

PSALM 83 AND THE RISING STORM

A Pattern of Conflict Leading to Ezekiel 38

Not everyone agrees on whether Psalm 83 speaks prophetically about a future conflict or reflects past hostilities that Asaph himself witnessed. I understand it as a prophetic psalm, since no historical conflict fully matches the coalition of nations described in the passage.

While ultimately pointing to a future event, the psalm also reflects a recurring pattern throughout Israel's history—hostile nations uniting in their desire to “cut Israel off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”

What is clear is that Israel has experienced conflict with each of these nations at various points throughout her history, though not all at the same time. Since regaining statehood in 1948, Israel has continually faced hostility from surrounding nations, openly declaring their desire to wipe Israel off the map. These conflicts have increased and will continue to increase and intensify until Israel and her neighbors, led by Russia, enter the Ezekiel 38 confrontation. In that future conflict, Israel will face destruction at the hands of her enemies, and God will intervene to destroy those enemies. With this in mind, Israel's current conflict does not yet fulfill Psalm 83, since not all the nations mentioned in the psalm are involved in the present war. If this is truly a prophesy of a future conflict, then it must fulfill the details recorded in the psalm.

Psalm 83, then, can be understood not merely as a single prophetic event but as a recurring pattern woven throughout Israel's history. The psalm describes a familiar cycle: surrounding nations conspiring together with the shared goal of erasing Israel's identity and existence. This pattern has repeated itself from Old Testament times through our twenty-first century, surfacing in various forms—sometimes through military coalitions, sometimes through political alliances, and often through ideological hostility. Each resurgence of this pattern echoes the psalmist's cry, revealing how deeply rooted and persistent this opposition has been.

Seen this way, Psalm 83 becomes a lens through which to view Israel's ongoing struggles rather than a one-time prediction awaiting fulfillment. The hostilities of 1948, 1967, 1973 (1), and the many conflicts since all reflect the same underlying theme: Israel surrounded by adversaries who seek her destruction. Yet the Bible indicates that this pattern will ultimately culminate in the far greater and final coalition described in Ezekiel 38. That future invasion will not simply resemble Psalm 83—it will parallel and surpass it, gathering nations on a scale and with a unity that no previous conflict has matched. Psalm 83 foreshadows the frequency and intensity of hostility, while Ezekiel 38 reveals where the hatred will lead.

The sobering reality is that what we see unfolding today—its global impact on economies, governments, and societies—still represents the “good times” compared to what is coming. As the old saying goes, “You ain't seen nothing yet.”

Keep praying.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Most of all—don't give in to the darkness that increasingly hovers over us.

(1) 1948, War of Independence; 1967, Six Day War; 1973, Yom Kipper War

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