

CONSISTENT BIBLICAL FUTURISM
Part XII
by Thomas Ice

In this installment of the series, I will look at the prophetic passages that do place God's judgment of the nations mentioned in Psalm 83 into an end-times context. On the other hand, Bill Salus in his book *Israelstine*¹ argues for a new war, never before discovered by anyone else until he came along that will take place "well in Advance of both the Russian-Iranian Magog invasion and the seventieth week of Daniel (i.e., the Tribulation)."² Such a view is blatant historicism, which was proved defective at least a hundred and fifty years ago. Let the Bible itself set the context for the destruction of the nations mentioned in Psalm 83 or in any other biblical prophecy.

WHEN IN THE FUTURE?

Salus rightly looks at other passages in the Old Testament that mention the Gentile nations that surround Israel as noted in Psalm 83. The ten nations are Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre, and Assyria (83:6–8). Salus identifies the ten-nation confederacy as follows:

The modern equivalents of the Psalm 83 confederates are: tents of Edom (Palestinian Refugees and Southern Jordanians), Ishmaelites (Saudi Arabians), Moab (Palestinian Refugees and Central Jordanians), Hagrites (Egyptians), Gebal (Northern Lebanese), Ammon (Palestinian Refugees and Northern Jordanians), Amalek (Arabs South of Israel), Philistia (Palestinian Refugees and Hamas of the Gaza Strip), inhabitants of Tyre (Hezbollah and Southern Lebanese), Assyria (Syrians and perhaps Northern Iraqi's), and the children of Lot (Moab and Ammon above).³

Even though the bulk of his book is spent trying to identify how modern people groups relate to the ten nations mentioned in Psalm 83, all of that becomes mute if the intent of the Divine and human author does not relate to what Salus thinks they do. I think the best way to test this Psalm 83 theory is to compare Salus' teaching with instances in which later Old Testament prophets group these nations together and speak of their destruction. This does occur in three of the four Major Prophets as well as in the Minor Prophet Amos.

WHAT DO THE PROPHETS SAY?

The approach Salus uses is just the reverse of what I think is proper in this situation. The proper approach to this issue should be to go to the clear passages in the Prophets and then use the information gleaned from that to provide a prophetic context for Psalm 83. Instead, Salus presupposes that he has made a biblical case for his speculation of Psalm 83, which he has not in the least, and then pulls bits and pieces from the Prophets in an attempt to bolster his ideas. Salus does not let the contexts of the Prophets influence his thinking as to when the events they speak of will commence.

When one searches through the four Major Prophets of the Old Testament (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel), it does not take long to realize that all but Daniel are similar to each other. I guess we could call them the synoptic Prophets like we do with the synoptic Gospels in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar to each other, while John is very different, like Daniel is in relation to the other three Major

Prophets. It is not surprising then, to notice that the synoptic Prophets all have similar sections on the judgment of the nations, while Daniel does not (see Isa. 13—23; Jer. 46—51; Ezek. 25—32; Amos 1:3—2:16).

Why is there such an emphasis within these three Major Prophets upon the judgment of the nations (a total of 25 chapters)? I believe the emphasis is because the Lord is going to judge them for the way they have treated Israel and their rebellion against God, just like Psalm 83 requests. Without a doubt, the timing within God's prophetic program for this judgment to take place will be part of the Campaign of Armageddon in conjunction with Christ's second coming.

As we examine these three major "judgment of the nations" sections in the three synoptic Prophets, I have put in **bold face type** those nations that appear in Psalm 83. First we will look at Isaiah. It is important to notice that Isaiah's condemnation of the nations section (13–23) is then followed by a condemnation of the world section (24–35). Isaiah mentions half of the list of nations from Psalm 83. The first section deals with specific judgments upon the nations, while the second section deals generally with God's case against the world as a whole. Below is an outline of the nations mentioned in Isaiah, notice Jerusalem is included in this list.

- A. Condemnation of the nations (13-23)
 - 1. Babylon (13:1-14:23)
 - 2. **Assyria** (14:24-27)
 - 3. **Philistia** (14:28-32)
 - 4. **Moab** (15-16)
 - 5. Damascus and Samaria (17)
 - 6. Ethiopia (18)
 - 7. Egypt (19-20)
 - 8. Babylon (21:1-10)
 - 9. **Edom** (21:11-12)
 - 10. Arabia (21:13-17)
 - 11. Jerusalem (22)
 - 12. **Tyre** (23)
- B. Condemnation of the world (24-35)
 - 1. Tribulation and kingdom: Little Apocalypse (24-27)
 - 2. Six woes (28-33)
 - 3. Tribulation and Kingdom (34-35)⁴

The second Prophet is Jeremiah who also speaks of the global destruction in the end times of these nations on his list. Jeremiah speaks of judgment upon four of the nations named in Psalm 83, which is the least amount of any of the four prophets. At many points Jeremiah's prophecies are similar to those of Isaiah.

- I. Prophecies concerning the Gentile nations (46-51)
 - A. Egypt (46)
 - B. **Philistia** (47)
 - C. **Moab** (48)
 - D. **Ammon** (49:1-6)
 - E. **Edom** (49:7-22)
 - F. Damascus (49:23-27)

- G. Arabia (49:28-33)
- H. Elam (49:34-39)
- I. Babylon (50-51)⁵

The third Prophet is Ezekiel, who mentions half of the list of nations from Psalm 83. His language of complete destruction also must be placed in the last days as well.

- I. Imminent judgment upon surrounding nations (25-32)
 - A. Nations to the east of Judah (25:1-14)
 - 1. **Ammon** (25:1-7)
 - 2. **Moab** (25:8-11)
 - 3. **Edom** (25:12-14)
 - B. Nation to the west of Judah: **Philistia** (25:15-17)
 - C. Nations to the north of Judah (26-28)
 - 1. **Tyre** (26:1-28:19)
 - 2. Sidon (28:20-26)
 - D. Nation to the south of Judah: Egypt (29-32)
 - 1. Destruction of Egypt (29:1-16)
 - 2. Babylon to plunder Egypt (29:17-21)
 - 3. Egypt and her allies to be destroyed (30:1-19)
 - 4. Egypt to be scattered by Babylon (30:20-26)
 - 5. Egypt to experience the same fate as Assyria (31)
 - 6. Pharaoh lamented (32:1-16)
 - 7. Egypt's appointment with the grave (32:17-32)

The fourth list is found in the Minor Prophet Amos, which contains eight oracles of judgment. Some of these judgments have already taken place. Amos also mentions five of those nations on the list in Psalm 83.

- I. Eight prophecies of judgment against the nations (1:3-2:16)
 - A. Damascus (1:3-5)
 - B. **Philistia** (1:6-8)
 - C. **Tyre** (1:9-10)
 - D. **Edom** (1:11-12)
 - E. **Ammon** (1:13-15)
 - F. **Moab** (2:1-3)
 - G. Judah (2:4-5)
 - H. Israel (2:6-16)

Seven out of ten of the nations are mentioned in the Prophets noted above. The three that are not mentioned in the Prophets from Psalm 83 are the Ishmaelites, Hagrites, and Gebal. The Hagrites are said to be from Northern Saudi Arabia, which would place them “together with Edom, Ishmael and Moab,”⁶ which are East of the Jordan River near Israel. The name Gebal is from the Arabic and means a mountain or little mountain. It refers to the “place name near Petra” in Northern Saudi Arabia.⁷ The Ishmaelites refer to the descendants of Ishmael.⁸ Genesis tells us that Ishmael was the son of Abraham through the concubine Hagar (Gen. 16). The phrase “the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites” refers to those who live in tents, which were the Edomites and

Ishmaelites. The entire group of nations or people in the first half of verse 6 appear to refer to those who are southeast of Israel.

Salus is correct to refer to these enemies and peoples as those who are in the immediate area that surround and border of Israel. However, the timing of their judgment will not take place before the rapture, but at the end of the tribulation when the Lord will totally destroy these nations. Maranatha!

(To Be Continued . . .)

ENDNOTES

¹ Bill Salus, *Israelestine: The Ancient Blueprints of the Future Middle East* (Crane, MO: Highway, 2008).

² Salus, *Israelstine*, p. 53.

³ Salus, *Israelstine*, p. 20.

⁴ Andy Woods, *Old Testament Book Arguments: Isaiah* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2007), pp. 18–21.

⁵ Andy Woods, *Old Testament Book Arguments: Jeremiah* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2007), pp. 21–22.

⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, electronic version (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2000).

⁷ Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew Lexicon*, electronic version.

⁸ Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew Lexicon*, electronic version.