

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Prophecy 28: “Ice and Salus on Psalm 83”**

© 2014 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Is Psalm 83 a prophecy about an end time war between Israel and its neighbors, or is it something else? Many people like Joel Rosenberg, dismiss it and point instead to the war of God & Magog in Ezekiel 38 & 39 as the next end time prophetic war that will take place in the Middle East. But there are many other respected Bible prophecy experts who argue strongly that the next end time war prophesied for the Middle East is the one described in Psalm 83. Stay tuned for views from both sides.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our blessed hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. A major controversy has erupted in recent years among Bible prophecy experts who believe in Premillennialism, the view that Jesus will return to this earth at the end of the Tribulation to reign for a 1,000 years. The controversy centers around Psalm 83.

It began in 2008 with the publication of this book, “*Israelestine*,” by Bill Salus. The thesis of this book is that Psalm 83 describes an end time war between Israel and the nations that share a common border with it- namely, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and the Gaza Strip. Bill Salus theorized that the Israelis would win this war overwhelmingly resulting in peace for their nation. But the peace would be short-lived because the Arab world would turn to Russia, and the Russians would come down against Israel with certain specified Muslim allies in what the Bible calls the War of Gog & Magog, described in detail in Ezekiel 38 & 39. Russia’s Muslim allies will be made up of an outer ring of nations with no common border with Israel today. The Psalm 83 War on the other hand would be one between Israel and the inner ring of nations that surround it.

So, what about it? Is Psalm 83 a prophecy about an end time war that could occur any moment, or is it describing something else? I contacted Bill Salus and his major critic, Tommy Ice, and asked if they would appear on this program and present their arguments and both graciously agreed to do so. We are going to begin with Tommy Ice presenting his objections to Bill’s thesis. And then Bill will respond. Tommy Ice is the Director of the Pre-Trib Research Center that you can find on the internet at [pre-trib.org](http://pre-trib.org). This website contains a treasure trove of articles about end time Bible prophecy. Here now is Tommy Ice.

## **Tommy Ice's Response on Psalm 83**

**Tommy Ice:** My problem with the Psalm 83 theory by Bill Salus is that Psalm 83 first of all does not contain a prophecy. It's an individual lament psalm, a national lament by Asaph. And Asaph is complaining 3,000 years ago about the enemies that surround Israel. And I admit when you read it you'd think you are reading about the modern situation in Israel which shows that in 3,000 years things really haven't changed, it is basic Anti-Semitism. But in some of the lament psalms like Psalm 79 for example you have the Lord answering the request where He will give a prophecy for example about what He is going to do in response. In Psalm 83 you don't have the Lord answering it and therefore there is an assumption that there is going to be a battle behind this. And there may or may not be, but Psalm 83 does not contain a prophecy, it just contains the lament or the complaint that Asaph is giving.

Secondly when you look at the parallel passages, well they are not really parallel, but those that mention these 10 nations that are people groups that are mentioned in Psalm 83, these are mentioned in the prophets later on. And if you want to look at the development of Old Testament prophecy in any detail relating to Israel you have to start with the book of Deuteronomy, it has an outline of prophecy. And you really don't have much prophecy being given until the prophets come in and they start fleshing out this. For example you have Psalm 2 that is the psalm where it says, "kiss the son lest he be angry, why are the nations in an uproar?" Etcetera, etcetera. Well later on when you learn the outline of Israel's prophecy you realize that Psalm 2 which was given 3,000 years ago fits into the idea of the Tribulation. And these nations are going up against God and He is going to judge them in the Tribulation.

Well in the Old Testament you have, I call them synoptic prophets, just like you have synoptic gospels, synoptic means the same. And you have Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar and John has like 93% difference in its gospel. And the same is true in the four Major Prophets, you have Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and each one of those prophets has a section relating to the judgment of the nations. And most of these nations or people groups that are mentioned in Psalm 83 are given included in the judgment of the nations. For example in Isaiah 13-23 you have that section. You have a similar section in Jeremiah I think it is 9 chapters long. You have another section in Ezekiel that is 7 chapters long and they say a lot of the similar things. And the context of the judgment of the nations is going to be at Armageddon basically, in other words in conjunction with the Tribulation.

And so if there is going to be an actual fulfillment of Psalm 83 these other passages talk about the judgment of those people groups in conjunction with the Second Coming when He is going to judge the nations because that is the very purpose. In fact Isaiah 24-26 talks about the judgments of the nation's basically for their rejection of God. And we learn from Revelation 3:10 that the Tribulation's purpose is to test the earth dwellers. That phrase earth dwellers comes from Isaiah 24 and 26 where that's a term that's used 11 times in the book of Revelation. And these are the people who oppose God. And so this is the time in which those nations will be judged and therefore I think that the idea that there's got to be a Psalm 83 war to set up the peace for Ezekiel 38 & 39 is just built on speculation. And the New Testament warns against speculation, a number of times Paul especially in the Pastoral Epistles says that this is something he warns us about.

Now we all speculate on Bible prophecy. But it is one thing to speculate within the framework of clear revelation like this is the Tribulation, or this is the Millennium and how are things going to

work out because those are settled among literal interpreters. That there is going to be a 7 year Tribulation, or there is going to be a 1,000 year Millennium. And for example today we see the European Union preparing the way apparently for the revived Roman Empire. We see Israel back in the land because there are dozens of passages that talk about them returning to the land. And we speculate within that framework. And even though I agree with Bill that Ezekiel 38 & 39 the Gog & Magog Battle will probably take place at the beginning or before the Tribulation. In other words shortly before that because I believe there will be an interval of time between the Rapture that ends the Church Age and the start of the Tribulation because it takes time for the Antichrist who is being restrained by the Church Age according to 2 Thessalonians 2 to get into place, to set up a 10 nation confederacy and for him to arise from among that. So there's got to be a period of time after the Rapture and before the Tribulation starts. Which starts as a result of Israel agreeing or them imposing a contract on them from that revived Roman Empire and by the beast or the Antichrist himself. So it's very likely that's when that will take place.

So Bill speculates because he doesn't give a Bible verse or a passage to teach this, that there is going to be a war based on Psalm 83 with those immediate nations surrounding Israel to set up the peace. And Israel is going to win and all of this and that will set up the basis for the Gog & Magog thing. Well when you look at the end of chapter 39 I think it is around verse 28 and following it talks about how the Lord has hidden Himself from the nation of Israel. And that appears to refer to the period from the time of Christ to the Tribulation period because the Old Testament is focused on that 70th week of Daniel, the Tribulation period.

So I think the Battle of Gog & Magog has to be related to the Tribulation period because it is during that time that Israel is going to come to know Christ and He is going to be vindicated from that. Before that time it appears that God is not working directly or prophetically during the Church Age because the Church Age is a time in which you have general trends or characteristics, you don't have specific prophecies that are occurring in the Tribulation. And when the Church Age began in Acts 2 you did have some of Israel's prophecies that were fulfilled like the destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus gave in Luke 19 and some of those as they transitioned into that. And apparently as we transition out of the Church Age into the time of Israel you are going to have things like Israel returning back to the land in a similar way. But these events that are talked about in the Old Testament I believe have to take place either near or relation to the Tribulation or in the Tribulation itself. And that is why people who believe that things are going to happen during the Church Age are called historicists and people who take it more literally believe in the 70th week of Daniel and all of this that these events will happen in the future to the time of the Church Age.

And I think that since there is no passage that actually teaches the belief that the Psalm 83 theory teaches that it is pure speculation. And that is the rational given in his book, "*Israelestine*," is that there needs to be something that happens that brings peace to set up the peace required in Ezekiel 38 & 39. So it is a speculation built upon a speculation. And yet when I hear people on the radio or talk to friends who believe in the Psalm 83 theory they talk about it like it is going to be an actual event. And at best it ought to be noted clearly that this is pure speculation. It is pure speculation because as I say there is no prophecy behind it and there is nothing directly that relates to it.

### Part 3

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, you have heard Tommy Ice's objections to the idea that Psalm 83 is a prophecy about an end time war that will proceed the war of Gog & Magog. Let's hear now Bill Salus' response which we videotaped at the annual Pre-Trib Conference in Dallas.

#### Bill Salus' Defense of Psalm 83

**Bill Salus:** First of all I highly recommend Tommy Ice as an excellent teacher when it comes to talking about the Pre-Trib Rapture. Often we will refer people to the Pre-Trib Rapture website and I think that he has a lot of outstanding work on that. And I do also agree with him that the Psalm 83 is a prayer of lament, an imprecatory prayer. That Asaph is calling upon the Lord to intervene and he is beseeching Him to deal with his adversaries. But where I think Thomas Ice falls short is seeing the prophetic aspects within the psalm. He thinks it is just a prayer of lament and not a prophecy.

Well let's start with this, 2 Chronicles 29:30 Hezekiah says he commends the Levites to sing the praises of King David and Asaph who is the author of the psalm and he calls him a seer. The Hebrew word is clearly talking about a beholder of vision, a prophet. So Asaph wrote 12 psalms, Psalm 83 is one of the most prophetic of the psalms, he was a prophet. Now Hezekiah would be very interested in and would know that he was a prophet because among the confederacy that Asaph talks about in Psalm 83 is a member called Assyria. Now at the time that Asaph wrote, Assyria wasn't even in the picture, they weren't even really one of Israel's enemies until later. But they were an enemy of Hezekiah they had come into the fray with Israel during Shalmaneser II around 850 BC and Hezekiah was around 701 BC. So Assyria was already interacting with Israel problematically. They destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. So Hezekiah around 701 BC had to deal with Sennacherib issue with Assyria. So Hezekiah would be very concerned about what is going on with Assyria and he would know that Asaph had spoken about Assyria in a prophecy.

Another thing when we talk about this prophecy, Asaph, and I'm going to conclude by talking about the Psalm and breaking it down as a prophecy. But among the confederacy that Asaph talks about he talks about includes a place called Gebal along with Assyria. Now Gebal, you don't even hear about them until Ezekiel 27, Ezekiel wrote long after Asaph. Asaph wrote about 1,000 years BC. Ezekiel wrote about 500-600 years BC so he wrote after. So it had to be a prophecy because Asaph was not just saying, God help us with these enemies around us, and he listed the very specific group of 10 and of course Israel had much more than 10 enemies up to that point in time. But he listed a specific 10, so 2 of them weren't even the fray at that point in time. So he was talking about a future scenario.

Now he also talks about them in habitation condition. So he is talking about this confederacy and he calls the very first member the tents of Edom. He is listing some population, some people group in a habitation condition. Now biblically speaking that would even be military encampments or refugee conditions. The Edomites the descendants of Esau have ethnical representation in the Palestinians today. I do believe what Esau was trying to tell us and it became a reality in 1948 that there would be a refugee crisis, a Palestinian refugee crisis and they would be part of this overall problem. And I think that finds its face in today.

Now also he says about Assyria, they actually help the children of Lot. So you have a confederate member who is assisting another confederate member, the children of Lot would represent Jordan for the most part today. And at no time in Jordan's history did Assyria ever help Jordan until they were involved in wars in 1948 and 1967, and Jordan was not one of the stronger members in that war. So I think it is a prophecy from that perspective. Asaph was a prophet but that is just one argument about it.

One of the things that Dr. Ice talks about which was a little bit disturbing to me is that he says when my friends speak about Psalm 83 or I hear radio interviews about Psalm 83 he says, "At best it should be said that this is just utter speculation." First of all that ignores an enormous amount of research I've done through the years. And I wasn't the first one to write on Psalm 83, this was not my brain storm of an idea or hypothesis. Mutual respected people like Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum first wrote about it in his book, "*The Footsteps of the Messiah*." David Dolan wrote about it in his book, "*Israel in Crisis*," before I even wrote about it. But when he talks about my friends that are speculating, well let's unpack that a little bit. We are talking about Hal Lindsey who advocates the similar Psalm 83 hypothesis. Dr. David Reagan, Chuck Missler, Gary Stearman, a lot of notable, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum as I said, a lot of notable names very respectable. So from my perspective, I don't think those guys took my word for what the interpretation of Psalm 83 would be without them cracking the books and figuring out for themselves whether it was a prophecy. So I think just broad brushing that it is speculation is a little bit dangerous.

Now this interview you saw with Dr. Ice, he could only cover a modicum an overview of what he had written in a dissertation that he wrote about 2011 called, "Consistent Biblical Futurism." And in that he devoted sections 10, 11, 12 and 13 to Psalm 83. And one of the things I want to clear up on this and I certainly invite you to Google that and read that if you really want to hear all of his general arguments on that. But at the same time I would invite you get my book, "*Psalm 83: The Missing Prophecy Revealed*," where I address every objection he's made, and every objection everyone else has made about why Psalm 83 is perhaps not a prophecy for our time and things like that. But I do want to quote one thing that he says right in the beginning of his dissertation, he says, "Consistent futurists believe that future Old Testament prophecy will start to be fulfilled after the Rapture of the Church except the prophecy of the Rapture itself." So what he is saying there is that Bible prophecy apart from the Rapture will be fulfilled after the Rapture. And as you read his teachings on futurism, more specifically he is putting it all into the catch all closet of the 7 year Tribulation period. So in essence pretty much all prophecy apart from the Rapture finds final fulfillment in Daniel's 70th week in the Tribulation period.

Now he goes on to say, "Bill Salus has set forth the speculation that Psalm 83 prophesies a separate end time war that will take place at the end of the current Church Age before the Rapture. Salus teaches that before Tribulation, before the Battle of Magog which will take place before the Tribulation even before the Rapture toward the end of the current Church Age Israel will be invaded by the nations surrounding it." First of all I want to clarify when I read that I e-mailed Dr. Ice and I said, "Please point out where I said that, or were you gleamed that thought because I certainly don't know where that was. I never wrote that." And he never responded to me. And so I want to go on the record right now in all in subsequent works I have made it perfectly clear that I do not believe that Psalm 83 has to be precede the Rapture. Now it might. The Rapture could happen before, it could happen during, or it could happen after Psalm 83. But I believe in the doctrine of imminence as does Dr. Ice. I believe we should be looking for the

return of Jesus at any given moment. But I also see watching the geopolitical situation in the Middle East that Psalm 83 is also very imminent and it could happen and we need to be prepared for it.

Now I want to talk a little bit about the Psalm. Asaph is petitioning God about a concern, a genocidal attempt of the Jewish people. He's saying they are going to form a confederacy, they are going to have a plan, a contemporary confederacy of Arab states. These Arab states share a common borders with Israel. That they are going to have a contemporary confederacy, they are going to have a plan to destroy the nation of Israel that the name of Israel could be remembered no more. If that is a prophecy for our time that means they don't want peace with the Jews today, the Arab and the Palestinians, they want peace without the Jews. And they don't want a two state solution, they want one more state and they want to fly the flag of Palestine over it. And folks, I think this is a very real concern, it certainly is with Israel and it should be a concern for you as supporters of Israel.

He goes on to talk about the confederacy as I said to you. Now Dr. Ice has made the comment that, "If this is a prophecy how come it's not in the prophets, the major and minor prophets that are emphasizing prophecy. Well I point out in my book, *"Psalm 83: The Missing Prophecy Revealed,"* that the prophets did talk about that and I point out about 150 verses that I think apply to the prophets addressing these very population groups, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Gebal, Assyria, Ishmaelites, Hagarenes, and I put maps in the book of course of who they are the Arab states sharing common borders with Israel. I call them an inner-circle, inside of that inner-circle you've got terrorist populations that have evolved, Hezbollah, Hamas, of course you've got the Palestinians, etcetera. So I will let you read through my book and you will see that I believe Asaph has spoken and the other prophets very much about them.

Now I think the problem that Dr. Ice runs into is because he believes that in consistent futurism that the judgment of all the nations will occur in the Tribulation period. And I think he gravitates towards that and I certainly respect his view on that. But when that happens in the campaign of Armageddon this is the Lord returning, Jesus is returning and He is dealing with the Antichrist single handedly, he's fighting them off. What I point out is that the Israeli defense forces today are instrumental, they are the tool the Lord uses to fight off the Psalm 83 Arabs, and I show Scriptures like Ezekiel 25:14 dealing with Edom. "I will execute vengeance by the hand of my people Israel," not by the Messiah by the hand of my people Israel on Edom and they'll show them my fury and vengeance. Obadiah 1:18 is a very important prophecy, the House of Jacob will be a fire, the house of Joseph a flame, but the house of Esau shall be stubble. Esau is the father of the Edomites, the Edomites are the tents of Edom in this prophecy. So, the thing and even Asaph petitions the Lord in verses 9-11 to deal with this confederacy in the manner of historical Jewish military precedent. At the time of Gideon when he defeated the Midianites the Lord empowered Gideon to defeat the Midianites, 300 men kill 120,000 Midianites. He also talks about deal with them like Barak the general did at the time of the Canaanites and the Israelites won and they were empowered. So he is petitioning the Lord to deal with them, empower the Israeli defense forces through the manner of historical precedent as was done.

So as I conclude here I certainly respect Tommy Ice. I just don't agree with him, he fall short on calling it a prophecy. I invite you to certainly read all the things he said but pick up my book and read it too because folks I think Psalm 83 is on the nearby horizon and that also means that Jesus could come at any given moment. Thank you.

## Conclusion

**Dr. Reagan:** When Bill Salus first published his theory in 2008, I endorsed it immediately with a feature article in our Lamplighter magazine. I did so because I had always taught that a limited war in the Middle East between Israel and its immediate neighbors would result in a victory for Israel that would, in turn, motivate the Arab world to cry out to Russia for help, which would lead to a Russian invasion of the area, with the Russians accompanied by the outer ring of Muslim nations mentioned in the War of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Although I had taught this for years, I had never made the link between Psalm 83 and the war of Israel with its immediate neighbors, with those with whom it shares common boundaries.

I still believe this is the most likely scenario; first the limited war of Psalm 83 and then the broader war of Ezekiel 38 & 39. One of the immediate objections to Bill's thesis took the form of an accusation that he was inserting events that must take place before the Rapture, but folks that objection was unfounded. Bill never placed any event before the Rapture. According to his thesis, the Rapture could occur before these wars or during them or after them. Bill has been consistent in arguing that the Rapture is a signless and imminent event that could occur any moment.

Basically, those who object to Bill's thesis about Psalm 83 simply argue that the Psalm is a prayerful lament against the enemies of Israel, and you know what it could very well be. Bible prophecy is not always clear, and that provides legitimate grounds for honest differences in interpretation.

I want to thank both Tommy Ice and Bill Salus for agreeing to appear on this program and share their viewpoints about Psalm 83. If you would like to study this issue in greater detail, I would recommend this particular video by Bill Salus entitled, "Psalm 83." In just a moment our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy.

Well, that's it for this week. I hope this program has been a blessing to you. And I hope you will be back with us again next week. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

## End of Program