

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXXXIII. Handling Troubling Prophecy Errors On The Gaza War
(Psalm 83:1-18 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The Hamas attack on Israel that led to the Gaza war has raised concerns by world leaders that the struggle might spread into a wider conflict, and it has sparked unsettling rumors on the fulfillment of end time prophecies:

(1) President Joe Biden has moved heavily armed American war ships into position off of Israel's western Mediterranean coast to discourage Russia and Iran from getting involved in the war while the president also seeks the release of American citizens who are still cornered or captured in Gaza.

(2) Some prophecy buffs suggest that Psalm 83:5-8 that we will study in today's sermon predicted the current Gaza war, and that after God gives Israel victory in Gaza as allegedly predicted by Psalm 83, Russia and her allies will invade Israel, fulfilling the Ezekiel 38-39 prophecy when God supernaturally destroys those invaders. ("Psalm 83 and the Coming Battle for Israel," free.messianicbible.com) If this were true, then we would witness the destruction not only of Russia, but of her allies who are identified in Ezekiel 38:1-6 as Iran, some Arab States, Germany, and some Asiatic peoples, what would head us into the campaign of Armageddon! (J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, 1972, p. 326-331) The belief that we would then face Armageddon is a very unsettling one, for it would mean that we would also need to face the antichrist who is predicted to be involved in Armageddon in Revelation 19:17-20.

(3) In addition, other prophecy enthusiasts have claimed that Psalm 83 predicted "Israel's 1948 War for Independence" or that Israel's "1967 Six-Day War" fulfilled this psalm, but upon later reflection, both claims were found to err because the ten-nation confederacy Israel faces in Psalm 83:5-8 does not precisely match the nations Israel fought in either of those two former wars. (Ibid., free.messianicbible.com)

(4) Besides all such prophetic speculations, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 claims that we Christians in the dispensation of the Church must not become unsettled by thinking that we will face the antichrist, for God will take us to heaven in the pretribulation rapture before the antichrist is revealed to the world! Accordingly, we need to handle troubling prophecy errors on the current Gaza war so that we might know how to live and minister for Christ today!

Need: *So, we ask, "How can we discern the truth about Biblical prophecy as it relates to the current Gaza war?!"*

- I. Psalm 83 mentions a historical war that Israel faced in David's era so that it is not even a prophecy:**
- A. The list of nations who oppose Israel in Psalm 83 include 2 nations that Israel cannot face now or in the future:
 - 1. The "Hagarenes" of verse 6d KJV (better "Hagarites" as in 1 Chr. 5:10, 20-22 KJV) are *not* Egyptians who descended from Sarah's mistress Hagar as some say, but tribes in the Syrian and North Arabian desert in David's era. (Ibid., free.messianicbible.com; Ryrie S. B., KJV, 1978, ftns. to Psa. 83:6-7 & 1 Chr. 5:10)
 - 2. "Gebal" in verse 7a KJV is *not* Byblos north of Israel as some say, but an area south of Israel between the Dead Sea and Petra, Ibid., free.messianicbible.com; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Ps. 83:6-7; Z. P. E. B., v. 2, p. 668.
 - B. Thus, *the conflict Israel faced in Psalm 83 occurred in antiquity so that Psalm 83 is not even a prophecy!*
- II. Therefore, Psalm 83:1-18 testifies how its author Asaph applied the Mosaic Covenant in the theocracy of ancient Israel in the dispensation of the Mosaic Law to gain God's deliverance of Israel from her foes:**
- A. The Mosaic Covenant promised Israel victory over her enemies if she obeyed God, Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 7.
 - B. Since Israel was in right relationship with God in David's era, when Israel's enemies at that time gathered in a conspiracy against her, the psalmist in faith in God pleaded with God for His deliverance, Psalm 83:1-8.
 - C. Asaph recalled God's past deliverances of Israel in Gideon's victory over the Midianites and their rulers Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna and Israel's victory over the Canaanites with their rulers Sisera and Jabin at the River Kishon as hope for God's deliverance from Israel's many enemies in Asaph's era, Psalm 83:9-12.
 - D. The psalmist asked for God's vengeance on these enemies in accord with Deuteronomy 32:35.
 - E. Asaph asked that God thus glorify Himself before all as the Most High God over all the earth, Psalm 83:18.

Lesson: *With Israel encircled by Gentile foes in David's era, the psalmist in line with Israel's covenant relation with God as a theocracy called on Him for help and vengeance on their foes, and God delivered the nation.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) Since Psalm 83 applies to believers in the dispensation of the*

Law who were in a theocracy, the only application of this psalm that we in the dispensation of the Church can make is prayer for God's help from foes who hinder His will for us in our dispensation. (3) Scriptures applicable to our handling the issues of concern in our introduction today are thus supplied in the Conclusion section below.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

To answer the questions raised by unsettling prophecy enthusiasts in our introduction, we view Scripture:

(1) First, we identify the rules of interpreting Bible prophecy correctly (as follows): (a) Contrary to Amillennialism that interprets Bible prophecy figuratively to make the Church replace Israel in God's program, we interpret all Scripture **literally** as taught by Christ in Mark 12:18-27. There, He showed the Sadducees that they erred in believing that the soul ceased to exist at death so that they thought it was illogical to believe in a resurrection when Jesus used the literal, grammatical and historical contexts of Exodus 3:6 to prove that the souls of the patriarchs still existed hundreds of years after they had died when God appeared to Moses at the burning bush. (b) When God then gave Abram the promise that his seed would possess the Promised Land in Genesis 15:18-21, He promised **literally** to give them the land stretching from the "river" (Hebrew *nahar*, B. D. B., *A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 625-626) of Egypt, i. e., the Nile (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Gen. 15:18) to the River Euphrates in today's Iraq, land that Israel has never yet possessed. She must thus still be able to possess it in her Kingdom that must yet occur. (c) When God gave this promise, He made Abram fall into a deep sleep so that he could not move while God alone passed between the sacrificial animal parts, Genesis 15:9-21. This made God's **literal** covenant with Abraham depend solely on God and not on Abraham or his seed's righteousness. Thus, no sin by Abraham or by his descendants can replace Israel with the Church in God's program opposite the claim by Amillennialists, so God must yet give Israel her Kingdom.

(2) Second, the Daniel 9:24-26 prophetic "weeks" or better, "sevens" according to Daniel 9:1-2 with Jeremiah 25:11-12 and Leviticus 26:33-35 are based on Israel's being in captivity in Babylon for 70 years for her failure to observe her land sabbaths that occurred every seventh year for 490 years. Since the first 69 "sevens" have been fulfilled **literally** over a 483-year time span up to the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey on March 30th, A. D. 33 (H. W. Hoehner, *Chron. Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 1979, p. 139), but since the 70th "seven" has yet to occur, and as Christ was "cut off" or executed **after** the 69th "seven" had **ended** (Daniel 9:26a), and since the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed 37 years later in A. D. 70 by Rome in fulfillment of Daniel 9:26b, we are currently in an **undisclosed extended** period of time **between** the **end** of the 69th "seven" in God's dealing with Israel and the start of His 70th "seven" of dealing with Israel and the antichrist's interactions with Israel in the yet future Tribulation Period.

(3) Accordingly, the war and desolation predicted in Daniel 9:26c will continue until Christ takes the Church to heaven in the "pretribulation rapture" (See "(5)" below). For rejecting Christ, Israel faces God's discipline, six cycles of which discipline Moses in Leviticus 26:14-39 predicted would occur if Israel kept sinning against God. The sixth cycle in Leviticus 26:36-39 includes the past World War II Holocaust and Israel's still future suffering under the antichrist in Daniel 9:27 in the Tribulation Period! (J. V. McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, 1981, vol. I)

(4) Thus, ***the ONLY prophecy that remains to be fulfilled before the rapture of the Church is the Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 prediction of God's "overcomer(s)" in our current era of the "Laodicean Church" where we face a "mini-Great Tribulation."*** We thus hold that after the rapture that is predicted to occur in Revelation 4:1-2 after the end of our current Laodicean Church era in Revelation 3:14-22, the antichrist will be revealed and will make a seven-year peace treaty with Israel as predicted in Daniel 9:27a. Just before the middle of that seven-year period, Russia and her allies will invade Israel and be supernaturally destroyed by God to fulfill Ezekiel chapters 38-39. That will leave an imbalance of power that the antichrist, who will rule the revived Roman Empire, will exploit by breaking his treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27b) by invading her and the entire Middle East and north Africa, Daniel 11:45. Reacting to this extensive invasion by the antichrist, the "kings of the East" will move to intercept the antichrist (Daniel 11:44; Revelation 16:12), and Christ will then begin His descent from heaven to the earth in His Second Coming, with the armies of East and West joining to oppose Him at Armageddon (Zechariah 14:1-3). Christ will destroy these armies (Revelation 19:11-21) and set up His 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom of Israel and the world, Revelation 20:1-6.

(5) So, ***our part as believers in Church History era is NOT to be unsettled by false claims that we will face the end time antichrist and Armageddon (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), but that we be settled in staying preoccupied with serving the Lord, for God has destined us to obtain the glory of our Savior in the pretribulation rapture that occurs BEFORE the Tribulation Period (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17). The unsaved world will face the Tribulation for rejecting Christ, but we are not guilty of rejecting Him, so God will deliver us from facing that judgment.***

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. If we face foes to God's calling for us, may we call upon Him for deliverance that we might achieve His will and stay preoccupied with every good word and work until He calls us home to heaven in the rapture.