

PSALM 83 – SOME BRIEF THOUGHTS

Psalm 83 is an intriguing prophetic Psalm which most Bible Scholars agree has not been totally fulfilled. If it is indeed a prophecy of a future war, could this war issue in the time of Jacob's trouble. Could a refusal by Israel to cede Jerusalem, etc or an attack by Israel on Iran's nuclear plants be the precursor to this conflict?

Ps 83: ¹ A SONG. A PSALM OF ASAPH.

¹ O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!

² For behold, your enemies make an uproar (Ps 2); those who hate you have raised their heads. (Judges 8:28) ³ They lay crafty plans (Neh 4:8) against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones.

⁴ They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!" (Jer 48:2; Ps 74:8; Esther 3:6)

⁵ For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant—

⁶ the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, (Gen 25:12-16) Moab and the Hagrites (1 Chron 5:10), (*2 Chron 20)

⁷ Gebal (Josh 13:5 – Lebanon) and Ammon and Amalek (1 Sam 15:2 – Amalekites lived in Israel's southern desert), Philistia (Amos 1:6 – Gaza) with the inhabitants of Tyre (Lebanon) ;

⁸ Asshur (Assyria – Iraq & maybe Iran) also has joined them; they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. *Selah*

⁹ Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, (Defeat of Canaanites under Deborah & Barak (Jg 4,5);

¹⁰ who were destroyed at En-dor (Joshua 17:11, 1 Sam 28:7), who became dung for the ground (Job 20:7).

¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, (Defeat of the Midianites under Gideon (Jg 7,8))

¹² who said, "Let us take possession for ourselves of the pastures of God."

¹³ O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind. (Is 17:13)

¹⁴ As fire consumes the forest, (Is 10:16-19) as the flame sets the mountains ablaze (Deut 32:22),

¹⁵ so may you pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane!

¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame, (Job 19:15) that they may seek your name, O LORD.

¹⁷ Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace,

¹⁸ that they may know that you alone, (Ex 6:3 – the path to freedom) whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth. (ESV)

Probably written in the 8th or 9th century BC when the land of Judah was in danger of invasion.

These Old Testament territories are in modern times the nations of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria and the *Philistines* represent the Palestinian Arabs in Gaza.

Edom, Moab, and Ammon occupied what is the modern state of Jordan. *Gebal* is Lebanon (Joshua 13:5,6.)

Iraq was populated by the *Hagarenes or Hagarites* that dwelt east of Gilead in the wilderness of the River Euphrates (1 Chronicles 5:1,9,10.) The *Ishmaelites* settled what is today Saudi Arabia and *Ishmael's eldest son*, Nabajoth, is identified with Syria. *Lebanon (Gebal)* and *Tyre* play a prominent role in Psalm 83.

Hezbollah is headquartered in Tyre which has been heavily attacked by Israel's army in the last war with Hezbollah. Back in the 1970s the PLO had 6,000 Palestinian terrorists in southern Lebanon creating havoc in Galilee, northern Israel. Thousands more Palestinians were amassed in the environs of Tyre where Arafat was headquartered.

Psalm 83 was probably written some time after the reign of King Solomon but before Assyria's march through the Middle East, but the Bible contains no account of such a coordinated effort by all of Israel's neighbors to destroy them during that time.

A partial fulfillment may be in view in **2 Chron. 20** when Moab, Ammon, and Edom invaded Judah during King Jehosaphat's reign (872-848 BC).

Interestingly, Jahaziel, a Levite who prophesied Judah's victory in that battle was a descendant of Asaph, who wrote **Psalm 83**. Applying one of his favorite tactics, the Lord set Israel's enemies against each other and they defeated themselves. **Ezekiel 38:21** tells of a future use of this same tactic.

But the battle of **2 Chron. 20** doesn't fully meet the requirements of **Psalm 83**, so on that basis we have some reasons for suspecting its fulfillment is still in the future, perhaps the very near future.

Paul Herring, April 2008