

GNITN

#218

When Prophetic Leaders Disagree

You Say Potato, I say Potato

If you're reading that heading, it probably won't make much sense, however if you're familiar with the song *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off* by famous composers *George and Ira Gershwin* it will be in your head for the rest of the day. The song makes fun of the British and American pronunciations of common words. The song illustrates in a clever way that relationships will have differences, but in the end the relationship can survive these seemingly insurmountable disputes when the larger benefits from maintaining them is seen. Now, how you say the same words is a miniscule hurdle compared to, say the differences between people who believe that the world is flat to those who say it is round, yet how these bigger quarrels change our day-to-day lives doesn't need to irreparably doom the good derived from overall healthy bonds. And I bring all this up to prove a point in the Christian world where we see the same argumentative spirit that the secular world has devolved into separating us. Consider this lesson a call to unity, But first, a few more examples are helpful.

These Men Were Not Perfect

I taught a class on Revival, and in one week, I made the point that these great people of past revivals were hardly perfect and would be remiss if we characterized them in any other way. Their boldness in speaking out was not always in kind and diplomatic terms. *Wycliffe* was brutal in his criticisms of anyone who disagreed with him and this made him more than a little bitter in not getting higher leadership posts. *Luther* was terribly antisemitic and railed against the Jews. Others after them would stake out positions that they didn't need to if the goal was to expand the Kingdom of God. They fought and bickered with their contemporaries over doctrinal stances that are still debated today, stances that ultimately made unity impossible. If you want a perfect church you need perfect leaders and that actually hinders the main point of turning from one's wicked ways. Turning demands acceptance of the fact that we are indeed imperfect and in need of a savior. Oddly enough, *Luther* died from an illness he got by traveling in the January cold weather as he endeavored to reconcile two brother's in Christ.

A Little Lesson

The point is, God uses imperfect vessels to accomplish a perfect plan. All of these people could have lived longer or lived in unity with many more of their other leaders if they just put aside their personalities and laid down religious differences that were not as important as the cardinal doctrines that would become the center of their lives. This is not meant to be a criticism of all the good they accomplished by tarnishing the messenger. Rather it is an important lesson to avoid the failings of past moves of God that would eventually lead to yet another falling way. It is this unity that will keep the believers unified longer and prolong the effectiveness it brings.

Paul And Peter

One need only look to the skirmishes over evangelizing the Gentiles in the early church. This heated difference in the early church could have easily severely slowed down the fledgling Church. But Paul led the charge and the challenge to the Jews to realize that the Gospel must be preached to all who would listen. And one need only look at the arguments between Paul and Barnabas to see how disagreements can be dealt with and healthy relationships secured. Paul didn't like John Mark and wanted to leave him behind. Barnabas, who saw the potential in Paul himself, was willing to let the

young evangelist stay with them. The two split over it and Paul added Silas to his team. In the end Paul saw value in John Mark and actually asked for him to be sent to help him. And now we turn to our current state in the body of Christ. And in particular, a differing stance on a specific prophetic belief concerning Israel.

That Was A Long Way To Get To Here

I could have just led with the issues over the **Psalm 83** war, but I wanted to lay the groundwork for why we can disagree on prophetic interpretations of future events and still agree on so much more. If John Wesley and George Whitfield could disagree over signs and wonders in meetings and both continue to be friends and advisors to each other, we can diverge over this one interpretation of a future war from the Bible. In the long run, things will play out as they should and as I always say, prophecies make more sense the closer they get to being fulfilled. Rather than play a game of gotcha with each other, let's agree to disagree and move on to bigger things and let history play out as it should. Israel will get to dwell in the land God promised and she will defeat her enemies both now and in the future because God keeps His promises. Disagreeing on whether the **Psalm 83** war was fulfilled in 1948 or is yet to be fulfilled doesn't have to divide the body of Christ and keep her from working together to evangelize the world and make disciples of all nations. Unfortunately, we live in a time when prophets and prophecies abound and Christians can bicker and fight with each other over interpretations ad infinitum. Believe it or not, it is possible to hold extreme views on this and still work together to win the lost at any cost.

Now On To The Specifics – When Will The Psalm 83 War Happen?

I happen to believe that the **Psalm 83** war is on the horizon while people I greatly respect like Amir Tsarfati says it happened in 1948. Tsarfati, in a recent interview said this about his feelings on the war:

We're being attacked by the Iranian proxies in Iraq. So for all those people that come up with, oh, Psalm 83 is being right now fulfilled, let me tell you something. Psalm 83 speaks of nations. It speaks of countries that indeed came about to destroy us when we declared our statehood and changed the name to Israel. That's why they said, let us cut them off from being a nation that the name of Israel will be remembered no more. And they are from Lebanon and Syria and Jordan and Egypt and even Iraq. All that was fulfilled in 1948, all of that. Those were countries, those were leaders, and those were militaries of those countries that came up to destroy us when we declared statehood. What we see now is proxies of Iran that, for the most part, are not encouraged by the government under which they're operating.

I kept hearing from friends that heard these comments and they wanted to know what I thought and I told them I politely disagreed with him. But I never addressed this argument against my view of what I think about the **Psalm 83** war. I looked in my past classes about it and discovered that although I knew it existed, I didn't teach on it. Well, now I will. And I will lean heavily on a response to it by referring to an article you can find on the web site for Bill Salus (see prophecydepotministries.net) .

Just A Few Questions: The Tents Of Edom

I won't do an exhaustive response as Salus did, but he makes a point of stating that one key piece of the **Psalm 83** narrative is these people who appear to be leading the war against Israel:

*They say, "Come, let us destroy them as a nation. Let the name of Israel be remembered no longer." 5 For they plan together with one mind. They make an agreement against You: 6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagarites; 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with those who live in Tyre; 8 Assyria has joined them also. They help the children of Lot. (**Psalm 83:4-8, NLV**)*

It is this phrase “tents of Edom” that throws a wrench in the belief that this prophecy was fulfilled in 1948. According to proponents of this war happening now is that these people listed as the first of the ones coming against Israel were not a nation or have ever been one. And they never existed in 1948. Here is how Salus explains it:

I disagree with his current interpretation because the main instigator, which is listed in the first primary position in Psalm 83:6, is the “tents of Edom” (Palestinian Refugees). They didn’t technically even become refugees until the aftermath of the 1948 war. The logical question is; since the tents of Edom didn’t exist until after the war of 1948, how could this war be the fulfillment of the prophecy?

Therefore, only Psalm 83:1-5 could have potentially found fulfillment in 1948, but probably not Psalm 83:6-8, which identifies the tents of Edom along with their Arab cohorts. Since neither Psalm 83:6-8 or Psalm 83:9-18 appears to have found fulfillment in the war of 1948, then the possibility that the prophecy was fulfilled at that time diminishes dramatically.

Who Are The Edomites?

Simply put, they are the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob of the Old Testament. They formed the nation of Edom, from which comes the term Edomites. So who are the Palestinians? Unlike the Jews, Palestinians come from no one common historical lineage. Their genealogies can be traced back to the Edomites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Philistines, Sidonians, Ammonites, Moabites, Yemenites, Saudi Arabians, Moroccans, Christians from Greece, Muslim Sherkas from Russia, and Muslims from Bosnia just to name a few. And where do the Edomites currently live? These people do still exist and can be located in Southern Jordan. The phrase “tents of Edom” can be translated as “tents of Palestinians” and in the Bible “tents” represent a population assembled in refuge, and/or military encampments. This is important to note since Palestinians have been seen as living in tents under the United Nations flag for some time.

Just A Few Questions: Enemies Aren’t Seen Anymore

According to **Psalm 83:9-12**, in this conflict Israel is told to do to those who come against them the same things that Israel did to the Midianites and the Canaanites. Going back to Salus we read this: *Psalm 83:9-11 contains the petition of Asaph to empower the IDF like was done in Judges Chapters 4-8 with Gideon against the Midianites and Deborah and her general Barak against the Canaanites. The Midianites and Canaanites were soundly defeated, and as Judges 8:28 says, the Midianite oppression of the Israelites was over forever. This was also the case with the Canaanites upon their defeat. I have yet to find any biblical or historical evidence that either the Midianites or the Canaanites ever oppressed the Israelis subsequent to these defeats.*

Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon. (Judges 8:28, NKJV).

The Arabs of Psalm 83 today still don’t recognize Israel’s right to exist and still oppress Israel. Ps. 83:9-18 are descriptive verses that call for the total end of the Psalm 83 confederate aggression. Since these Psalm 83 belligerents still oppress Israel, it is safe to presume that these relevant verses remain unfulfilled.

Just A Few Questions: And About Those Walls

If the War of Gog and Magog is being setup now without the need for **Psalm 83** either because it isn’t a prophetic portion of the Bible or it already happened as Tsarfati and others believe, how do the conditions for the war described in **Ezekiel 38** happen? Here is what the verses say:

You will say, ‘I will go up against the open country, where people are quiet and live in peace. They live in villages without walls and have no iron pieces or gates.’ (Ezekiel 38:11, NLV)

Right now, Israel is probably the most walled and gated nation in the world and for good reason. These barriers were erected to keep terrorists out and up until October 7th, they worked very well. And yet, even if Hamas were to be destroyed, the other borders would still need to exist. And the finance minister of Israel is on record as saying that if Gaza is turned over to the Palestinians, he wouldn't authorize one shekel to building another wall. What would be the conditions for taking them down then? How will Israel become a nation living in peace and safety? **Psalm 83** tells us that these nations harboring terrorists like Hamas and Hezbollah, who are essentially running these nations like Lebanon, will no longer exist to attack Israel. Hence the need for walls will go away.

Just A Few Questions: Not The Same Nations, Not The Same Results

The nations that attacked Israel in 1948 comprised armies of more than the nations listed in **Psalm 83** and if the Bible is as precise as we believe it to be, the war seen in **Psalm 83** hasn't happened yet.

Salus tells us why this is a key point:

Also, an important side note is that more countries were involved in 1948 than just the Psalm 83 countries. Volunteers were sent to fight from Yemen, Morocco, Sudan, and Pakistan. The fact that more nations than the Psalm 83 countries were involved in the war of 1948 also reduces the possibility that the 1948 war was the fulfillment of the prophecy. The details of the prophecy have to align perfectly and these additional countries are not included in Psalm 83.

Another salient distinction is the conditions described as the result of the **Psalm 83** war didn't follow after 1948. Not even close if just the subsequent wars fought in 1967 and 1973 are any evidence.

Here is how Salus expands on this:

Psalm 83:6 identifies the tents of Edom existing in a habitation condition as refugees, which I believe is a primary clue as to the timing of the prophecy. The prophecy specifies that there has to be Israelis (Ps. 83:3), Israeli Defense Forces (Ps. 83:9-11), Palestinian refugees (Ps. 83:6), a nation of Israel (Ps. 83:4), an Arab confederacy (Ps. 83:6-8), and an Arab hatred of the Jews that drives them to want to eradicate the Jewish state and confiscate the Promised Land (Ps. 83:4, 12). This entire criterion still exists.

If the **Psalm 83** war already happened, there would be no Palestinians.

Why Have a Family Feud?

1-3 How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along! It's like costly anointing oil flowing down head and beard, Flowing down Aaron's beard, flowing down the collar of his priestly robes. It's like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion. Yes, that's where God commands the blessing, ordains eternal life. (Ps 133:1-3, TMG)

Getting back to my original point, prophecy teachers, commentators, leaders, and the like will most likely go back and forth over many things including the debate over the **Psalm 83** war and it's timing. I doubt my explanations will change their collective minds, but it's not a bad thing to debate collegially as long as we don't get into a Hatfield's and McCoy's fight over it. Unity is a blessing that the Bible wants to confer upon His Children, but it is conditional. God will do His part as long as we do our part.