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Messianic Perspectives®

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

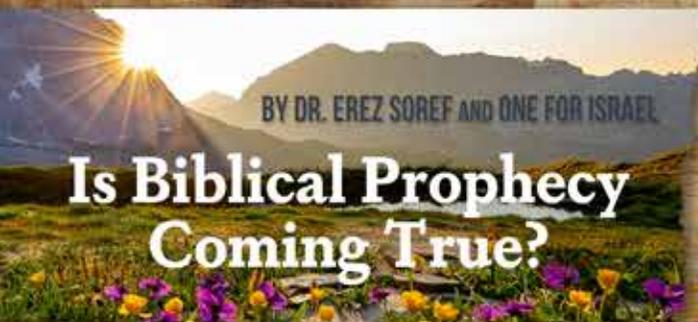


ARE WE IN PSALM 83?

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK



ALSO FEATURING



BY DR. EREZ SOREF AND ONE FOR ISRAEL

Is Biblical Prophecy Coming True?



ARE WE IN PSALM 83?

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

We are living in tumultuous times. The world is rapidly changing and becoming virtually unrecognizable. And it shouldn't come as a surprise to Bible-believers that the global epicenter of this wave of change seems to be in the Middle East.

Why the Middle East? Because the underlying dynamic for much of this worldwide tumult is antisemitism. And antisemitism, ultimately, targets the Jewish State.

Israel was brutally attacked last October 7 by Hamas, the duly elected, governing authority in Gaza. The attack and the hostilities since have shown us where the battle lines are drawn in the international community.

What was most remarkable about that attack was that it caught everyone completely off guard. The operation was extremely well planned by highly disciplined participants. It included incursions into Israeli territory by land, sea, and air. And no one saw it coming!

Infrastructure had been prepared underground in the form of a sophisticated network of tunnels that took years to complete. It runs for miles, under and around Gaza City and outlying areas, enabling the movement of fighters and equipment underground without detection from ground level.

Unbelievably, Israel's security apparatus—including the IDF (Israel Defense Forces), National Security Service, Mossad, and the intelligence services of allies like the US and Great Britain—had no inkling of what the terrorists were planning.

Hamas' assault on Israel has included unspeakable war crimes and atrocities. In the initial attack on October 7, the terrorists crossed the border from Gaza into Israel, raiding Israeli settlements and hospitals and spraying their victims with deadly automatic weapons fire as they went.

When they came to Kibbutz Re'im, the terrorists massacred 364 unsuspecting civilians—young men, women, and children—at the annual Supernova Music Festival. They also took more than 40 hostages of various nationalities. Only five days later, on October 12, it was reported that 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals had been killed by Hamas, and that more than 1,100 Palestinians/Gazans had died in the fighting. Dozens more hostages were also taken, some of them Americans.



IDF in armed conflict around the Gaza Strip that started on October 7, 2023
IDF Spokesperson's Unit

Messianic Perspectives®

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Early on, news services reported that the terrorists had breached a barbed wire barrier and staged a blitzkrieg-type attack on nearby Israeli communities. Their victims reportedly included defenseless infants, some of whom they brutally decapitated.¹ Video footage from a terrorist's cell phone was posted on social media, showing the killers chanting and celebrating after their Israeli victims were all dead.



Pro-Palestine protest in Times Square, New York City
Hugd Breyer

The international community has found itself divided along pro-Israel/pro-Hamas lines. The United Nations, for instance, has issued official statements insisting that the Israelis call an immediate ceasefire and withdraw from Gaza. The Israelis, on the other hand, dismissed any outcome that didn't include the top-down elimination of all Hamas leadership in Gaza—and they have accomplished that, for the most part. As a result of these successes, the IDF scaled back its military operations in Gazan territory in early 2024.

In the meantime, it has been informative to note how much support Hamas has all over the world. There have been pro-Hamas, mass demonstrations in major cities like London, Paris, Chicago, New York City, and even Washington, DC. Attendees at some of these demonstrations have numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Many of us have been forced to admit that we have greatly underestimated the amount of Jew-hatred that simmers beneath the surface in our world. It took a tragedy like this one to force it out into the open—and it is truly disconcerting.

¹ Some media outlets (like the liberal *HaAretz*, as reported in its October 28 *Instagram* post) disputed reports about Hamas terrorists murdering Israeli babies. Pro-Hamas groups claimed the reports were Israeli propaganda designed to turn public opinion against them. However, *PolitiFact* has done the research and says the sickening accounts are very likely true: "Israel Defense Forces spokesperson Jonathan Conricus said in an October 11 broadcast on X (*Twitter*) that, based on reports, he could say 'with relative confidence' that babies were beheaded in Kibbutz Be'eri, about 10 miles southwest of Kfar Aza. He said these reports came from eyewitnesses and a . . . CBS News interview with Yossi Landau, the southern region's head of operations for Zaka, Israel's civilian emergency response organization" (Sarah Swann, *PolitiFact* [politifact.com], November 21, 2023).

Anti-Israelism Is Antisemitism

This surprisingly widespread show of support for Hamas shows us how pervasive antisemitism has become. Even here in America, in "the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave," there are people who believe that what Hamas did when they attacked Israel on October 7 was justified and acceptable. Their approval of these atrocities constitutes an endorsement of genocide against the Jewish people. This is antisemitism at its worst.

Antisemites say these terrorist attacks are payback for Israel's own acts of aggression. However, the historical reality is that the Jewish State has never attacked an enemy in an unprovoked act of aggression. Never, not even once! The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) is only activated for purposes of self-defense.

Every nation on Planet Earth has a right to defend itself from aggression—including the Jewish State. Once engaged in a war, she has the right to continue the fight to its conclusion, whether that's victory or defeat.

No aggressor nation has the right to attack a neighbor, and then, when that neighbor fights back, to call for an immediate ceasefire. That would be like Germany having called for an immediate ceasefire after overrunning Poland in 1939, at the beginning of World War Two. No one with any common sense would defend such irrationality. The Allies had every right to respond and to fight the Second World War to its conclusion.²

Israel has defended herself in a number of conflicts with her Arab/Palestinian neighbors, most notably the following:³

- **The 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Nov. 1947–Jul. 1949)**
Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, and the surrounding Arab states attacked within hours. There had been skirmishes since the previous year, but the formal declaration prompted a wholesale response by the combined militaries of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The war ended the following year with an Israeli victory and the 1949 Armistice Agreements.



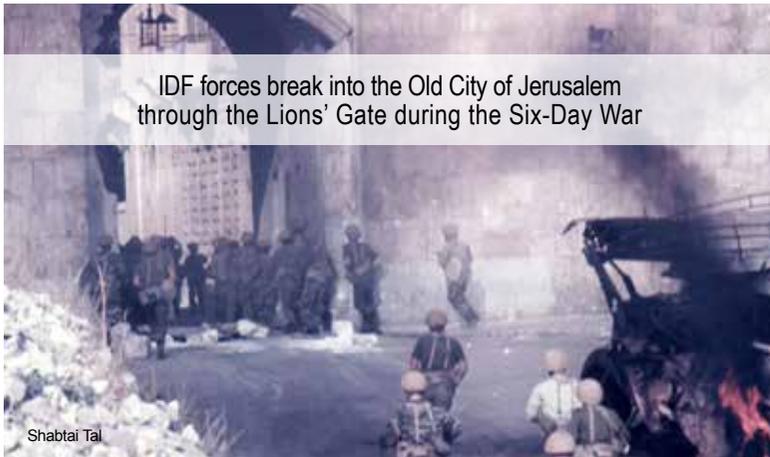
Benno Rothenberg / National Library of Israel

² An acceptable conclusion to a war is when one party declares victory and the other surrenders. Too often, a ceasefire is merely a ploy by one party to buy some time when the war isn't going well.

³ This abbreviated list does not include the numerous Intifadas in which Israel has been forced to defend herself from terrorist attacks and uprisings in Gaza, the West Bank, and other adjacent areas.

- **Six-Day War (Jun. 5–10, 1967)**

In this Arab–Israeli war, Israel struck preemptively in response to Egypt’s provocation (i.e., the closing of maritime passageways to Israeli shipping). Egypt’s strategy was meant to paralyze the Israeli economy and set up a future attack by Egypt. The combatants were Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel won an overwhelming victory and expanded her territory significantly as a result, occupying territory from all three of her attackers.



IDF forces break into the Old City of Jerusalem through the Lions’ Gate during the Six-Day War

Shabtai Tal

- **Yom Kippur War (Oct. 6–26, 1973)**

A coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria staged a surprise attack on Israel on the most holy day of the Jewish religious year. Their objective was to recapture territory they had lost six years earlier (1967). Israel successfully defended herself, and territorial boundaries remained unchanged.



Zeev Radovan

Israeli troops fight off Syrian soldiers in the Golan Heights, the area was later named the Valley of Tears.

- **Israel– Hamas War (Oct. 7, 2023, until the present)**

The Jewish State defended herself in Operation Swords of Iron. Hamas terrorist forces had been planning the offensive for years, and finally launched the attack on Saturday, October 7, when Hamas commandos breached barriers, crossed into Israel, and attacked a crowd of civilians attending a music festival. They killed 364 defenseless people, wounded hundreds more, and took dozens of others as hostages.

Again, there is no rational basis (or any basis in international law) for denying the State of Israel her right to self-defense. Anyone who does so is betraying their anti-semitic bias. Antisemitism is a phenomenon that doesn’t require any factual or rational basis. On the contrary, it feeds on blind irrationality.

So, then, where does antisemitism come from? What causes it? Is it possible to understand it in the context of the Israel–Gaza War?

Three Underlying Causes of the Current Conflict

1. The first cause is a *spiritual* one.

The current conflict, like all outbreaks of antisemitism, is animated and stirred up by the unseen forces of darkness: *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph. 6:12).

Why does the devil (and his minions) hate the Jewish people so intensely? Why is he so determined to destroy them? *Simply because they represent God’s covenant-keeping power, as well as His sovereignty in history.* If anyone ever succeeded in wiping out the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God would be effectively toppled from His throne. Passages like Jeremiah 31 and Romans 11 would have to be excised from the Bible.⁴ Lucifer, in his role as “accuser” (Rev. 12:10), could bring an indictment against the LORD God for failure to keep His promises and for His inability to protect His people.

Of course, nothing like that will ever happen. Nonetheless, the devil is so prideful and self-deluded by his twisted, warped thinking, he believes he can pull it off. We all know how that will turn out for him in the end (Rev. 20:10).

2. Another cause for the current conflict is *geopolitical* in nature.

This has to do with Israel’s relations with other world powers. Extremist groups like Hamas (in Gaza, to the south) and Hezbollah (in Lebanon and Syria, to the north) are adamantly opposed to any form of détente with Israel. An extremist group known as the Muslim Brotherhood is also in the mix, especially in Egypt. They are all outspoken in their insistence that Israel and the Jewish people must be eradicated.⁵



⁴ It’s important to recognize that the term “Israel” in Romans 9–11 refers, clearly and invariably, to ethnic Israel—the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and not to any alternate entity like the Church. No other definition for “Israel” fits all of the term’s occurrences in Romans. *Paul never called the Church “Israel.”* The term “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) is sometimes mentioned as a possibility, but that’s Paul’s reference to Jewish people who had become believers in Yeshua the Messiah. So, even in that instance, “Israel” means ethnic Israel (i.e., Jewish believers in Yeshua). It’s a subset of the Church, but not the Church itself.

⁵ In the few instances where groups like the Muslim Brotherhood have moderated their language, it has been an attempt to deflect criticism and doesn’t reflect any real change in their position.

The Abraham Accords under the Trump Administration (2020) was a series of agreements meant to normalize, for the first time, relations between Israel and much of the Arab world. Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, of course, have been on board for years. The Abraham Accords sought to add United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco to this Israel-friendly Arab alliance. The effort was spearheaded by Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, who is Jewish. He called this arrangement "the Abraham Accords" to emphasize the common roots of both the Jewish and Arab peoples traceable back to Father Abraham.

More recently, President Biden appointed a former US ambassador to Israel, Daniel Shapiro, to manage and expand on the Abraham Accords. However, the Israel–Gaza war and the disruptive Arab ruling class continue to fan the flames of conflict, hindering his efforts.

3. A third cause is *economic*.

Someone has wisely said, "If you want to get to the truth about almost anything, just follow the money." That axiom can be very aptly applied to the seemingly unending Middle East conflict.

Terrorist groups like Hamas are bankrolled by Arab billionaires who live in the lap of luxury in places like Qatar and Turkey.⁶ The "big picture" here is that these powerful Arab elites have a vested interest in perpetuating the Middle East violence. The war in Gaza is just one more attempt to sabotage the normalization of relations between Israel and prominent Arab neighbors as well as potential trading partners.

Rarely have these ruthless Arab overlords ever set foot in Gaza. They are not concerned about the suffering and dying Gazans. The inconvenient truth is that these long-distance elites don't want the Arab world coming to détente with Israel because antisemitism is a profitable business for them. Since the days of Yasser Arafat, this Arab/Palestinian ruling class has raked in literally billions (that's with a "b") of dollars/euros/shekels of "relief" funds (from the US, the European Union, and Israel) earmarked for the poor, suffering Palestinian masses in the West Bank and Gaza. Most of those incoming funds have been diverted into alternate bank accounts without ever reaching the people who desperately needed the help.⁷

This brings us to our question about Psalm 83. Is Asaph talking about our situation today?

Psalm 83

It's understandable that many believers these days are asking, "Are we in Psalm 83?" The answer is yes, inasmuch as the criteria provided in the psalm match up favorably with what we are witnessing in our world right now, it is indeed where we appear to be.

However, we've been here before. Some people thought the Arab–Israeli War in 1948–49 might trigger World War Three, right on the heels of World War Two. Other conflicts in 1967 and 1973 erupted and brought similar concerns. More recently, the involvement of players like Iran and Russia have heightened peoples' fears.

⁶ See "The Hamas terrorist billionaires who live in luxury hotels" in the *London Daily Mail* (January 9, 2024). Accessed at [dailymail.co.uk/news](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news).

⁷ Tricia McDermott, "Arafat's Billions" on CBS News' *Sixty Minutes* broadcast for November 7, 2003 (accessed at [cbsnews.com/news/arafats-billions](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/arafats-billions)).

PSALM 83

1. *A Song. A Psalm of Asaph. Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God!*
2. *For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; And those who hate You have lifted up their head.*
3. *They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.*
4. *They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."*
5. *For they have consulted together with one consent; They form a confederacy against You:*
6. *The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites;*
7. *Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;*
8. *Assyria also has joined with them; They have helped the children of Lot. Selah*
9. *Deal with them as with Midian, As with Sisera, As with Jabin at the Brook Kishon,*
10. *Who perished at En Dor, Who became as refuse on the earth.*
11. *Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb, Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,*
12. *Who said, "Let us take for ourselves The pastures of God for a possession."*
13. *O my God, make them like the whirling dust, Like the chaff before the wind!*
14. *As the fire burns the woods, And as the flame sets the mountains on fire,*
15. *So pursue them with Your tempest, And frighten them with Your storm.*
16. *Fill their faces with shame, That they may seek Your name, O LORD.*
17. *Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,*
18. *That they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, Are the Most High over all the earth.*

We're not suggesting that Asaph wrote this psalm specifically about the current war of 2023–24; however, Psalm 83 provides us with a framework for understanding antisemitic terrorist activity, whenever and wherever it occurs.

This 83rd Psalm is about genocide. It describes a broad conspiracy to destroy the Jewish nation and its people:

Verses 1–2: The LORD God is petitioned **to intervene on behalf of His people**.

Verses 3–4: Here, the diabolical **goals** of this anti-Israel conspiracy are revealed.

Verses 5–12: This section deals with the **extent** of the conspiracy.

Verses 13–17: Operationally, God has numerous **options** at His disposal to deal with His (and Israel's) enemies.

Verse 18: The song closes with the **reason** God must intervene.



Dr. Gary Hedrick is president and CEO of CJF Ministries in San Antonio, TX.

Is Biblical Prophecy Coming True?

BY DR. EREZ SOREF AND ONE FOR ISRAEL

Events in the Middle East seem to be getting more and more apocalyptic, and people want to know: Is the Book of Revelation unfolding before our eyes? So many are speculating about whether we're seeing biblical prophecy in action. *But what you might not have heard is that many of the people asking questions are non-believers.*

On one of the most popular podcasts in the world, the host recently read an entire chapter of Revelation on his show. Joe Rogan may have mocked the Scriptures in the past, but not anymore. He is genuinely asking whether we're seeing these events coming to pass right now. Rogan is a man of the world who often smokes weed while talking to his guests, but just enthusiastically shared a song about Jesus he'd found and loved. These shakings in the Middle East are bringing all sorts of interesting things to the surface.



At *One for Israel*, we receive many messages from Israelis who don't yet know Jesus. Many of them ask about biblical prophecy. Some wonder if we are seeing the fulfillment of Psalm 83. Others want to know if we're saying that Jesus is going to appear soon. For some, it's a matter of fear and dread, while for others it's an extraordinary discovery that maybe life isn't so meaningless after all.

What should we make of it all? How can we best support those around us, whether they're believers or non-believers, as this shaking of the world continues? Can anyone really know for sure what is happening? One thing is certain: These events all point to the most wonderful future anyone could ever imagine.

Biblical Prophecy Reveals God's Peace Plan

Rather than being a scary subject, biblical prophecy should be a powerful antidote to fear. God, Master of the Universe, has told us it's all going to be okay. More than that, it's going to be absolutely amazing. Jesus likened end-time events to labor pains (Matt. 24:4–8),⁸ but people often forget that birth pangs result in something wonderful . . . a birth!

An expectant family won't focus constantly on the contractions and the agony of childbirth (though it's smart to be forewarned and forearmed), but rather they get busy painting the room, collecting clothes, and getting excited to meet the new member of the family. They are getting ready for one of nature's greatest miracles, something to look forward to and celebrate.

⁸ Matthew 24:8 says, *All these* [i.e., war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes] *are the beginning of sorrows*. The Greek word for "sorrows" here is *odin* (ὄδιν), a reference to the labor pains a woman experiences during childbirth.

Not All Doom and Gloom

When Jesus lays out the plan of what will happen during the birth pangs, it's in the context of looking forward to the coming Kingdom.

With all the talk of end times, most people forget to actually look at the END! Instead of looking at the painful birth pangs, let's look at the picture painted in biblical prophecy of what will happen when Jesus comes again.

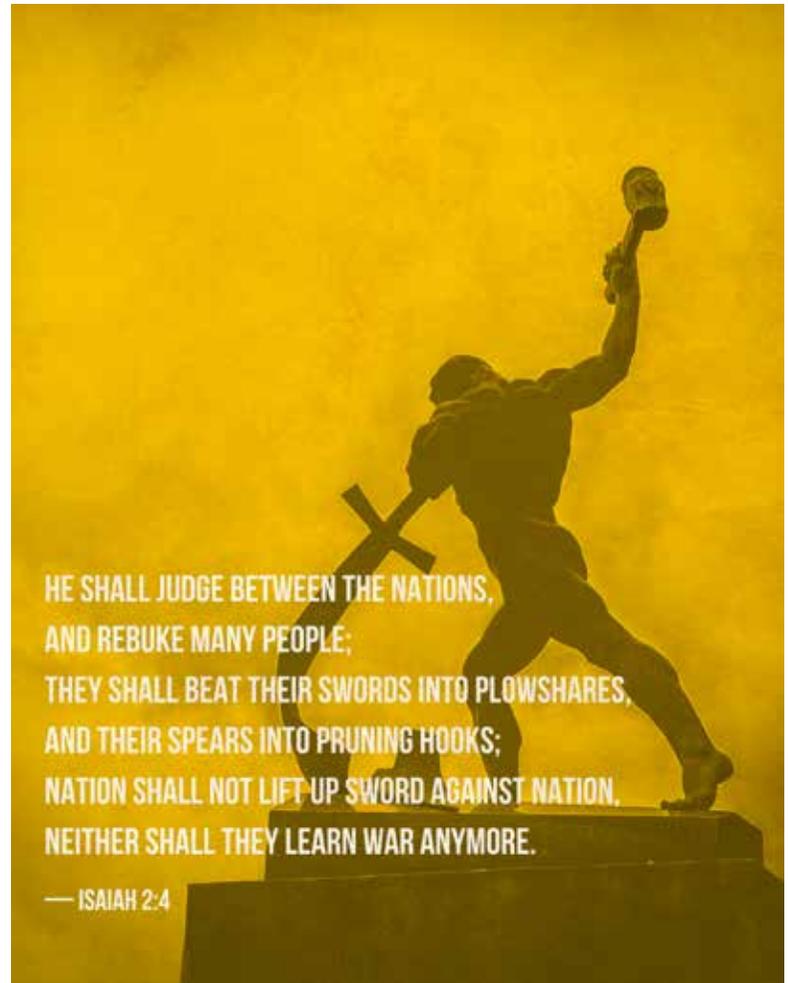
The Messianic Age is going to be incredible! Ironically, this is something Jewish people seem to have grasped better than Christians, partly because the prophecies about the coming Kingdom are mostly found in the Jewish Scriptures. Most of the Book of Isaiah, for example, deals with the themes of the redemption of Israel, the Day of the LORD, and the glorious return of our Messiah. There are hundreds of prophecies scattered throughout the 66 books of the Bible, and there are about 150 chapters that deal directly with the return of Jesus.

“Thy Kingdom Come”

There's far too much about this to cover in one article, but here are a few aspects of His coming Kingdom in biblical prophecy that we can look forward to:

- **King Jesus (*Melech Yeshua*) will reign from Jerusalem, and no one will be able to oppose Him** (Psalm 2:6, 110:2; Zech. 2:12, 9:10; Rev. 2:27, 19:15).
- **At long last, there will be world peace—weapons of war will be changed into tools for agriculture** (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3; Psalm 46:8–10).
- **The nations of the Middle East will join together in worship of the God of Israel, and their citizens will freely travel throughout the region** (Isa. 19:23–25, 60:6, 14).
- **Lifespans will change, along with other changes in nature, as illness, death, decay, and evil are limited** (Isa. 11:6–9, 65:17–25).
- **The enemy will be bound for 1,000 years so he can no longer deceive people** (Rev. 20:3–10).
- **During this thousand-year period, the nations of the world will go up to Jerusalem to pay homage to King Jesus and learn from the Jewish people about their God** (Isa. 2:2–3, 60:1–22; Micah 4:1–2; Zech. 8:22–23).
- **Each nation is obliged to come to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkot and will be punished if they don't** (Zech. 14:16–19).
- **The earth will be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea** (Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9).
- **A river will flow from the Temple in Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, which will come to life once again** (Ezek. 47:1–12; Zech. 14:8; Isa. 35:6–7; Psalm 46:4).
- **Once vilified by the nations, Israel will be finally and decisively vindicated in the eyes of the world** (Ezek. 36:16, 37:24–28; Isa. 19:24–25, 60:1–18, 62:1–12; Zech. 8:3–8; Zeph. 3:20).
- **Jesus of Nazareth will finally be embraced as the Messiah by all His people** (Zech. 12:10; Matt. 23:39; Rom. 11:25–26; Ezek. 20:40–44).

The Messianic Age in which Jesus rules and reigns from Jerusalem for a thousand years is not the same as eternity—all of that wondrousness will come later. For one thing, it sounds like it will still be possible to rebel against God during the millennial rule (e.g., refusing to go to the Feast of Sukkot, Zechariah 14). Rebellion is something that will not happen after the final judgment at the end of the Millennium. But when Jesus returns, the world will be run by His rules, and He will punish the wicked to keep them in line (Psalm 2:9; Rev. 2:27). He will be the One in charge. Can you imagine? The world run by Jesus? How amazing! In this Messianic Age, people will still marry and give birth, and people will still die, albeit at vastly older ages—similar to lifespans before the Flood. In eternity with God, however, there will be no death at all.



More About the Messianic Age

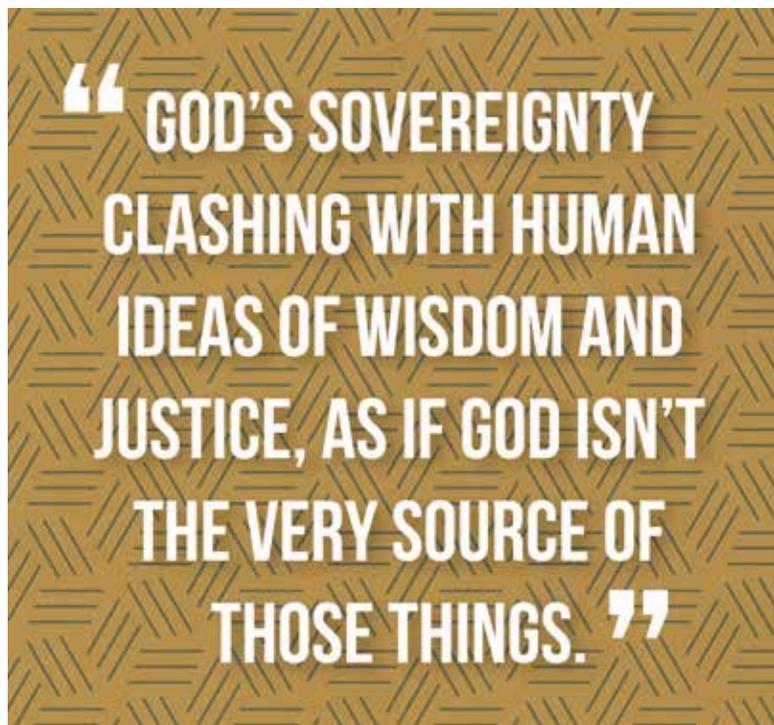
God has made many promises about the restoration of Israel when Jesus comes in glory. He has never yet failed to keep His Word. Biblical prophecies concerning the Messiah's first coming all came to pass in very real and literal ways (e.g., the Messiah was born in Bethlehem as Micah said in 5:2, to a virgin as Isaiah prophesied in 7:14, and they actually pierced His hands and His feet, as David wrote in Psalm 22:16).

These fulfillments in the past were not metaphorical. Rather, they were literal. So, we can expect the biblical prophecies regarding the Lord's future Second Coming to be literally fulfilled, as well. It's all really going to happen. Not one word will fall to the ground. But this makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Particularly as it applies to the Jewish people.

Why Do the Nations Rage?

God chose Israel for a purpose: to bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:2–3). However, God doesn't just use and then discard people. He made a covenant with Israel and He will keep it, but it's for the benefit of the entire world, and principally for the glory of His name. God's choice of Israel sends some people into a fury that is visceral and deep. It's a fury triggered by God's sovereignty clashing with human ideas of wisdom and justice, as if God isn't the very source of those things.

Those who hate Israel may chant, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," but God has another vision entirely.



However, we can see (also in biblical prophecy) that things will get a little hairy before He rolls out His perfect peace plan.

The nations will "rage" (Psalm 2:1) because they are threatened by the prospect of being under new management in the coming Kingdom.

*For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;
And those who hate You have lifted up their head.
They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,
And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.
**They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off
from being a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."**
For they have consulted together with one consent;
They form a confederacy against You:
The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
Geba, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot.
SELAH
(Psalm 83:2–8, emphasis added).*

Remarkably, the very nations mentioned here by their ancient names were the peoples positioned all around Israel—in Jordan, Gaza, Philistia, Lebanon, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. No wonder so many are wondering if this is a prophecy coming to pass right now!

However, God has promised that the people of Israel will never be wiped out and that they will be around as long as the sun, moon, and stars are in place (Jer. 31:35–36). Israel's enemies have clearly not gotten this memo. Their stated goals are to have a *Judenfrei* land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and for things to go back to Muslim rule as it was before the British Mandate.

If you look at the passages of biblical prophecy that describe nations coming up against Jerusalem, you'll notice that it's God Himself who draws the nations against Jerusalem for battle (see Zechariah 12, 14, and Ezekiel 38). He's completely in control the entire time.

Why would God do that? Just as Pharaoh made his decisions but God hardened his heart, God creates the conditions for maximum miracles and peak glory. In the Exodus, a multitude of Egyptians turned to believe and follow Him out of Egypt to the Land of Promise. God wants both Israel and her enemies to know Him.



Now we come to the conclusion of Psalm 83:

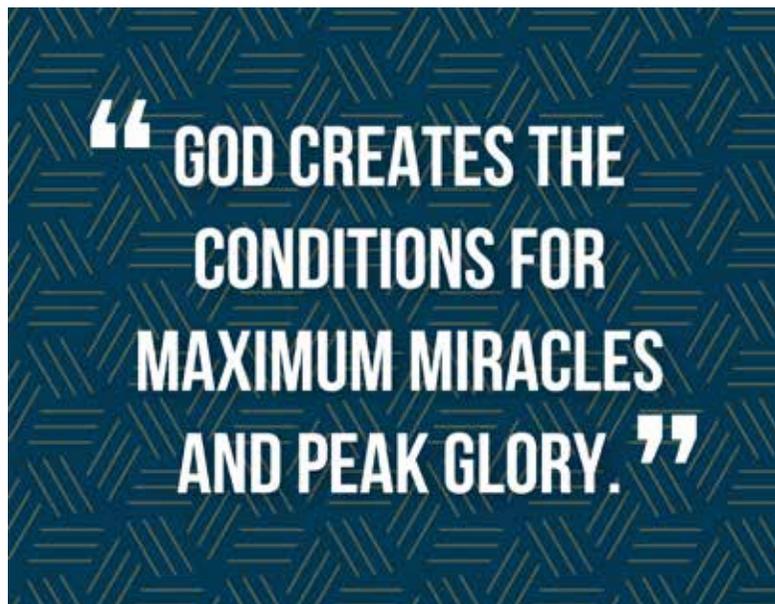
*Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name, O LORD.
Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,
**That they may know that You,
whose name alone is the LORD,
Are the Most High over all the earth**
(Psalm 83:16–18, emphasis added).*

God's goal is the salvation of as many people as possible. Even if it means hardship here on earth, He wants to bring as many as possible into eternity: Jews, Arabs, and all the nations of the earth.

Israel Is the Timepiece, Biblical Prophecy Is the Map

In this time of war, and all its uncertainties, antisemitism is rising around the world like nothing we've seen since the Holocaust. It's right that we should start to pay attention. There are still major events that need to be in position before it can really be the end. Some examples:

- A seven-year peace deal broken after 3 ½ years;
- The Antichrist exalting himself in the third Temple;
- The mysterious “mark” of the beast enabling him to take control of the world economy;
- The rise of “Babylon the Great,” an end-time commercial and religio-political empire; and
- The successful completion of the Great Commission by making the Good News of Yeshua available to the whole world.



It's hard to think of a time in the last 2,000 years when conditions have fallen into place more than they are currently, in our generation. Israel has been reestablished as promised in God's Word, and we are seeing the Jewish people come home, both physically and spiritually. The people of Israel are being regathered, by hook or by crook, as the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) come to an end.

Here in Israel, we are in an era that's seeing more Jewish people accepting Jesus than ever before, more perhaps than since the time of Acts. There will come a time when enemy nations surround Israel in order to wipe us off the map, but when that time comes, Jesus Himself will come to the rescue. Our warrior Messiah will come to save the Jewish people, just as they always believed He would. His identity might turn out to be a bit of a shock to the unsuspecting, but He will be wholeheartedly welcomed, just as He predicted 2000 years ago:

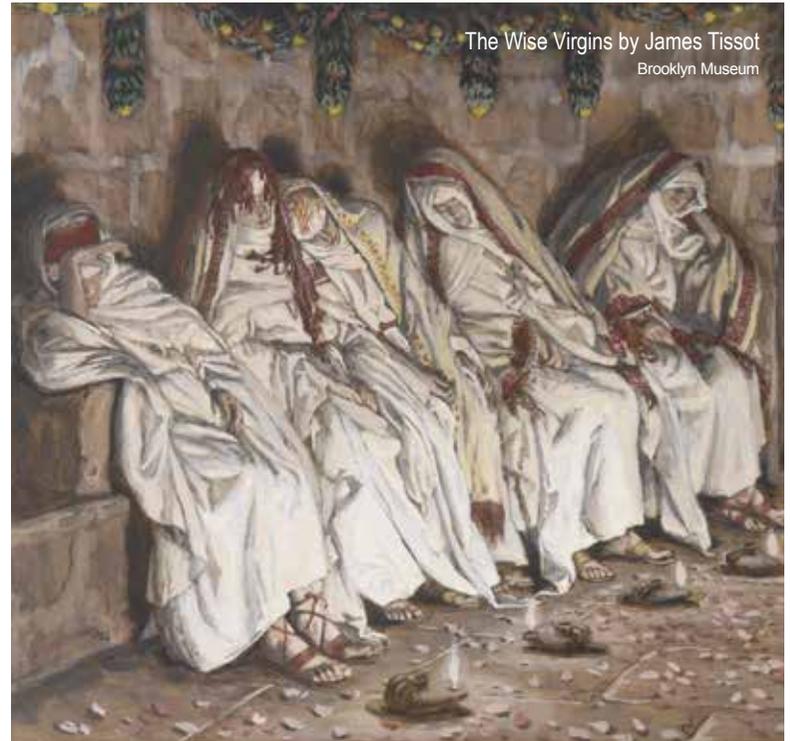
“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

“See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

(Luke 13:34–35).

At the same time that the Jewish people suddenly recognize and mourn for the One whom they have pierced, Israel will be restored in the sight of the whole world, and the nations will see that God meant every word He said. The restoration of Israel will take place when the Kingdom of God is established from Jerusalem. Bring on God's kingdom rule!

Jesus tells us to watch, to pray, and to be ready. We are warned in the parable of the five foolish virgins who fell asleep not to fall into complacency (Matt. 25:1–13).



God esteems those who yearn for His appearing, not those who mock and scoff, saying it will never come. As we see biblical prophecy coming to pass and the circumstances lining up to match God's Word, may He find us eagerly looking up, ready and waiting for Him.

Yeshua himself left us with this model petition (see below). Notice that it begins with our yearning for the Kingdom to arrive on Planet Earth. This is the fervent hope and prayer of every redeemed heart:

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread.

“And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

“And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”

(Matt. 6:9–13, emphasis added).



Dr. Erez Soref is the president of ONE FOR ISRAEL, leading the only accredited Messianic Bible college in Israel, and engaging in evangelism and discipleship.

Bible Questions & Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *What's all the fuss about the red heifers in Israel? People are saying it's a sign that the Rapture is about to happen. Is that a possibility? I sure hope so!*

ANSWER: Well, now, it's been a while since we've had a question about the OT red heifer! The last time this cow received such widespread publicity was thirty or more years ago. Around 1990 or so, Clyde Lott, a lay Pentecostal evangelist and cattle rancher in Mississippi, was doing some reading in the Book of Numbers. When he came to Chapter 19, he was fascinated by the description of the red heifer purification rites (v. 2). He did some research and learned that during the days of the Second Temple, priests (*cohanim*) would undergo a ritual cleansing (with a solution of water mixed with the ashes of a sacrificed red heifer) before they went about performing their priestly duties. When they were mixed with water, the ashes from one animal could last for several generations. According to Jewish tradition, there have been nine red heifers since the time of Moses. The next heifer, then, will be number ten. The ashes from the ninth red heifer reportedly perished in the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

Our longtime friend, Dr. Randall Price, a widely respected evangelical archaeologist, explains the significance of these young, red cows in ancient Judaism:

The red heifer ceremony (Numbers 19) was conducted on the Mount of Olives where a heifer of three years of age was burnt and its ashes transported along a wooden bridge over the Kidron ravine to a repository near the East Gate of the Temple Mount. After the destruction of the second temple in AD 70, this repository of red heifer ashes disappeared, as did red heifers themselves. The red heifer ceremony was done for ritual cleansing (restoration from corpse impurity). The 113th of the 613 mandatory commandments in Judaism states, "the ashes of the Red Heifer are to be used in the process of ritual purification." Without a purified priesthood the work of consecrating the site and rebuilding the temple cannot begin. This explains why Jewish organizations desiring to rebuild the temple today have sought to reinstitute the red heifer ceremony (Randall Price, *Rose Guide to the Temple* [Peabody, MA: Rose Publishing, 2012], Kindle edition).

That cattle rancher in Mississippi wondered if the absence of a qualified red heifer might be holding up the Second Coming. The people of Israel had no red heifers from which to obtain the ashes required for this ancient, priestly ceremony! Being a cattle rancher by trade, and well acquainted with breeding practices, Mr. Lott believed he was just the man for the job. He contacted Rabbi Chaim Richman at the Temple Institute in the Old City, and the rabbi (who is Orthodox, not Messianic) agreed that such an endeavor might indeed hasten the Messiah's coming. Here's what Rabbi Richman wrote in his book *The Mystery of the Red Heifer: Divine Promise of Purity* (Jerusalem: Rabbi Chaim Richman, 1997):

In truth, the fate of the entire world depends on the Red Heifer. For God has ordained that its ashes alone [are] the single missing ingredient for the reinstatement of biblical purity—and thereafter, the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

Mr. Lott and his ranch hands worked hard for several years, breeding red cows, and trying to come up with an acceptable animal. What made it tricky was that, according to rabbinic tradition, the red heifer had to be a perfect specimen—completely red, with not a single hair of another color anywhere on its body. There were rumors that they had to tweeze a few white hairs from some of the red heifers; but by the late 1990s, the Lott ranch in Mississippi was ready to begin shipping plane loads of the animals to Israel. They raised money from Christian donors for what they called the "Canaan Land Restoration of Israel" project. Many of these donors sincerely believed they were helping remove the final obstacle to the Lord's return. For a contribution of \$1,000, they could sponsor one red heifer. Halves and quarters were available for \$500 and \$250, respectively. Or donors could opt to pay the plane fare—which came to \$341 per animal.

Sadly, none of the hundreds of red heifers that Lott shipped to Israel ultimately passed the rabbinic test. At one point, they reportedly narrowed the field down to two finalists—but tiny, white hairs were found on both animals during their quarantine. So, Mr. Lott's "Canaan Land" endeavor became defunct and hundreds of well-meaning donors lost their money. Ranchers in Israel have similarly failed to breed the Tenth Red Heifer.

The takeaway from all of this should be this: The Lord doesn't need our "help" to fulfill prophecy. Everything will unfold, just as it's supposed to, in His own, good time. His return won't be one minute early, or one minute late. He will be right on time—and we don't know when that will be (Matt. 24:44).

Understandably, we all want Him to return as soon as possible—maybe even today! However, the timing of His return is in the Father's hands, not ours. The Lord himself confirmed this when He responded to His disciples' question in the first chapter of Acts:

Therefore, when they [i.e., Yeshua and His disciples] had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (vv. 6–7).

This idea that we must show ourselves worthy of Messiah's coming, or that a lack of Torah-observance or Sabbath-keeping prevents Him from revealing Himself, derives from works-based rabbinic Judaism—not from the Bible. From a human standpoint, it may be possible to "hasten" the Lord's return by doing certain things (like living in holiness and doing Great Commission work; Matt. 6:10–11; Acts 3:19–20; 2 Peter 3:12); however, from God's perspective, nothing can hinder His Son's return (Acts 1:6–7). He will come "in the fullness of time," just like He did two thousand years ago (Gal. 4:4). Any attempt to slow Him down would be like trying to stop a fifty-ton locomotive by laying a toothpick on the train track.

My best advice for you, dear friend, is always to maintain a stance of readiness—and ignore the misguided musings of prophecy "experts" who say that certain events (e.g., the breeding of an acceptable red heifer) must take place before the Lord can come back for His people in the Rapture. 

Fruit from the Harvest



by Violette Berger



The Ultra-Orthodox Community

CJFM representative, Diann Parkas (New Jersey), praises God that He has gathered workers from a number of Messianic ministries to reach the ultra-Orthodox with the Good News of Messiah, Jesus. Diann writes: “One very exciting initiative that we have just started is an online Bible study geared to believers and seekers from that background. Please pray for the current attendees to grow in their faith or come to faith, as the case may be, and pray that God will connect us with others who will join us in studying the New Covenant Scriptures.” Diann is also excited about educating and inspiring other believers to learn about the ultra-Orthodox community and to become equipped to minister to them as opportunities arise. They have started a private Facebook group where interested believers can access educational resources. Please email Diann at diann@cjfm.org if you are interested in learning about the ultra-Orthodox Jewish people and how to share with them.

A Shooting on UNLV Campus

Richard Hill, CFM representative and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation (Las Vegas), and his wife, Oanh, were blessed with 34 salvation decisions during the fall/winter UNLV campus outreach. They ask that we join them in praying for revival on campus as they approach the spring semester. Although pro-Palestinian protests continue, they are also seeing a dramatic change of attitude in students who are listening and asking questions about God.

There was a shooting on the UNLV campus on December 6. That day, Rich and his team of evangelists were on campus sharing the Gospel message of Jesus. Two students prayed with them to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and a few other business students also heard the Gospel message for the first time. As Rich and his team were leaving the campus, heading for their cars, they passed by the Student Union and Beam Hall, where Lee Business School meets for classes. As they were driving away, they saw police cars speeding by them but were unaware as to why until later. They literally walked by those buildings five minutes before the shooting occurred. It was reported that the shooter killed three teachers at Lee Business School. Rich writes, “As we grieve over all this evil, we praise the Lord for His protection. Please pray for our ministry and others on campus to be agents of revival.”

The Blind Shall See and the Deaf Shall Hear

A mother, who is a believer, had been attending services with her two unsaved sons, Michael and David. During Shabbat School, Michael, the older son, prayed with Oanh to receive the Lord. He jumped with joy when telling his mother the good news. However, David, who is deaf, wanted nothing to do with Jesus. Oanh then asked Michael to “sign” with David as she shared with him. But David still rejected Jesus—until a few weeks later after “hearing” more about Him. Then he, too, prayed to receive Jesus as His Lord and Savior. That’s when Michael explained that they are Jewish because their father is Jewish! Please pray for these two Jewish boys as they are baptized and for their growth in the Lord.

“To Be With Jesus”

Cameron was Rich’s good friend and a loyal congregant for ten years. When he developed cancer throughout his body, he fought the good fight but lost in the end. However, Rich writes, “He only lost to cancer. In the end, Cameron was telling everyone that all he wanted was ‘to be with Jesus!’ Jesus answered that prayer, and we preached it at his funeral, resulting in the salvation of one family member. Please pray for that person’s sanctification process.”

Ideological Rifts

Marcos and Deborah Morales, CJFM representatives (Mendoza, Argentina), are concerned that the financial situation, mismanagement, and discredit of Argentina’s politicians are fueling support among many young people for a new figure, Javier Milei, who does not come from a political background. However, he is the current Argentine president and also the architect of the largest cultural debate between right and left in Argentine history. Marcos and Deborah write: “His appearance created a real ideological rift and has caused many young people to turn to one extreme or another, politically speaking, like never before. The opportunity arose to talk in-depth about Yeshua with two young Jewish men, Ivan and Karim, of opposite political leanings, but with a common denominator—both separated from faith in God.”

“Ivan comes from a Masorti Jewish family; his parents attend Chabad Lubavitch in our city. Ivan states that he does not believe in God or the Bible. He is a friend of my daughter’s, and I had the opportunity for a deep discussion with him. The political topic was the icebreaker in our conversation since he is an admirer of our new president. Further in our conversation, I led him to the Torah as a revelation from God and to Yeshua HaMashiach as the fulfillment of the Torah. At first, he expressed doubt concerning the canonicity and veracity of the Word of God. When I began to explain it to him, he remained silent, and then his eyes lit up as he listened to me attentively and started asking questions. We pray that the seed of the Word sown will bear its fruit in His time.”

“Karim is also Jewish, but his parents have always been apolitical and far from Judaism. He is left-wing and quite bohemian. As a child, Karim attended our meetings with his mother and also attended children’s Bible classes taught by Deborah. Today, at university, where leftist indoctrination abounds in Latin America, Karim has adopted a clearly progressive position. I went to visit him in San Luis, a city 250 kilometers from Mendoza. He received me, along with his girlfriend who shares his political beliefs. I was able to testify to him once again of faith in Yeshua. As we spoke, Karim remembered what he had learned about Yeshua as a child. His girlfriend also participated enthusiastically in our conversation and told me that she came from a traditional Methodist family and had attended Sunday School as a child. May God multiply the faith in both of them so that the Word of God sown brings salvation to their lives, families, and friends.”

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