

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

## Psalm 83, Ezekiel 38, and the Coming Battles for Israel

ISRAEL MAGAZINE

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“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets.” (*Amos 3:7*)

End-time experts are talking a lot about the Gog-Magog war of Ezekiel 38–39, a prophecy that predicts a powerful confederacy, apparently led by Russia, that is destined to someday invade Israel. Some think that its fulfillment is even knocking at our door.

But a lesser known prophecy is gaining momentum and importance for our day: Psalm 83, in which a different confederacy attempts to wipe out Israel.

This psalm seems to be addressing current issues in the Middle East—nations conspiring to destroy Israel.



An Israeli soldier and his girlfriend read from the Book of Psalms (Tehillim) during a visit to the grave of a friend who died defending

### Asaph's Vision of a Future War

“O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God. See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads.” (*Psalm 83:1–2*)

Psalm 83 is more than a prayer or a plea to God for vengeance on Israel's enemies; it reveals that a 10-member confederacy wants to destroy the Chosen People and possess the Promised Land.

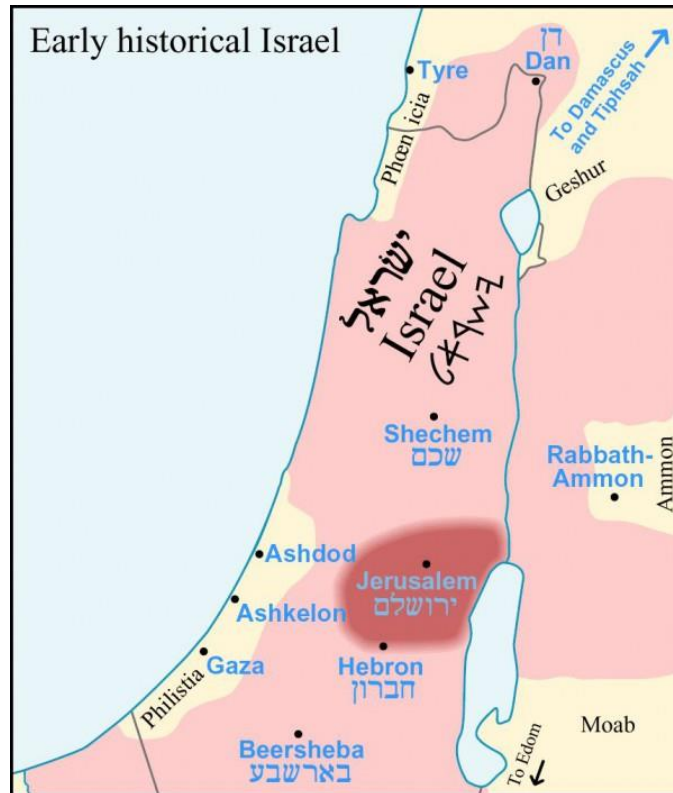
This psalm, however, was not written during a time of war. It was written some 3,000 years ago by King David's worship leader, Asaph, during a time of great prosperity, liberty, and peace.

King David had decisively triumphed over Israel's enemies, and Israel could expand freely since the

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superpowers of Egypt and Assyria were both declining. (Aish)

David's kingdom, therefore, extended from the Red Sea to the Euphrates.



■ = A rough approximate map of the lands inhabited by Israelites or under *direct* central royal administration during the United Monarchy (according to the Bible). This is basically what is referred to by the recurring Biblical phrase "from Dan to Beersheba". ■ = The central core of ancient Judea. This area was part of a Jewish kingdom, or a Jewish province within a larger empire, almost continuously from the days of King David down to 135 CE.

## Early Historical Israel

But Asaph was not just a worshiper; according to 2 Chronicles 29:30, he was also a **chozeh** (seer or prophet).

As a prophet, **Asaph saw beyond this period of peace, to a time when this confederacy would seek the utter destruction of Israel.** That time now seems to be nearing.

"Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more." (Psalm 83:4)

Even though Asaph's vision was received in a time of peace, it must have been cause for some concern since **many named in the confederacy had previously demonstrated their hatred.**

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Of course, even today, conspiring against the Jewish People is considered nothing new. From the Philistines to the Nazis, the Jewish People have been plotted against.

“See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.” (*Psalm 83:2–3*)



The Nazis forcibly remove men, woman, and children from Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 after crushing the Jewish resistance that opposed Nazi Germany’s effort to transport the remaining Ghetto population to the Treblinka extermination camp.

## The Coalition’s Motive: Break the Abrahamic Covenant

“With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you.” (*Psalm 83:5*)

The ten-member coalition of Psalm 83 forms a covenant with each other against not only the nation of Israel, but the God of Israel

**The coalition is not satisfied to only destroy Israel as a nation; they want to wipe out the memory of the name of Israel; in effect, breaking the Abrahamic Covenant.**

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In the Abrahamic covenant, God pledges that a Chosen People will come through Abraham (*Genesis 22:17–18*), through Isaac (*Genesis 26:2–4*), and through Jacob (*Genesis 28:14*) and that God would give them the Promised Land (*Genesis 15:18; Joshua 1:4*).

“The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, ... ‘For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.’” (*Genesis 26:2–4*)



**God shows Abraham the Stars, by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld**

Of course, if through a human coalition the adversary could wipe out the name of Israel, that would effectively make the God of Israel look powerless and a liar in the face of the entire world.

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It would also nullify other promises, including the following:

- **Davidic Covenant / Eternal Throne** (2 Samuel 7:12–13; Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 1:31–33)

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His kingdom.” (Isaiah 9:6–7)

- **New Covenant / Eternal Relationship** (Jeremiah 31:33; John 14:16–17)

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33)



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish men pray in Jerusalem.

The Word of God, however, is accurate and reliable and no adversary can thwart God’s plans.

**His covenant with Abraham is unconditional and everlasting.** Even after Israel’s disobedience, which He foresaw, He would bring His people home to their own land after a period of exile.

“It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.... For I will take you out of the nations; **I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.**” (Ezekiel 36:22, 24)

**And God has been fulfilling this prophecy and others like it, much to the dismay of those seeking to wipe out the very memory of Israel.**

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The historic quarter of Byblos, a Canaanite city called Gubal during the Bronze Age and Gebal in the Iron Age that is mentioned in Psalm 83. Byblos is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world and is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## The Ten-Member Coalition

While Israel's many enemies have wanted to destroy the nation of Israel and the Jewish People, **Asaph specifically identifies ten nations / groups that unite to form a coalition for this very purpose:**

“With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—**the tents of Edom** and the **Ishmaelites**, of **Moab** and the **Hagrites**, **Byblos [Gebal]**, **Ammon** and **Amalek**, **Philistia**, with the people of **Tyre**. Even **Assyria** has joined them to reinforce **Lot's descendants**.” (*Psalm 83:5–8*)

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Kingdoms Around the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah.

While these groups **are no longer identifiable by their ancient names**, Bill Salus, author of *Israelistine* and *Psalm 83: The Missing Prophecy Revealed* ascertains the modern-day equivalents / descendants of these coalition members as the following:

- **Tents of Edom:** Palestinians and Southern Jordanians
- **Ishmaelites:** Saudis (Ishmael is the father of the Arabs)
- **Moab:** Palestinians and Central Jordanians
- **Hagrites:** Egyptians (Hagar is the matriarch of Egypt)
- **Gebal(Byblos):** Hezbollah and Northern Lebanese
- **Ammon:** Palestinians and Northern Jordanians
- **Amalek:** Arabs of the Sinai area

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- **Philistia:** Hamas of the Gaza Strip
- **Tyre:** Hezbollah and Southern Lebanese
- **Assyria:** Syrians and Northern Iraqi's

Salus has worked to identify some of these ancient groups based upon their ancient locations and others by where they migrated.

Author and prophecy expert **Joel Richardson** has also identified each member group, as well, basing his conclusions only on their ancient location in 10th century BC; therefore, his locations differ slightly from those of Salus.



An old tourism poster replica for sale in a poster shop in Jerusalem.

## The Coalition's Goal: Destroy Israel

While this **10-member coalition might not yet be overtly united in an action against Israel**, these nations do exist today and are already united under the values of Islam.

Moreover, Islam is influenced by a sibling rivalry that dates back to Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob.



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This **ancient resentment** against the chosen ones is perhaps fueling attacks and conspiracies against the existence of a Jewish homeland.



**Sarai Sends Hagar Away**, by James Tissot

Of course, these **Psalm 83 countries** are **actively conspiring today to either take over the land of Israel and make it their own or to prevent Israel from being a Jewish state**. In other words, they want to make Israel a country that cannot protect and shelter the Jewish People from those who hate them. Let's look a little closer at these groups:

## 1. *Palestinians—Tents of Edom (Esau); Moab and Ammon (sons of Lot)*

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority (PA) president, has made his intentions about Israel's existence very clear:

**"We won't recognize and accept the Jewishness of Israel. We have many excuses and reasons that prevent us from doing so,"** Abbas said.

**"We will march to Jerusalem in the millions, as free people and heroes,"** he asserted. (*JPost*)

And that sentiment remains to this day.

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas meets with former US President Barack Obama.

## 2. *Jordanians—Tents of Edom; Moab and Ammon*

Although Jordan and Israel have enjoyed a peace treaty since 1994, Jordan's former **Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh** told his parliament that **Israel should not be recognized as a Jewish State** nor should Jordan take in the Palestinian refugees (Tents of Edom). (*ArutzSheva*)

Jordan's parliament voted to not recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

That sentiment permeates society as well, where even 81% of Jordanians have anti-Semitic views and 70% have positive views of Hamas. (*JPost*)

## 3. **Hezbollah and Lebanon—Geba (Byblos) and Tyre**

While Hezbollah, the terrorist group based in Lebanon, has been helping Syrian President Assad wage war against the rebels. Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, came out of hiding to remind the people of Lebanon that **"Israel poses a danger on all people of this region ... including Lebanon, and removing it is a Lebanese national interest."** (*JPost*)

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That belief remains today.

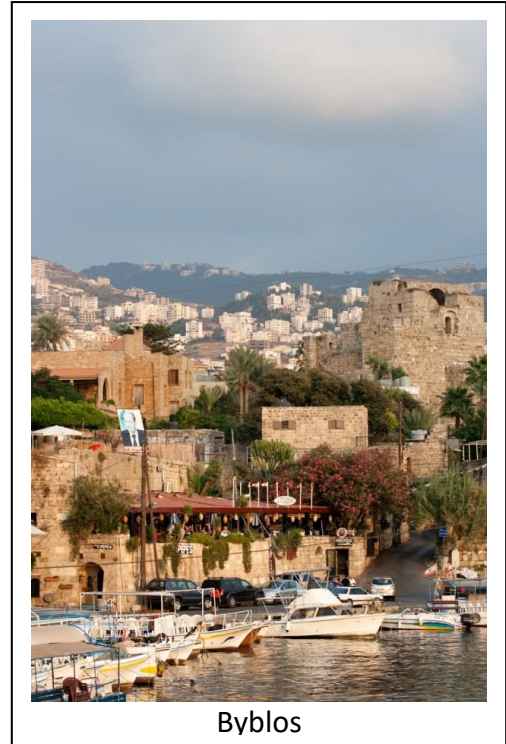
## 4. Hamas—Philistines

Although Gaza is officially a part of the Palestinian Authority ruled by President Abbas, the terrorist group Hamas (similar to the word for “violence” in Hebrew) rules Gaza and is ready to form a coalition with any Muslim group willing to resist Israel.

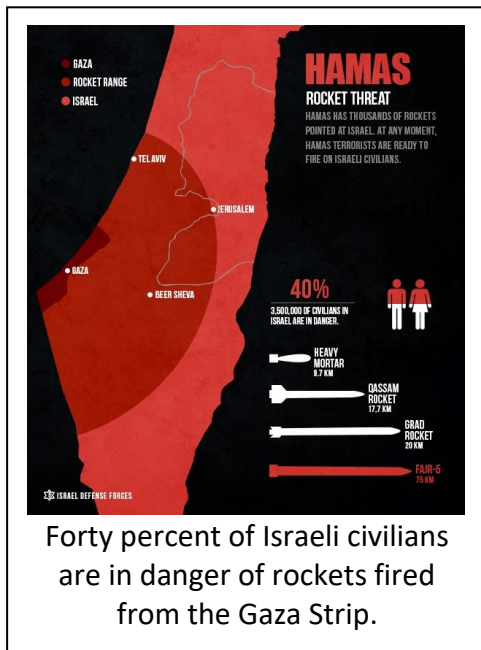
Its charter states: “[Hamas] will only be of help to all associations and organizations which act against the Zionist enemy and those who revolve in its orbit.”

Hamas Political Leader Fathi Hamad said that the goal of Hamas is total destruction of Israel.

“We are coming after the Zionists with all our leaders and soldiers,” Hamad said. (JPost)



Byblos



Forty percent of Israeli civilians are in danger of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip.

## 5. Egyptians (or possibly Northern Jordanians)—Hagrites or Hagarenes

Some commentators believe that Egypt and Israel are experiencing the highest level of peace and cooperation since they signed their peace treaty of 1979, especially in security against Hamas, where they have been destroying hundreds of terror tunnels that smuggle weapons to ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula from Gaza.

This makes sense if prophecy watchman Joel Richardson is correct. He believes that the Hagarenes are not Egyptians but northern Jordanians (based on 1 Chronicles 5:10, which specifies a region east of Gilead).

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In this scenario, the peace and cooperation that Israel is currently enjoying with Egypt might continue through the coming war. (wnd)

## 6. Saudis (or all Arabs)—Ishmaelites

**Bill Salus believes Saudi Arabia represents the Ishmaelite people in Psalm 83.** Like most Arabs throughout the Middle East and Africa, the Saudis claim to be the true chosen people (as descendants of Ishmael).

Considering that Saudi Arabia is an ally of the US and a foe of Iran, it may seem that it is not involved in a coalition against Israel.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia voted “no” to the 1947 UN resolution to create a Jewish state and **supported the Arab invasions of 1948, 1967 and 1973 with troops as well as finances.** They do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.



Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan River divided among the tribes of Gad and Manasseh. It is situated in what is today called Jordan.

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Sir M. Zafrullah Khan, right, Pakistan, speaks with Amir Faisal al Saud, center, and Shaikh Asad al Faqih, of Saudi Arabia, in a conference room before the 30th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question of the Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 24, 1947.

## 7. *Arabs of the Sinai (or of the Negev area) — Amalek (grandson of Esau)*

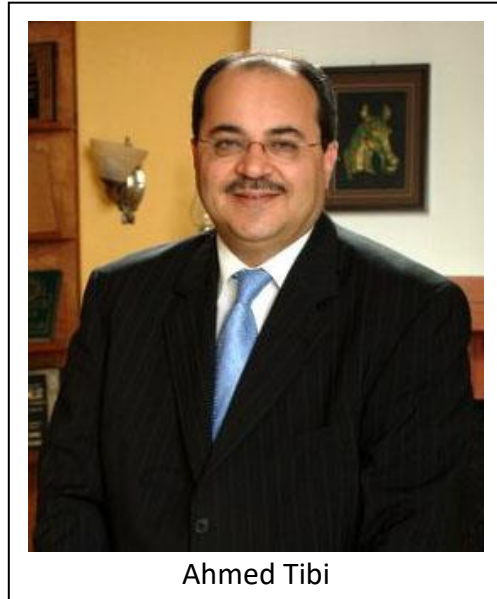
Salus places the Amalekites in Sinai. He believes they were a part of Esau's family (the Edomites) who migrated into the Sinai area, which is part of Egypt.

Others, however, think that the Amalekites originated near Mecca and by the 10th century BC, migrated to the Negev area of modern Israel (*wnd*). It is possible, therefore, that some Arab-Israelis currently enjoying citizenship within Israel are of this group.

Indeed, some Arabs inside of Israel look for its destruction as a Jewish state, and even have representation in the Knesset (parliament):

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“Israel should be defined as a state of its own nationalities. There are two nationalities in Israel. One is [the] Jewish majority, one is [the] Arab-Palestinian minority,” said the deputy speaker of the Knesset Ahmad Tibi in January 2014. “Saying that Israel is the Jewish state is neglecting our existence, our very existence and our narrative, and I will not accept that,” he added. (*cbc*)



## 8. Syrians and Northern Iraqis (and possibly Turkey)— Assyria

Since the creation of both Israel and Syria in the mid-20th century, **diplomatic ties have never been established between these two countries**, which share a border.

Syria has attacked Israel in three major wars in 1948, 1967, and 1973.

Any invasion could potentially include Russia some day, which now has a permanent navy and air base in this nation to Israel’s north.



Former US Secretary of State John Kerry meets with PA President Mahmoud Abbas in January 2014.

## The Prophet Appeals for Victory

In Psalm 83, the prophet Asaph appeals to God, asking Him to make the coalition members perish in disgrace (*Psalm 83:9–18*).

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In fact, Obadiah, Ezekiel 25–27, 37:10, and Jeremiah 49:1–6 prophesy that these coalition members will indeed perish and be cursed as *Genesis 12:3* predicts:

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

**These connecting prophetic verses seem to refer to Israel’s victory in Psalm 83.**

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A resulting sense of regional security may make Israel ripe for the battle of Ezekiel 38—the invasion of a nine-member coalition whose leaders say,

“I will go up against the land of unwallled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates, to seize spoil and carry off plunder...” (*Ezekiel 38:11–12*)

While Israel today is indeed prospering and is a safe country to visit, she will have incredible riches and live in **unparalleled safety after the victory of Psalm 83 is complete.**



The coastline of Tel Aviv

## Psalm 83: A Pending Prophecy

Some theologians have argued that the battle highlighted in Psalm 83:5–8 was fulfilled in Israel’s 1948 War for Independence; however, **the tents (refugees or military encampments) of Edom (Southern Jordan) only came into existence in 1949, after the war ended.**

**And since Psalm 83 lists them first, Salus believes the tents of Edom will play a key role in this coming war.**

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Other theologians have made the argument that the 1967 Six-Day War fulfilled this prophecy; still, only a portion of the ten members listed were involved in that war, so the Six Day War does not seem to be the fulfillment of this end-time prophecy.

Since neither of these wars precisely fulfill the prophecy, we can understand that some future war involving a 10-member coalition will fulfill it.

Today that coalition, which is united under the common values and motives of Islam, fit the prophecy's requirements like no other time in history.

Therefore, **many believe the war in Psalm 83 will happen soon**, before the invasion of Ezekiel 38.

In fact, none of the ten coalition members of Psalm 83 are mentioned in Ezekiel 38, though the book of Ezekiel mentions them elsewhere.



The prophets Joel, Zephaniah, Amos, and Hosea in St. Mary's Church in Fairford, England.

## Pitfalls in Interpreting Prophecy

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth." (*Isaiah 62:6-7*)



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There is a saying that hindsight is 20/20. Likewise, **Bible prophecy is more easily understood in hindsight, after its fulfillment.**

Still, Psalm 83 reminds us that we must keep a watchful eye on the Middle East and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, as well as diligently study God's Word.

**As we watch, pray and study, God will give us wisdom as events unfold and the pieces of the prophetic puzzle come into place.**

And when they do, that picture will be illuminated on the same wall where God has displayed His plan for Israel and mankind and where the Messianic prophecies are permanently hung.

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