

God Over the Nations

Psalm 83:1 *A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.*

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

² For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads.

³ They lay crafty plans 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!"

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

⁶ the tents of **Edom** and the **Ishmaelites**, **Moab** and the **Hagrites**,
⁷ **Gebal** and **Ammon** and **Amalek**, **Philistia** with the inhabitants of **Tyre**;

⁸ **Asshur** 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,

¹⁰ who were destroyed at En-dor, who became dung for the ground.

¹¹ Make their nobles like **Oreb** and **Zeeb**, all their princes like **Zebah** and **Zalmunna**,

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.

¹⁴ As **fire** consumes the forest, as the **flame** sets the mountains ablaze,

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

¹⁶ Fill their faces with **shame**, **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, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth."

Psalm 83

A Monster from the Nations

THROUGH TWENTY-FIVE POINTS, or what he would later call “a **profession of faith ... meant to unite adherents together in a covenant to which all have subscribed,**”¹ he demanded among other things **equality of rights** in respect to other nations (including an end to any treaty that would in any way subjugate them (point 2), **citizenship** only for “**members of the race**” (point 4), and **freedom of religion** for

¹ **Adolf Hitler**, *Mein Kampf The Stalag Edition: The Only Complete and Officially Authorised English Translation Ever Issued* (Ostara Publications, 1937-44), 517.

all religious denominations within the state “*so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the race*” (point 24).

Of course, this isn't really freedom of religion at all. And in this point it meant, explicitly, that the strong central power of the Empire (point 25) must “*combat the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us*” (point 24). For as an earlier point had made, “*no Jew can be a member of the race*” (point 4) and they must not be allowed to practice their religion. And so off he went to fight the great enemy.

At first it was through propaganda, “*Binding Jews, Communists, and freemasons to images of vampires, zombies, demons, devils, spectres, alien parasites, and other supernatural monsters.*”² The power of an idea is incredible, especially when you can carry it into the imagination of another person. What better way than to demonize another person through supernatural evil.

Later, he would use “*every possible means to cultivate respect for the individual personality [meaning himself].*” He would invite such admiration for himself that the people

² Eric Kurlander. *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (London: Yale University Press, 2017), ibooks.

really would finally be “united under one covenant.”³ This came true when, in 1933 he was appointed Chancellor and shortly thereafter became the Führer of Nazi Germany.

Quickly seizing all power to himself, Hitler would finally begin implementing the true nature of his covenant: the extermination of the Jewish race from the face of planet earth. Someone put it this way, “The first of Hitler’s covenant was that of his hatred of the Jews which will be a prevailing theme for all the troubles and ills that have befallen upon his beloved Germany.”⁴



In light of this, it is curious, to borrow from a title of ABC’s 1983 post-nuclear doomsday movie that scared every kid in America, that today is “The Day After” Christ was supposed to come back for the Rapture (yet again). This one almost gives *’88 Reasons why Christ Will Return in ’88* a run for its money. It seized on a number of “coincidences” and

³ Step 14 in *The First Stage in the Development of the national Socialist German Labour Party*. Hitler, 395.

⁴ Richard C. Geschkeon, Amazon review of *Mein Kampf*, February 10, 2016. <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:6StqLozpmUsJ:https://www.amazon.com/Mein-Kampf-Adolf-Hitler/product-reviews/1935785079%3FpageNumber%3D23+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

manipulation of data that didn't actually work as neatly as argued.

- [Rosh Hashanah, 2017](#) ended on Friday. This is the day Jews celebrate, among other things, the creation of the world and the beginning of their new year. (30 years ago '88 *Reasons* explained why this was so important).
- [The Solar Eclipse](#) from just 33 (a magical number) days earlier (and exactly 40 days before the Day of Atonement), first touched land in Salem, OR ([Salem/Jerusalem](#)), the 33rd state and exited the country on, of course, the 33rd parallel (insert ohhhs and ahhs here). Oh, and the greatest point of eclipse duration was in Cairo, IL, which clearly means *something*.
- [The next solar eclipse](#), which is 7 magical years away (can we say “Tribulation” anyone?), which when combined with the first one creates a huge “X” across America, which is obviously important, because America is always the other focus of End-Times Bible prophecy.
- A supposedly unique [convergence of stars](#) and planets with the constellations Virgo and Leo that line up exactly (well, not exactly, oops⁵) to the future prediction of Revelation

⁵ A great recap of most of this is found in Dr. [Danny R. Faulkner](#), “Are the Stars Lining Up on September 23 for the Lord’s Return?”, *Answers in Genesis* (Sept 12, 2017), <https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/stars/are-stars-lining-september-23-lords-return/>.

12:1-2. [NOTE: Never mind that Revelation 12 describes the First Coming, not the Second].⁶

Put these all into the Pre-Trib cauldron, stir the foaming broth for a few minutes, and “Walla!” Rapture: Sept 23, 2017. Except, it didn’t happen. Again.

Two things are seemingly unrelated. And yet, this latest Rapture Disaster sees the same prophecy crowd using Psalm 83 to predict what the End Times scenario is going to look like. Ten nations gathering around Israel. Why? “They say, ‘Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!’ For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant” (Ps 83:4-5).

Never mind Hitler or Haman. We didn’t talk about Haman, the revenge-seeking anti-Semite who tried to exterminate the Jews 2000 years before Hitler in the book of Esther. Why aren’t these two men in mind in this so-called “prophecy?” Because Psalm 83 has to be future prophecy ... *for us!* That’s always the way these things work, isn’t it? Don’t worry about the “for Israel” application of the

⁶ For an interesting take on how Revelation 12 is astral prophecy, but not future prophecy see Dr. Heiser’s, “Revelation 12 Astral Prophecy,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMqKBK7SKgk>.

thing. Don't worry about things that already happened. Worry about how it is going to change my view of the Second Coming, and probably within the next couple of years. And when I say "worry," I mean worry, because that's the point to help you become a Christian so you won't miss the Rapture. It isn't really about loving God and worshiping him, its about not having to live through the Great Tribulation.

As we will see today, if this is a prophecy at all, its first message is to the Jews of the OT, who were living with terror from the nations, particularly the Assyrian Empire. It is a song of strange comfort, strange because its message is mostly one of doom for Israel's enemies. But "mostly" is important, because it doesn't end that way. In fact, the doom here could easily be read the wrong way, which would miss the whole point of the Psalm, of God's character, and of what actually might be a prophecy. But if it is a prophecy, it is related to the one that came immediately preceding it in **Psalm 82:8**. "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!"

The Climactic Psalm to the Nations

Psalm 83 is an often-overlooked Psalm, partly because it comes between two relatively well known songs, partly because much of its message is similar to others songs and thus it doesn't stand out. Yet, it bears a remarkable truth of being the last song in two lesser collections within the Psalter. It is the last of this large grouping of the songs of Asaph (**Ps 73-83**), and it is the last of what many scholars called the Elohist grouping of psalms, where Elohim is the favorite word used for God (**Ps 42-83**). Because it stands as the pinnacle of these two collections, Psalm 83 is actually much more important than many realize.

So what is its message? Recall that these songs of Asaph form a nice small chiasm where the first are Israel centered and the last are nations/Gentiles centered. Psalm 83 ends yet a third collection too—these songs of the nations.

Eleven Psalms of Asaph

A. Psalms 73-77 – Individual prayers that are Israel-centered.

B. Psalm 78 – *Theological teaching in the form of a poem.*

A¹. Psalm 79-83 – Community prayers directed toward the nations.⁷

⁷ See Lothar, 300.

It is especially related to Psalm 82, which lays the groundwork for the theology and probable prophecy of Psalm 83. Psalm 82 begins with *Elohim* taking his stand in the Council of *El* (82:1), two names for God. There it was Elohim judging the gods for literally “lifting up the face of the wicked” (82:2). Psalm 83 begins similarler, “*Elohim, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O El*” (Ps 83:1). These are the same two names for God in the very same order. And why such a prayer? Because literally “those hating have lifted up their heads” (83:2). The main difference is that in the first song, God is going to speak, in the second, the Psalmist is crying out to God. But the literary links are obvious, so they beg for our reading them together.

As does the last verse from Psalm 82 and how it sets up Psalm 83 as mentioned earlier. “*Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!*” How will such a prophecy of Christ as this come to a climax in the Psalter? Psalm 83 answers it by unfolding for us 1. The plans of the enemies (vv. 3-5); the names of the enemies (6-8), a history of God triumphing over his enemies (9-12), and the prayer

for what the psalmist wants God to do to the present enemies (15-18), all of which are the nations.

The Plea in the Face of Enemies

As we begin this “Psalm of Asaph, a song,” and we read the first verse, a question becomes obvious. God, if you are going to inherit all the nations, when why are they so brazenly violent and hateful towards your people? Can this really be the way you want it? Therefore, the Psalmist returns to his laments of previous songs when the nations were raging against Israel.

“O God (Elohim), do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God (El)” (Ps 83:1). If we allow our interpretation of Psalm 82 to carry over here, then Elohim and El are two words for the same God, but different names for two different Persons. In other words, the Psalmist is crying out both to El the Father and to Elohim the Son—Israel’s God, to do something. I do not see how A Christian interpretation of this that follows in line with the NT teaching of Psalm 82 can come to any other conclusion. Again, from Genesis to Malachi, the Triune God is known and spoken about explicitly. This is not making things up,

but is using clearer passages (like Psalm 82 and 2) to interpret the less clear (Psalm 83).

What is the problem? It has been the familiar lament of the Jewish people since the days of Egypt, with scarcely a respite between then and now. Always hunted. Always hated. Why? One could argue other causes, but here it is clearly because of their God. “Behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads” (Ps 83:2). Those about to be named are *God’s enemies who hate and raise their heads against Him*.

Christians, when they hate you without case, know that they hated Him first. If you are suffering at work with unbelieving bosses, in a marriage with an unbelieving spouse, in a school with unbelieving friends, realize the root of their hatred. Is this not what our Lord Jesus—the same God of Israel tells you? “All men will hate you *because of me*” (Matt 10:22 NIV). They attack you. They slander you. They hate you. They try to silence you. Why? Because this God does something to them that they can’t stand. Later, the psalm will show us that what he does it force them to be confronted with his sovereignty over their lives. But “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and

falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me” (Matt 5:11 NIV). The Psalmist is affirming that this hatred is because of God.

The Plans of the Enemies

In the mean time, what does this intense hatred of God make them do? It is as we just said. “They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones” (3). Planning and consulting is the language of groups. This is not Lone Ranger vigilantism here. This is planning, plotting, and conspiring together, with deliberate forethought and stated known intentions. It is Psalm 2.

Intentions of what? “They say, ‘Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!’” (4). Nothing short of the full extermination of God’s people will do. It happened to the Psalmist, and it happened after he died. Haman. Hitler. But why go after the people? Because you can’t actually do anything to God, and since they were his representatives on earth that convict others of sin and call us to bow the knee in repentance to the

God of gods, that's the next best thing. They must not be permitted to do such a thing.

Our Founding Fathers were wise beyond measure to create a system where the very first thing they did was protect religious liberty, not like Hitler did (which is sadly the direction many are going today), which wasn't protection at all, but unconditional religious liberty for all. If people break the law through religion, you punish the people, not the religion. Sadly, today people are trying to embrace a full on Nazi ideal of freedom of religion, and we all know where that got the Germans.

How were these decisions arrived at? The very way Hitler said. **By a covenant.** The man may have been evil, but he knew what he was doing. Evil does not equate to stupid, it equates to wicked. **“For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant”** (5). This is not a covenant they are entering with God. Rather, it is a covenant they are entering with one another against God. It is an anti-covenant. And as such, it is the most anti-Christ kind of relationships that human beings could ever possibly have. And the only fruit it can bear is poisonous. Which, of

course, is why such covenants always end in bloody savagery against those who have done nothing to them.

While we will see in a moment how this prayer was rooted in very real, historical events against the Israelites, before moving on it needs to be said that this Psalm can rightly be applied to the church, not only because our God is Israel's God, but because we are “a holy nation” (1Pe 2:9), “his people” (Heb 10:30; Rev 21:3); his “treasured ones” which the LXX renders as “saints” (1Co 1:2; Eph 1:1; Col 1:2; etc.). As branches that are grafted into the Vine, given the very titles that belonged to Israel alone in the OT, Christians are every bit as much the singers of these psalms, and it is good and right when they are attacked to sing them to their God.

The Names of the Enemies

A shift in the song occurs in vs. 6-8. The Psalmist gets concrete. This is the section that intrigues so many end-times speculators. It identifies the enemies. Ten nations are mentioned. Someone writes that this, “According to this popular prophetic scenario,” this “Imminent Invasion of

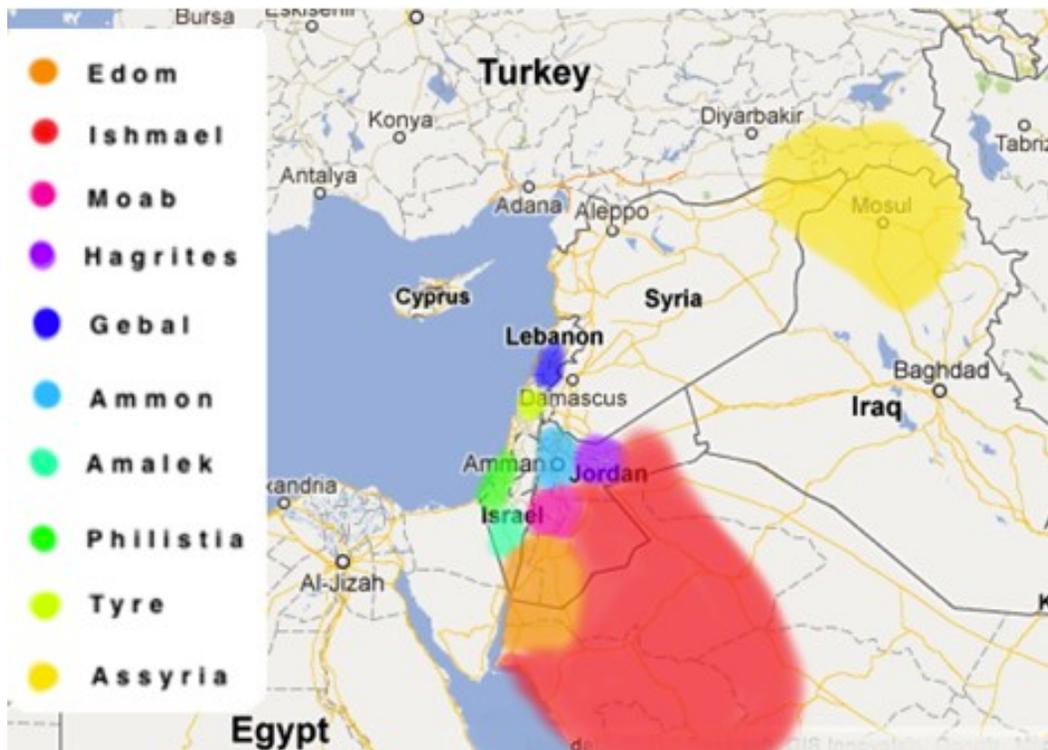
Israel” (It’s always imminent, isn’t it?) includes “a coalition of nations, including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian peoples, will very soon join forces to attack Israel.”⁸ We’ll see why in a moment how this is plagued with problems. Here are the nations:

Edom	Ishmaelites	
Moab	Hagrites	
Gebal	Ammon	Amalek
Philistia	Tyre	
Asshur		

There are some things to understand about this list. First. They form a kind of confederacy around the Promised Land. But rather than say “form” I should say “formed.” This is past tense. But it is also quite natural that those immediately surrounding Israel would be the focus of the plea. Though, as we will see, it is not entirely those close to Israel.

⁸ Joel Richardson, “Which Nations Does Psalm 83 Really Include?” WND (8-2-12), <http://www.wnd.com/2012/08/which-nations-does-psalm-83-really-include/>.

Two Maps showing the Psalm 83 Confederacy of Nations



Second, they are mentioned in a kind of **counter-clockwise direction**, beginning southeast of the trans-Jordan, moving north, then around to the Mediterranean, and south down the coast. But importantly, this does not include Egypt (which some confuse with the Hagarites). The Hagarites were not Egyptians but a tribe located east of Gilead during the reign of king Saul. In **1Ch 5:10-22**, the tribe of Reuben assisted Gad and Manasseh in subjecting them “until the [Assyrian] exile.” This is one of the great problems with these so-called prophecy experts. They make things up in order to fit current political events so that they can sell books and fill churches. But this is not an acceptable way to handle God’s Holy Word.

Third, these are all enemies of *ancient* Israel, not modern Israel. In fact, none of these peoples even exist anymore as people groups. How can you say that this predicts Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and other attacking Israel when none of those nations are actually in the text?

Forth, these 10 nations are literarily divided into a 9+1 pattern.⁹ This actually helps us interpret the text properly.

⁹ The series of ten is linguistically and stylistically divided into a set of 9 + 1. After the nominal sequence of names in vv. 7–8*, Assyria is set apart syntactically in v. 9* as the tenth member. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*,

The poem's form is part of its interpretation. Put another way, you have nine little nations followed by one Big One—Assyria. The Assyrians were the great power of the period. They were no where near Israel, but eventually sacked the Northern Kingdom, sending them into captivity. One more point about this is these 10 are followed by 7 specific examples of when the little nations were beaten back by Yahweh. Ten is a number of perfection. Seven is a number of completion. Multiplied together, you get 70, which is the number of the nations at the Tower of Babel. It is a very creative way of calling our minds back to this fascinating theology, including how it works itself out in Psalm 82.

A History of God Triumphant Over His Enemies

This list of seven names is found in **vv. 9-11: Midian, Sisera, Jabin, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna.**¹⁰ These

ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 342.

¹⁰ Out of curiosity I wondered what the names meant. I didn't see anything discernable from their meanings in terms of why these might have been picked among all the possible enemies of God. Midian means "Strife," Sisera means "A Crane of Seeing," Jabin means "God Discerns," Oreb means "Raven/Crow," Zeeb means "Wolf," Zebah means "Sacrifice [to Molech],"

enemies come from the former little nations, and they are all found in the book of Judges. One recalls the defeat of the Midianite leaders (Midian was friendly to Israel in the days of Moses, as they were Jethro's tribe): Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmun by **Gideon** (Jdg 6-7).

As this section of the Psalm is recalling that God fought and won these battles, it is quite curious how explicit this “God” is that fought for Gideon. It says, “**Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terbinth at Ophrah**” (Jdg 6:11). He came to Gideon who asked him something similar to our Psalm. “**If the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds**” (13). *Wonderful*—the language of Christ. But *Yahweh* said to him... In other words, the Angel of *Yahweh* is *Yahweh*! “**Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?**” (14). This makes the God Psalm 83 is praying to come alive all the more.

The other names are found in Judges 4-5, the chapters just before Gideon. This is the famous story of Deborah, Barak, and Jael smashing a tent peg through Sisera's temple.

Zalmunna means “Withdraw of Protection.” The reason they were picked seems to have more to do with their location in Judges close to one another.

Again it tells you who fought. “And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army” (Jdg 4:15). Who is this LORD? The LORD of Hosts. For “From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera” (Jdg 5:20). The sons of God did his bidding.

The language that is used here vividly depicts the horrors of war. As someone writes, “The fate is a terrible one: a ‘Hideous picture of corpses that were scattered like so much dung on the field.’”¹¹ I can’t help but think of the thousands upon thousands of emaciated Jewish bodies murdered to horribly in the holocaust. Those images are life-changing. But this is not Jews. This is their enemies, and God is destroying them like so much dung on a field. Not a line you’re likely to hear from CCM or on KLUV. Yet, it is language that powerfully demonstrates just how easily dispatched the enemies of Israel were by Yahweh Sabaoth in days of old, under circumstances that were similar to those when the song was written.

One of the points to make here is that this is obviously history, not prophecy. These were things that happened to

¹¹ Kraus, 163 in Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 348.

the Israelites in days long before David and Asaph at the hands of real nations and real kings that set their ways against the LORD. This is summarized in vs. 12, “Who said, ‘Let us take possession for ourselves of the pastures of God.’” This again ties into the previous song. For here the idea is that God has a territory that belongs to him, and this particularly refers to the Son of God who was fighting those enemies in the Judges.

The “pasture” imagery through calls to mind **sheep**, and this is Asaph language all the way, for Israel is the “**sheep of your pasture**” (Ps 74:1). And if they are the sheep and this is a pasture, then not far behind is the Good Shepherd idea, which we know is the Title of our Lord Jesus.¹²

But the focus is on these evil nations taking a possession that does not belong to them. This is **stealing**. They do so through **murder** by conspiring and **bearing false witness** against their neighbor and by **taking the Name in vain** and **worshiping other gods**. All of this, of course, is the definition of evil, for it is the nations willfully ignoring all of the commandments of God—commandments the

¹² 2 Enoch calls the seventy sons of God “Shepherds” (as does Plato). This is a title that rightly belongs to the sons. But Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and no one is Good save God alone.

requirements of which were written on their very hearts, though they would not listen.

Prayer Concerning the Enemies

Therefore, the imprecatory verses arises, “O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wing. As fire consumes the forest, as the flame sets the mountains ablaze, so may you pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane. Fill their faces with shame...” (13-16). Here we have a final set of seven, this time three pair of similar nature imagery (dust, chaff | fire, flame | tempest, hurricane), followed by one word summing them up: shame.

Dust and chaff blow away easily, with little to no effort. Fire and flame consume voraciously, generating great heat and wind. Tempests and hurricanes destroy completely, with power and force and might. The total picture is one of absolute devastation. Nothing is left.

But it needs to be understood here that several of these are images often associated with the Holy Spirit in the Bible. He is the Storm of God, the Fire of the LORD who goes

before him and prepares the way. Truly, the God of the Psalmist is the Triune God of Christians.

These nature images associated with the coming of the Spirit in judgment culminate in [an end result in this prayer](#). If there is a prophecy, it is here. [That God may fill their faces with shame](#). But why *shame*? Think very carefully about this question. These images disasters are to drive the enemies of God to shame. This is very important to think about.

It is because the nations know that they are behaving terribly. They *know* it. Shame only comes upon someone's face—meaning that they have internalized it—*when they know they have done wrong*. When the nations have ruthlessly attacked Israel, they know that it is wrong, but they ignore this. When they have sought to murder Christians, they know that it's wrong, but they will not listen to their consciences. They don't care.

So the psalmist prays that the blowing, consuming, storms of God would make them come to shame. Think about what this is saying. Is he praying for their utter destruction? Sometimes the Psalmists do this. But is shame a reduction to oblivion? Of course not. It has as its goal [the](#)

humbling of someone. We shame people so that they will stop their bad behavior.

Now consider the next words: “That they may seek your Name, O LORD” (16). The second half of this verse shows that the prayer for terror has as its end result the conversion of the nations! This is evangelism and it is put completely into the LORD’s hands.

Someone may say, “But no one seeks God.” Well, yes and no. No one *of their own initiative* seeks God, because all hate him. That is exactly what the enemies are doing. They are not seeking him. So, the Psalmist prays for God’s overwhelming sovereign hand to intervene to make them seek him. When God effectually calls someone, then they of course do seek God! They can’t help it. God has compelled them. And this is the prayer. “God, work so powerfully, so mightily, so forcefully by showing them justice that you overcome their obstinate hatred of you and your people and make them seek your Name!” Now that is a powerful prayer! It sees the temporal judgment of God (that is, the judgement that is not eternal) as being a means God uses towards the end of showing mercy those he has chosen.

The object of their faith is not merely the LORD (Yahweh), though it is not less than that. Here, Asaph's "Name" theology (Ps 74:7, 10, 18, 21; 75:1; 76:1; 79:9; 80:18), a theology as have seen many times in other Psalms, returns. *That they may seek your Name.*

What did the church learn about this? In Acts 15 we read that "God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his Name" (Acts 15:14). Then it says this was *in line with prophecy*. Here then we come to the rub of the matter of prophecy. "And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written..." (15).

Now, the prophecy spoken of there is from Amos, not Psalm 83. To my knowledge, Psalm 83 is not quoted in the NT. However, look at the conclusion of this prophecy, "... that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my Name" (17). This is exactly what Psalm 83:16 is saying. "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your Name, O LORD." The Name of the LORD is Jesus Christ, the God who routed the enemies of Israel and who in Psalm 82 would inherit the nations. This is partly how the prophecy of Psalm 82:8 is thus going to be carried out.

With the next words, the psalm and the songs of Asaph are ended. “Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace, that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the most High over all the earth” (17-18). Now, this is a little different, for the idea here is still that they may know the Name. However, if they will not turn and repent, then the prayer is that they will know that God is the Most High in their eternal destruction, for so conspiring together to attack God and his people.

There is more than one way to know that the Name is God. Either through humbly repenting of your sins against him and trusting in the Name by God’s grace, or by being destroyed in the future through that powerful Name who will not share his glory with another and who will not let the wicked go unpunished should they reject God’s mercy in Christ.

The last verse set’s God above all the gods, giving him the title Most High (Elyon), a name that was given to the Father in Psalm 82:6. But here, the Name and the LORD and the Most High are so inextricably tied together, that it is as if they were one. In fact, God is One. And though the

Father, Son, and Spirit are in this Song, all are the One God in Three Persons.

This God is God alone, the Most High over all the earth. This is why the Father can give the Son the nations for an inheritance. This is why the Son can rule the nations with the rod of Iron. This is why the Spirit can go back and forth through the nations sending storms that turn men to Jesus Christ.

Psalm 83 thus ends by teaching us how Christ will inherit the nations. It is through the divine power of the sovereign God whose will will not be thwarted by hard-hearted people who are doing nothing but living in known rebellion against him. But when does he do this?

This question leads to the tragedy that is so much contemporary so-called “prophecy.” You want to fill a building? Have a prophecy conference and talk about the Rapture and the End Times and the Tribulation. People want to know the future, because there is an unsatisfied seer in all of us that want to divine the future, even though we know it is forbidden.

Is Jesus Christ returning again? Yes. And he will finally put those to shame and make them perish eternally at his

glorious Second Coming. But does this song talk about this? Only in that final fact that some will eternally perish. Certainly not in the nations that are conspiring against Israel in the early part of the song, for that was history. And certainly not in the main thought of the end prayer which is for their turning to God through Christ.

But therein lay the real prophecy. It has and is being fulfilled, but for whatever reason this doesn't seem to be the thing that Christians want to talk about in too many prophecy conferences. Yet, that is exactly what the Jerusalem Council spoke of in Acts 15. Jesus has come already. It was future for the Psalm, but it is past for us. And even now, he is taking many from the wicked nations who so ferociously attack God's people (including in some ways I suppose his national people, the Jews) and he is leading them to the Name, causing them to seek Christ through repentance and faith when they hear how they have broken his law and how he provided an atonement that takes away the sin of any who believe.

This could have included even someone as evil as Hitler—had God so desired it. This thought bothers some people, because he was a truly wicked man. But perhaps that

only bothers them because they do not know the wickedness in their own hearts. This is the good news that is offered freely to all, and though I have no known hope that Hitler ever repented, I do know that if he were to have trusted in Christ alone, everything he did that was so evil in this world would have been forgiven in the blood of Christ. For there is no sin so bad, no sin so great, no sin committed so many times, no number of sins committed so many times that it is not possible for God to forgive them when they repent and trust in Christ alone.

For Christ's was an infinite sacrifice undertaken by an infinite God to cover any amount or any kind of sin that you commit. It is sufficient for all. But will you trust in Christ and seek the Name? May the Gospel of Psalm 83 that God is powerful and just yet full of kindness and compassion upon even his worst enemies be the power of God unto your salvation and the salvation of all who hear this great ending Psalm of Asaph.