south of the Black Sea. It is believed that these people intermarried and became known as Magog, the dominant tribe. The name "Moscow" derives from the tribal name "Meshech," and "Tobolsk," the name of the principal state, from "Tubal." The noun "Gog" is from the original tribal name "Magog," which gradually became "Rash," then "Russ," and today is known as "Russia."

Another significant reason for identifying Russia as Magog is her geographical location. The Bible usually describes geography in relation to Israel. For example, "south" means south of Israel' "north" signifies north of Israel. The only likely exception would come in this instance, in that Ezekiel was in Babylon when he spoke the prophecy. A case could be made that he may have meant "north of Babylon" when he said, "You will come from your place in the far north" (38:15), or "I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel" (39:2).

While looking at a map it is easy to see that it doesn't matter whether one starts in Israel or Babylon; north in either case leads to the broad expanse of the former Soviet Union. Unquestionably the invading forces that will march against the nation Israel, recalled from the nations of the world and established in her own land, will be led by Russia.

## **RUSSIA'S ALLIES**

There is general agreement today on the identity of Russia's allies as primarily the Muslim countries. The only war that Russia has ever fought alone was being lost to Afghanistan. We can be certain that the Russians will not invade Israel alone. The prophet stipulates that they will bring "many nations with you,... hordes gathered about you" (Ezekiel 38:6-7). But he also notes that Russia will be in command (v. 7).

Russia's confederates, as disclosed in Ezekiel 38:5-6, are among her current friends. Those not in her orbit of friends at present are being cultivated either secretly or openly. When Russia comes down to invade Israel, she will use Middle East hatred of the Jews to her advantage and inveigle these nations to help her in the fighting.

This will probably be the most massive invasion army assembled in the history of the world - all in opposition to Israel, a nation of less than 4 million people. For the first time since World War II, Israel's friends will betray her.

When Russia's invasion forces rattle their spears, the western democracies, including America, will use the impotent instrument of diplomacy instead of the one power that all terrorists, murderers, dictators, and lawless individuals or nations understand: force.

## **GOD DELIVERS ISRAEL**

The scenario that develops at this point in our prophetic story is exciting. Confronted by overwhelming forces from Russia and forsaken by her friends, Israel will turn to God, and He will do for modern Israel what He did for ancient Israel. As the God over all forces, He will deliver Israel from the hands of the oppressor. As certain as it is that Russia and her Middle East hordes will come down against Israel, so certain is it that God will destroy the invading forces and deliver Israel supernaturally.

The prophet does not leave us in doubt as to the methods that God will use in this destruction. It is noteworthy that this is not the first time they will have been used by the Almighty, for all of them have precedence in the Old Testament.

#### 1. A mighty earthquake

"For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, 'so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.'" Ezekiel 38:19-20

Evidently God permits the Russians and their hordes to begin an airborne invasion while the infantry launches a ground assault. But at a strategic moment He generates a powerful and destructive earthquake that causes people to "tremble" at His presence. This catastrophe will manifest the power of a supernatural God.

#### 2. The sword of the Lord

"I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord God. "Every man's sword will be against his brother." Ezekiel 38:21

#### 3. Plague and bloodshed

"And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed..." Ezekiel 38:22

#### 4. Floods, hailstones, burning sulfur

"...I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Ezekiel 38:22

### **"WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?"**

Whenever we discuss the future events of Bible Prophecy, someone immediately asks, "When will this take place?" Admittedly, Bible teachers do not concur as to the "when" of this event. But for at least four reasons it cannot be confused with the Battle of Armageddon.

1. Armageddon is not directed against Israel, but constitutes an attack on the part of the world's nations against Christ (see Revelation 16:12-21 and 19:11-21). The deception of the Antichrist and his insane hatred of Jesus Christ at the end of the tribulation period will culminate with his bringing together - even from the Orient over the dried-up river Euphrates - hordes of people against, not Israel, but Jesus Christ, the coming King. That

he will utterly fail is clearly predicted in Revelation 19. However, this Scripture passage should not be confused with Ezekiel 38 and 39, which to even a casual reader plainly states that Israel is the object of Gog and Magog's hatred. These two attacks are unique and distinct, and I believe they will occur at least ten or more years apart.

2. No one-world government is functioning during the events in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The destruction of Russia, as revealed by God to His prophet, will come at a time when - as we have already seen - Israel is the central focus of two confederations of nations. These two confederations - the northeastern confederation of Russia and her hordes vs. the western democracies that do not come to the aid of Israel, cannot coexist in the one-world government predicted by our Lord and His prophets for the seven-year Tribulation.
3. Gog comes from the North, the Antichrist from Europe. Gog the prince and Magog the country are predicted to come from the "north parts" (Ezekiel 38:15). According to Daniel 7:8, 24, and 26, the Antichrist comes out of Rome, a mixed blood of Romans, Greeks, and possibly Jews.
4. It takes seven years to burn the implements of war (Ezekiel 39:8-10). Armageddon occurs at the end of the Tribulation just before the Millennium. This in turn, according to II Peter 3, begins with a renovation of the earth by fire. It is certain that the Jews will not spend the first seven winters of the Millennium burning the implements of war left over from the Tribulation. Taking these four reasons together, we can only conclude that Ezekiel 38 and 39 are not to be confused with Armageddon. Instead, they occur ten or more years earlier, prior to the tribulation period.

### **WHEN DOES ISRAEL BURN WAR IMPLEMENTS?**

In Ezekiel 39:8-10 we find that after Russia has been supernaturally destroyed, "Those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up... For seven years they will use them for fuel." Obviously the Israelis are not going to pile all the war implements together and make an enormous bonfire. In a land that enjoys quite mild winters, they will use the weapons for fuel for seven seasons instead of gathering firewood from the forests.

Two facts stand out in bold relief. First, Israel will enjoy seven years of peace after Russia is destroyed; second, for seven winters they will be reminded of God's supernatural intervention on their behalf as they burn the implements of war. It is vitally important that we locate these seven years chronologically, because they are the key to the period in which the Soviet Union will be destroyed.

God has not left us without information regarding His plans for the future. For the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel during the latter 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. According to Revelation 12, this event will unleash the harshest anti-Semitic persecution the world has ever known - a fiery furnace arranged for the Jews by the Antichrist. Russia will have to be destroyed at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation begins, for the Jews to have seven years in which to burn the implements of war.

The entire seven-year period of burning could occur before the Tribulation begins, but there is no way to be certain of this. We can only speculate as to whether the seven-year period occurs entirely before the Tribulation. We know that it cannot extend beyond the Tribulation.

## **WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?**

Most premillennial scholars place the rapture of the church before the Tribulation. The biggest misconception of some pretribulationists is that the Second Coming of Christ for His church (the Rapture) and the beginning of the tribulation are simultaneous. They may be, but no passage of Scripture requires it. We must remember that the Tribulation is not started by the rapture of the church but by the signing of the covenant between the Antichrist and Israel.

Admittedly, I Thessalonians 4:17-18 and II Thessalonians 2- which describe the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the revelation of the man of sin or Antichrist - parallel the signing of the covenant. But it is important not to tie them together. The Rapture could take place several years prior to the tribulation period. The closer we get to the actual occurrence of these events, however, the more we are inclined to believe that they could happen in close succession. If they do indeed occur in close proximity or simultaneously, the church will still be on earth when Russia invades Israel and is destroyed by God.

Any chronology of the Rapture and the invasion of Israel is speculative and should be given wide flexibility. However, it is instructive to examine some of the possibilities.

## **WHEN WILL GOD DESTROY RUSSIA?**

Having considered the possibilities for the seven years when the implements of war are burned, we can only speculate on the possible time of the invasion of Israel and the subsequent destruction of Russia. Although we know they will take place a minimum of 3 1/2 years before the Tribulation, no one can predict when the Tribulation will occur; the exact time of our Lord's return is known only to God.

One thing is certain - Russia and her hordes will be destroyed before the Antichrist arrives on the scene and signs his covenant with Israel. So which comes first: Russia's destruction or Christ's return?

There is no simple and dogmatic answer to the question of whether Russia's destruction comes before Christ's return. The Bible does not offer conclusive evidence, and my suggested answer should be regarded as somewhat speculative.

The Rapture may occur in any of four possible time sequences: before Russia is destroyed, immediately afterward, long afterward, or simultaneously with the signing of the covenant between the Antichrist and Israel

1. "You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me,

when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes... 'so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground" (38:16,20).

2. "Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD" (38:23).
3. "And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the LORD" (39:6).
4. "So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel," (39:7a).
5. "and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel" (39:7b).
6. "I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them: (39:21).
7. "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward" (39:22).
8. "When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer" (39:27-28). God, in remaining generally silent for the past 1,900 years, has chosen to make the skeptics believe in Him by faith rather than by physical demonstration. The destruction of Russia will be a striking exception.

## **THE MOST MEMORABLE DAY IN MODERN HISTORY**

This world has known many memorable days: the creation of the earth, the flood in the days of Noah, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since then, nothing in the physical world shows the irrefutable hand of God in terms that the most sophisticated unbeliever can understand.

When our Lord walked on the earth, He performed such mighty miracles that even His greatest enemies had to acknowledge that He was endowed with supernatural power. Thinking people who saw Him walk on water, calm the troubled storms, multiply a boy's lunch to feed thousands of people, heal all manner of diseases, cast out demons, and even raise the dead were forced to admit, "No one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2).

The Sovereign Lord will intervene at a climatic time in world history and instantly solve one of its greatest problems by completely eliminating Russia and their Muslim allies. In one dynamic moment He will judge Russia, save Israel, and prove to the most skeptical minds that a supernatural God does exist. I can grieve over the enormous loss of human life that such an event will cause; but I can also rejoice in God's willingness to manifest His supernatural power so that all the world will know that He is the Lord. Notice carefully, there is nothing here that indicates China or the kings of the east are involved at all.

That "memorable day" will spark in many a personal belief in the existence of an omnipotent God. The skeptical nations and even the skeptics living in Israel will believe. The result will be the greatest soul harvest in history. That alone could explain why He wants all the world to know that He is the Lord!

### **NOT A 200 MILLION MAN ARMY!**

In the May 21st 1965 issue of TIME Magazine the author of an article on China threw a hand grenade into the laps of prophecy preachers by stating that The Chinese had the potential of yielding an army of "200 million troops." <sup>8</sup>

That specific number, coincidentally identical to the one found in Revelation 9:16, predicting that during the Tribulation period at the blowing of the sixth Trumpet judgment, 200 million horsemen would be unleashed and would go out to slay "one third of men." This similarity in number of troops triggered an outbreak of speculation that found many suggesting that the two hundred million would come with the kings of the east to do battle with Christ at the consummation of the end of this age known as The Battle of Armageddon.

While there is no question that the armies of the Orient, which come to that bathe, at the very end of the Tribulation, will be enormous, due to the incredible population of those countries. It definitely is not the 9:16 army. Consider the following reasons...

- In the first place, that army goes out during the sixth seal, which occurs near the middle of the Tribulation, the 16:12 army goes out at the end of the Tribulation.
- The 200 million in 9:16 are not humans, they are demons, they do things that men cannot do and have a supernatural affect on the earth.
- They kill one third of the world population, or approximately one and a half billion people from the Euphrates to the Holy Land. The fact is there aren't that many people in the entire region. In addition, Revelation 9 has a worldwide view.
- The TIME Magazine article included all the men and women under arms in China, including their local militias or defense forces. There is no way in this world the communist government could risk committing all their military and armament to the middle east for they know their freedom hungry citizens would revolt before they got back. Besides, the logistics of moving an army of 200 million from the Orient across the Euphrates and the Arabian Desert to the little land of Israel seems impossible. That would

consist of four times as many troops as were utilized in all of World War 11 and that stretched from the South Pacific through Europe and into the near east and lasted over five years. This battle is accomplished in a matter of days.

For these and other reasons it is not realistic or scripturally necessary to assume that the armies of 16:12 are synonymous with those of 9:16. It is more likely that when the Euphrates River, the natural boundary between east and west for sixteen hundred miles is "dried up," that the "kings of the east" will march a sizable army across to battle with the King of Kings. That army will probably be more like three to five million strong. Remember, they will be joined in the valley of Meggido by huge armies from all over the world and while that valley is vast and as Napoleon has said, "the most ideal natural battlefield in the world," even it has a limit to how many people it can hold.

### **"WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE?"**

The significance of the rise of China at this strategic time in history to the point that she is becoming a principle player among the nations of the world was not lost on the perceptive prophecy expert Dr. John Walvoord. He saw the prophetic significance of their rise to prominence back in 1967 when he wrote;

The fact that the rise of Asia has occurred in our twentieth century with so many rapid and unexpected developments is another evidence that the world is moving toward its final climax and the end of the times of the Gentiles. In Asia, as in other parts of the world, the stage is being set for the final drama in which the kings of the east will have their important part.<sup>9</sup>

If he were writing on that subject today he might be inclined to say the curtain is about to rise. We are convinced that the rise of China to world prominence economically and militarily in our day is prophetically speaking a most significant event. For we are the first generation that has witnessed the sleeping giant of China reach the potential of fulfilling this prophecy. No one doubts that unless something drastic and unforeseen occurs soon, China will gain control of most of the countries of the east, with whom she shares many religious and cultural similarities. That she could be led in these very days by her master, the dragon, "that old serpent, the devil" the deceiver of men, to so rebel against God that she would actually join the armies of the world in opposition to the Coming of Jesus Christ is realistic. What is needed to bring them to that capability? Very little! Just the deceiving spirit forward by John the Revelator. They are almost there today and could gain control of the entire Orient in ten or at most twenty years.

And remember, this does not take place until seven years after the rise of the antichrist, which follows the rapture of the church. More than enough time to prepare to fulfill 16:12! Just one more reason we have to believe Christ may return for His church in our generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens' Intelligence Digest, May 1997, article by John Wheeler, Jr., CLINTON AND THE CHINESE BANDITS.

<sup>2</sup> THE NATIONS IN PROPHECY by John Walvoord, pp. 141, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> THE SLEEPING DRAGON AWAKES by Chuck Missler, pp.19, Koinania House, Inc., Coeur d'Alene, ID, 1996.

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<sup>4</sup> THE REVELATION RECORD by Dr. Henry M. Moms, pp.308-309, Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA, 1983.

<sup>5</sup> CHINA, THE LAST SUPERPOWER by Joseph Lam, pp. 56, New Leaf Press, Green Forest, AR, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.57.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp.102-103.

<sup>8</sup> TIME Magazine, May 21, 1965, pp. 35.

<sup>9</sup> THE NATIONS IN PROPHECY by John Walvoord, pp. 142, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976.