

## WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

- I. Israel – the center of everything Ezekiel 38:12
  - A. Prophecies fulfilled - Isaiah 11:11&12 - Two dispersions & two re-gatherings
    1. First dispersion to Assyria and to Babylon (which conquered Assyria.)
    2. First re-gathering – 2 Chronicles 36:22&23
    3. Second Dispersion Luke 21:12-24
    4. Re-gathered to a land that had been a "continual waste." Ezekiel 38:8
    5. Re-gathered by the Lord God Ezekiel 34:6, 11-16, 30&31
    6. Re-gathered as one nation, not two Ezekiel 37:15-22; Isaiah 11:12&13
    7. Re-gathered to a land that is once again fruitful Ezekiel 36:8-12
    8. Re-gathered in unbelief Ezekiel 37:1-14
    9. Born as a nation all at once Isaiah 66:7-9
  - B. Prophecies being fulfilled
    1. A complete re-gathering Ezekiel 39:28
    2. To a land claimed by their ancient enemies Ezekiel 35:1-36:5
    3. To a land that will increase in size Isaiah 11:14
    4. Sabbath re-instituted Matthew 24:20
    5. Israel becoming the center of everything Luke 21:24
    6. Daniel 12:4b(ESV) “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” The pace of life has dramatically increased. The doubling of knowledge has gone from centuries to months.
    7. 2 Peter 3:3-7 Deliberately ignoring the overwhelming evidence for a world-wide flood began happening around 1800.
    8. Matthew 24:3d&14 “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age...And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” In 1965 about 2,000 languages had some portion of the Bible translated. In 2023 3,658 have some portion of the Bible translated, with 736 languages having the entire Bible and 1,658 others having the entire New Testament. There are 3,283 active translation projects currently with 1,268 languages still with no translation work. “Nations” in Matthew 24:14 is “*ethnos*,” which means a people with their own language, culture, territory and government. Missionaries usually present the Gospel before beginning to translate the Scriptures. Wycliffe Bible Translators estimates their will be translation work beginning in every language that needs on by 2038.

- C. Prophecies yet to be fulfilled
  - 1. Romans 11:25-32
  - 2. Zechariah 12:1-14
  - 3. Zechariah 14:1-21
- II. The Palestinians – Their Biblical history
  - A. Promises to Abraham
    - 1. Genesis 12:1-3
    - 2. Genesis 13:14-17
    - 3. Jews, Muslims and most Christians believe this.
  - B. Promise to Isaac. Genesis 26:1-5 Jews and most Christians believe this means the land God promised to Abraham was also promised to Isaac. Muhammed and Muslims have a very different idea. They say that the land should have gone to Ishmael as Abraham's firstborn.
  - C. Pre-birth prediction about Jacob and Esau. Genesis 25:24
  - D. Esau sells his birthright Genesis 25:29-34; Hebrews 12:16
  - E. The blessing on Jacob Genesis 27:27-29
  - F. The blessing(?) on Esau Genesis 27:39&40
  - G. Original homeland Genesis 36:1-9, 19, 43
  - H. The land promised to Jacob. Genesis 28:1-4, 12-15 Again, most Jews and most Christians believe God gave the Holy Land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Muslims disagree.
    - I. The story of Balaam. Numbers 22:1-24:25 (especially 22:12; 23:7&8; 24:9, 18)
    - J. Conflict with Israel in wilderness Numbers 20:14-21
    - K. Enemies of Israel during Saul's reign I Samuel 14:47
    - L. Doeg the Edomite I Samuel 22:17-19
    - M. Conquered by King David 2 Samuel 8:14
    - N. Rebelled against King Jehoram and gained independence 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10
- III. The Palestinians – Later History
  - A. Destroyed by the Babylonians not long after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Their destruction and the reason for it is given in Obadiah 1-14. God's attitude toward Edom is given in Malachi 1:2-5
  - B. After the Babylonian invasion the Nabateans drove the "Edomites (later known as the Idumeans) into the Negeb and what had been southern Judah. Settling in

the desert south of Beersheba, the Edomites established themselves in the relatively lush tableland and hills around Hebron, which became one of their chief cities." Page 150, Atlas of the Bible, The Readers Digest Association, Inc. 1983

- C. Idumea is mentioned in Mark 3:8
  - D. "By 125 BC Hyrcanus has annexed part of Samaria and all of Idumea...The people in these territories were forced to accept Judaism as a means of insuring their loyalty." Ibid. page 161
  - E. William Whiston says in a footnote on his edition of *The Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, 13.9.1.258, when discussing why the Edomites (Idumeans) agreed to accept circumcision and Jewish law rather than leave their land, "I suppose it was because they had long ago been driven out of the land of Edom, and had seized on and possessed the tribe of Simeon, and all the southern part of the tribe of Judah."
  - F. Edomite rulers in New Testament times (descendants of the forcibly converted Idumeans).
    - 1. Herod the Great 37BC to 4BC
      - a. Luke 1:5
      - b. Matthew 2:1-18
    - 2. Archelaus Matthew 2:21-23 4 BC to 6AD
    - 3. Herod Philip Luke 3:1 4 BC to 34 AD
    - 4. Herod Antipas 4 BC to 39 AD
      - a. Luke 3:1
      - b. Mark 6:14-29
      - c. Luke 23:6-12
    - 5. Herod Agrippa I 37 AD to 44 AD (appointed by Caligula after the death of Tiberius. He was given more territory to govern on two successive occasions.)
      - a. Acts 12:1-5
      - b. Acts 12:18-23
    - 6. Herod Agrippa II Acts 25:13
- IV. Who are the descendants of Esau today and where do they live?
- A. They were living in southern Judah at the time of the second Jewish dispersion.
  - B. When modern Palestinians are told that the land of Israel belongs to the Jews because God promised to Abraham, their typical response is: "We are the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, his first-born son, and through Esau,

the first-born son of Isaac. We have as good a claim to this land through Abraham as do the Jews."

- C. One of the sayings of modern Palestinians is: "Jacob may have cheated Esau out of his inheritance once, but we are not going to let him do it again."
  - D. According to Ezekiel 35 (with Genesis 36:1, 8, 19, 43)
    - 1. They have harbored an ancient hostility toward the Jews. Verse 5
    - 2. They have not hated bloodshed. Verse 6
    - 3. They have committed themselves to taking possession of the land that was Judea and Samaria. Verse 10
  - E. Although there has obviously been a great deal of intermixture with other people groups, history, Bible prophecy, the Jews and the Palestinians themselves view the Palestinians as primarily the descendants of Esau with a strong mixture of Arab blood (the descendants of Ismael). Genesis 28:6-9 and 36:3 tells us that one of Esau's three wives was a daughter of Ishmael.
- V. The future of the Palestinians
- A. Destruction by Israel Obadiah 15-18
  - B. The Remnant of Edom Amos 9:11-15 partially quoted in Acts 15:15-18
  - C. Under the wrath of the LORD Malachi 1:2-4
  - D. Edom made desolate Ezekiel 35:10-36:5
  - E. Not mentioned in the list of nations, including Iran, that launch a sneak attack on Israel in Ezekiel chapters 38&39.
  - F. Compare 2 Kings 17:6, 18-23 with 2 Chronicles 30:11, 18
  - G. Compare 2 Chronicles 36:20 with 2 Kings 25:12, 22 and Jeremiah 40:6-12
- VI. The Rapid Growth of Christianity until 600 AD.
- A. The Apostles Mark 3:13-19
    - 1. Simon Peter took the gospel to Antioch, Corinth (?), Babylon and Rome. Galatians 2:11; I Corinthians 1:12; I Peter 1:13
    - 2. Andrew is believed to have taken the gospel to Russia, Ukraine and Romania.
    - 3. James of Zebedee was beheaded in Jerusalem but strong tradition says that happened after he had preached the gospel in Spain. Acts 12:1&2
    - 4. John ministered primarily in Ephesus.
    - 5. Philip is believed to have gone to Greece, Phrygia (in modern Turkey) and Syria.
    - 6. Bartholomew is believed to have gone to India, then to Armenia (Ancient Armenia stretched from eastern modern Turkey to Iran).

7. Matthew (Levi) probably went to Ethiopia.
  8. Thomas went to India.
  9. James of Alphaeus most likely preached in Syria.
  10. Thaddaeus went to Armenia.
  11. Simon the Zealot preached the gospel in Egypt, and across north Africa and Spain and then went to Armenia. Foxe *Voices of the Martyrs*
  12. The Apostle Paul preached the gospel in Damascus, Syria, then preached in Jerusalem. (Acts 9:19-22, 28&29). The apostles then sent him home to Tarsus in modern Turkey (Acts 9:30). From there he went to Antioch (also in modern Turkey) to join Barnabas (Acts 11:22-26). On his first Missionary journey with Barnabas they went to Cyprus and from there what is now western Turkey and then returned to Antioch (Acts 13&14). On his next two journeys he retraced some of his previous trip and then went to Greece (Acts 15:36-21:15). After being arrested, he went as a prisoner to Crete, Malta, Sicily and Italy (Acts 23:23-28:31). After being released he probably went to Spain.
- B. From the Apostolic era until 600 AD (from Timeline of Christian missions on Wikipedia)
1. 80 AD First Christian reported in Tunisia and France
  2. 100 AD First Christians reported in Monaco, Algeria and Sri Lanka
  3. 166 AD Christians now reportedly outnumber Jews in Roman Empire
  4. 199 AD Christian missionaries go to Japan
  5. 300 AD An estimated 10% of the world's population now Christian; parts of the Bible available in ten different languages.
  6. 313 AD Christianity legalized in Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine.
  7. 330 AD Ethiopia makes Christianity an official religion.
  8. 334 AD First bishop ordained for the area that is now Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.
  9. 380 AD Christianity made the official religion of the Roman Empire.
  10. 400 AD Gospel proclaimed in Yemen.
  11. 425 AD First bishops ordained for modern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.
  12. By 600 AD Christianity was the predominant religion in most of what had been the Roman Empire and was firmly established in scattered locations throughout north Africa, on the Arabian Peninsula, from Armenia to India, throughout much of Russia and in those parts of Europe north of where it was the predominant religion. (See map "Spread of Christianity before 600 CE.)

## VII. The Rise of Islam

### A. Mohammed – a brief history – 2 Timothy 3:13

1. Born about 570 to an Arabian tribe near Mecca, considered himself a descendant of Ishmael.
2. He was orphaned at an early age and raised by relatives; he was probably illiterate.
3. A wealthy 40-year-old widow proposed to him when he was 25 and they were married. She was his only wife until after she died.
4. He claimed to have had his first vision at age forty and started preaching about what he said had been revealed to him three years later. He saw himself as the last in a long line of prophets including Abraham, Ishmael and the prophets of the Bible including Jesus and the apostles. He expected Jews and Christians to accept him as a prophet and taught his early followers to pray facing Jerusalem. (He was rejected and made fun of by the Jews because they said he garbled the Old Testament stories. According to Mohammed, Haman was the Prime Minister of Egypt when Moses was born and was still Prime Minister when Moses returned with Aaron and demanded that Pharaoh let the Jewish people go. He also said that Pharaoh told Haman to build a tower that would reach into heaven.) After being rejected by Jews and Christians in 624 he began teaching his followers to pray toward Mecca. Sura 2:136; 3:84; 4:163-165 He taught that Jesus was virgin born and the Messiah. Sura 3:45-47 He taught that Jesus was NOT the Son of God and was NOT CRUCIFIED. Sura 4:157&158; 19:88-93; 4:171 See quotes from the Quran.
5. In 622 he and his followers left Mecca and moved to Medina to escape persecution.
6. He united the Medina tribes and returned to and conquered Mecca in 630 AD.
7. By his death in 632 he and his armies had conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula, which included numerous Jewish and Christian communities.
8. Although he may have truly believed that God was speaking to him, several of his "revelations from God" in the Quran are extremely suspect. He had a "revelation" justifying his marriage to his adopted son's wife and a "revelation" saying that the limit of four wives imposed on other men did not apply to him. His marriage to a very young girl, although they did not live together as husband and wife until she was about twelve, also seems very inappropriate.

- B. Muslim conquests 632 – 750 Judges 11:12-27
1. After Mohammed's death many of the tribes on the Arabian Peninsula rebelled and needed to be reconquered. This took about two years.
  2. The Sassanid (Persian) and Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empires had been at war for 400 years. Starting around 610 AD the Sassanid armies took all of what is now Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt from the Byzantine Empire. Starting around 624 AD the Byzantine Empire re-grouped and took all that territory and much more back. When the Muslim armies attacked the Sassanid Empire it was in complete disarray. The defeat of the Sassanid Empire by the Byzantine Empire led to a series of coups resulting in five kings in less than four years. The Muslim armies took the territory regained from the Sassanid Empire from an exhausted Byzantine Empire and the southeastern part of the Sassanid Empire very quickly. By 710 AD the entire Sassanid Empire had been conquered as well as North Africa along the Mediterranean.
  3. By 750 AD almost all of what is now Spain and Portugal had been conquered and Islam was moving east from the territory conquered from the Sassanid Empire. See maps.
- C. Muslim conquests 750 -1095
1. Crete 826 AD
  2. Bari (in southern Italy) 840 AD
  3. St. Peter's Basilica in Rome sacked 846 AD
  4. Sicily 902 AD
  5. By the time the Crusades started approximately 60% of what had been predominantly Christian territory had been conquered by Muslim armies and the Christian and Jewish populations in those areas reduced to second class status. Muslim groups held, for a time, Corsica, Sardinia and other Mediterranean islands and were raiding cities along the coast of Italy and in what is now southern France on a regular basis. Christian sites in the Holy Land were being desecrated and pillaged. See maps.
- D. The Crusades – successes and failures
1. The attempts to re-take the Holy Lands were mostly disasters, poorly planned and organized and doomed to failure because those populations had largely genuinely converted to Islam.
  2. The attempt to drive back the Muslim advance into Europe was largely a

military success because in those areas the vast majority of the population had never converted to Islam. Muslim armies were driven out of what is now Spain, Portugal, Corsica, Sardinia, Malta, southern Italy and Sicily.

3. The Crusades highlight the Christian problem with aggressive Islamic conquest. The Roman Empire was largely converted by Christians who refused to take up arms against their pagan rulers. Part of the reason for the early Muslim successes was that Christians for the most part do not believe in spreading their faith by conquest. The question facing genuine Christians was and is when is taking up arms to defend your right to worship Christ a legitimate Christian response to Muslim conquest.

E. Muslim expansion to the present day.

1. The Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottoman Empire in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, with Constantinople being taken in 1453. By 1520 it included modern Greece, the Balkans and parts of southern Russia and Eastern Europe. They made several attempts to take Italy but were never successful. The Ottoman Empire essentially ended with World War I.
2. Most permanent Muslim expansion since the Crusades has been into areas dominated by polytheistic religions, not by Christianity.

VIII. Christian Missionary Work among Muslims

- A. The rapid expansion of Islamic political power essentially kept Christianity bottled up in Europe and Russia for many years. The closest non-Christian countries were Muslim and they were all extremely resistant to the Gospel.
- B. Colonizing missionary movements began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as part of the general movement toward European countries establishing a presence in less developed countries. They were generally unsuccessful in producing strong indigenous Christian movements and were almost totally unsuccessful among Muslims.
- C. When the modern missionary movement began in the nineteenth century, almost all of the missionaries traveled around the countries under Muslim control to work with more receptive people groups.
- D. The following statistics are from *A Wind in the House of Islam* by David Garrison published in 2012. He uses the figures of 1,000 baptisms or 100 churches started in 20 years or less as minimum numbers to describe a significant number of Muslim people converting to faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. From the time of the death of Muhammed until about 1850 there was not one significant movement of Muslim background people to Christ.

- b. From about 1850 to 1924 Sadrach Surapranata and his followers led between ten and twenty thousand Javanese Muslims to Christ, using an approach that was so harmonious with native customs and culture that it aroused opposition from more traditional church ministries.
- c. From 1896 to 1920 Shaikh Zakaryas was responsible for about 7,000 former Muslims being baptized after coming to faith in Christ in Ethiopia.
- d. In the 1990's two people movements started in Iran and one each among the Berbers in Algeria, among Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz and Kazakh peoples in the former Soviet Union, in Albania and Bulgaria, in the Sahel in West Africa and in Bangladesh.
- e. "In only the first 12 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an additional 69 movements to Christ of at least 1,000 baptized Muslim-background believers or 100 new worshipping fellowships have appeared." *Ibid. page 18*
- f. The number of Muslim Background believers has continued to increase since 2012. It is estimated that Algeria has 380,000 Muslim-background believers, Ethiopia 400,000, Iran 500,000 (there were only 500 in 1979) and Indonesia 6,500,000.

- IX. What does all this, the re-establishment of Israel and their displacement of the Palestinians and the beginning of people movements to Christ among Muslim populations, have to do with the emergence of Islamic terrorism in general and ISIS, Hamas, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in particular?
- A. Muslims believe that the conversion of the world to Islam is inevitable.
    - 1. They believe that once an individual converts to Islam, which they believe is the one true religion, no one ever genuinely converts to another religion unless coerced or induced by promises of money, power, etc.
    - 2. They believe that once a country is conquered by Islamic armies it will remain Islamic until the end.
    - 3. There have been exceptions to both these beliefs, but they have been rare enough to explain away. And historically, many formerly Christian countries have become Islamic.
  - B. A simple definition of *truth* is "that which conforms to reality."
  - C. In the last one hundred years or so there have been two major areas in which what Muslims believe has not conformed to reality in very significant ways.
    - 1. The creation of the nation of Israel in an area that had been under Islamic control since the eighth century, except for a brief interval during the

Crusades. Jewish people, who rejected both Jesus the Messiah and Islam's prophet Muhammed, have defeated Muslim armies in spite of over-whelming odds time and time again. Jerusalem, which they claim as their third holiest city, is back under Jewish control.

2. Large numbers of Muslims converting to Christ in spite of the threat of death is incomprehensible in the Muslim world view. To their way of thinking, there is no way this could possibly be happening and until recently, beginning slowly in 1850 and becoming much more prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it had never happened.

D. In the Muslim way of thinking, there are really only two possible explanations:

1. Islam is simply not true. This is one of many factors leading to the significant number of Muslims considering the claims of Jesus.
2. Allah is angry with Muslims because they have compromised with those who do not believe in Allah and have failed to follow the clear instructions of the Quran. Those who accept this explanation are returning to the version of Islam practiced in the seventh century and trying to spread Islam the way it was spread during the seventh and eighth centuries. ISIS, Hamas, Al-Qaeda, the government of Iran and the Taliban are examples of this.

E. Saul of Tarsus accepted the story of the Jewish religious leaders that the followers of Jesus had stolen his body and fraudulently proclaimed His resurrection from the dead. (Matthew 28:11-15) It was probably Stephen's conduct during his trial and stoning that first raised doubts in Paul's mind about the validity of what he believed and led to his violent persecution of the church. (Acts 6:8-8:3) Jesus' comment about it being hard for Saul "to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14) probably refers to his inner struggle over the genuineness of the claims of Christ. In the same way what God has and is doing both with Israel and with Muslims converting to Christ is both leading to violent persecution and even more Muslims coming to faith.

X. Islam – A house divided Mark 3:23-26

- A. The beginning of the conflict: When Mohammed died in 632, Muslims split over who their next leader should be. The majority of his followers thought it should be Abu Bakr, the father of his favorite wife, Aisha. A smaller group believed that Mohammed's son-in-law Ali Ibn Abi Talib should be the next leader. The followers of Abu Bakr won. Sunnis support the legitimacy of the first four

caliphs and how they were chosen. Shias believe that Ali, who became the fourth caliph, was the only legitimate caliph of the first four and that his descendants by Mohammed's daughter Fatimah are the sole genuine Islamic leaders.

- B. Shia religious leaders have much more power and influence than Sunni religious leaders.
- C. Over the years, numerous other differences have emerged.
- D. For much of the history of Islam, they have existed side by side in relative peace, but in the last 50 years or so conflict has intensified, although it is probable that religious differences are often an excuse for other, much more mundane motives, primarily political power or wealth.
- E. Approximately 85-90% of the Muslim world is Sunni, with 10-15% being Shia.
- F. Shias are a majority in Iraq (Saddam Hussein was Sunni), Iran, Azerbaijan and Bahrain. They are a politically significant minority in Lebanon. The Houthis of Yemen are Shia. Syria is predominantly Sunni, but the Assad family and their allies are Shia. Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan also have significant numbers of Shias.
- G. Other groups: Hamas, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Al-Qaeda and ISIS are Sunni. Hezbollah is Shia.
- H. Kurds make up 15-20% of the population of Turkey and Iraq and 7-10% of the population of Iran and Syria. They are discriminated against in all four countries. They have no country of their own and are perhaps the world's largest stateless ethnic group. Mahsa Amini was Kurdish.
- I. ISIS, Hamas, Al-Qaeda, the government of Iran and the Taliban are the most extreme of the movements seeking to restore a "pure seventh century" Islam.
- J. Other dividing lines: The Persian Empire (Medo-Persian in Daniel) probably ruled over a greater percentage of the world's population than any other empire. Iranians seem to see themselves as the most important of the Muslim nations. Most other Muslim nations (predominately Sunni), especially Saudi Arabia, see Iran as an even greater threat to themselves than Israel. Although Iran has supported Sunni groups (Hamas, Palestine Liberation Organization and Al-Qaeda), it has actively opposed ISIS. It has expected Sunni Hamas to actively support the Shia Houthis in Yemen.
- K. Many Arab nations have supported terrorist organizations that were committed to the destruction of Israel, but the events following the "Arab Spring" and the

extremism of ISIS, Hamas, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have convinced at least some of them that "extremist Islam" is a far greater threat to them than Israel.

- L. The tension between "Moderate Muslims" and "Extremist Muslims" is yet another growing division in Islam. As the "Extremists" become more extreme and seek to prove that they are the only true followers of Mohammed, the "Moderates" continue to become more hostile to them and their objectives. The signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020 between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco (Egypt and Jordan had already signed peace treaties with Israel) shows the willingness of "moderate" Muslim countries to get along with Israel. The fact that a peace treaty between Israel and Saudi Arabia was about to be signed was a motivation of the Hamas attack on October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- XI. What is ahead for the House of Islam? The predominantly Muslim countries are the greatest barrier to the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14. I am relatively certain that the divisions within Islam will continue to produce much violence and bloodshed, primarily against fellow Muslims, and that the number of conversions to Christ will continue to increase. I do not expect Islam to be a major player in the seven years of tribulation predicted by Daniel in chapter nine, verse 27. Whether their collapse precedes or follows the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is an open question, but the nations of Iran, Libya and the upper Nile region (literally Cush), are definitely a part of an attack upon Israel in the end times. In 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 God rescued the nation of Judah from an army of Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites (Meunites?) by having the armies of Moab and Ammon attack the army of Edom, and then having Moab and Ammon attack each other. It seems something similar is going on with the enemies of Israel today.
- XII. Does Psalm 83 predict the next Middle East War?
  - A. A psalm of Asaph
    - 1. 2 Chronicles 29:30
    - 2. 1 Samuel 9:9
    - 3. 2 Samuel 24:11
    - 4. 2 Kings 17:13
  - B. A plea for God to act against those who conspire against Israel. Psalm 83:1-5
    - 1. There are no time markers in this psalm.
    - 2. Verse 4 certainly sounds contemporary.
  - C. The enemies enumerated. Psalm 83:6-8
    - 1. The tents (indicating temporary or refugee status?) of Edom. The Palestinians are ancient Edom.

2. The Ishmaelites: Genesis 25:18 Ishmael, son of Abraham by Hagar, settled to the south of what we call the Holy Land. Modern Arabs believe they are descended from Ishmael. Genesis 21:20 & 21 says his wife was an Egyptian, as was Hagar his mother. Genesis 21:9
3. Moab: The Moabites are the descendants of Lot by his older daughter. Genesis 19:36&37 The Moabite king hired Balaam to curse Israel in Numbers 22:1-24:25. When God would not let Balaam curse Israel, he told Balak how to get God to destroy them. Numbers 25:1-9; Revelation 2:14 They were enemies of Israel from that time on. They lived immediately east of the Dead Sea, in what is now Jordan.
4. The Hagrites: The name possibly means "of Hagar" (Abraham's concubine). I Chronicles 5:10, 18-22 indicate that they lived on the fertile pastureland east of the Jordan and were driven out of that territory, probably to the east, by the combined forces of the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. See also Numbers 32.
5. Gebal is mentioned only in Psalm 83 and Ezekiel 27:9 and Joshua 13:5. For a time it was named Byblos. The Arabs today call it Jabail. It is north of Beirut in Lebanon.
6. Ammon: The Ammonites are the descendants of Lot by his younger daughter. Genesis 19:36-38 They at one time controlled the land on the east bank of the Jordan north of the dead sea. Judges 11:13 Their land next to the Jordan was taken by the Amorites, from whom Israel took the land given to the 2&1/2 tribes who wanted to settle east of the Jordan. An invasion by the Ammonites was the first military problem King Saul had to deal with. I Samuel 11:1-11 Their capital city was Rabbah, now called Amman, the capital of Jordan.
7. Amalek: The Amalekites are most probably descended from Esau (Genesis 36:12). (Genesis 14:7 is probably a case of Moses using the current name for a territory.) In I Samuel 15:7 we read that Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from "Havilah to Shur," which is described in Genesis 25:6 as where the descendants of Ishmael settled. See also I Samuel 27:8.
8. Philistia: The Philistines lived in territory promised to Israel and given to the tribe of Judah but never really conquered, even by David and Solomon (Joshua 13:3). It was a fairly narrow strip of land bordered on

the north, south and east by Judah, and on the west by the Mediterranean. The modern Gaza Strip includes only one of the five cities of the Philistines, namely Gaza, and is farther south than the territory ruled by the Philistines. The current Gaza Strip is approximately 32 miles long and 6.8 miles wide and borders Egypt on the south, Israel on the east and north and the Mediterranean on the west.

9. Tyre: Modern Tyre is located south of the ancient city of Tyre which was repeatedly destroyed in fulfillment of prophecy. Tyre is located today twelve miles north of the Israel-Lebanon border.
10. Assyria was founded by Asshur (mentioned in Genesis 10:22). Its ancient capital was Nineveh, to which Jonah was sent to prophesy, and about whose destruction Nahum also prophesied. For a period of time Assyria was the most powerful nation on earth. The Assyrians took the northern ten tribes of Israel into captivity in 722 BC. Because its borders expanded so greatly into an empire, it is a little difficult to locate it exactly, but its center was always in Iraq or possibly Syria. They caused trouble for the Jewish people as early as Judges 3:8&10. For the location of Aram Naharaim see Genesis 24:10; Deuteronomy 23:4 and I Chronicles 19:6&16. Aram Naharaim means between the rivers (Tigris & Euphrates). The name Aram comes from Aram in Genesis 10:22&23. The place name Aram is usually translated Syria in the King James Version. I Kings 15:18
11. The children of Lot: Moab and Ammon. Genesis 19:36-38

D. What Asaph asked

1. "Do to them as you did to Midian," Judges 7:1-27
2. "(Do) as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground." Judges 4:1-23
3. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, "let us take possession of the pasturelands of God." Judges 7:24&25; 8:10-12
4. Psalm 83:13-18 Destroy them so that men may know You are God alone and that men may seek you.

E. Is this a battle already fought?

1. The references to Midian, Sisera, Jabin, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna are all references to battles.
2. Nothing in Israel's biblical history seems to fit.
3. The three major wars between Israel and its enemies, the War of

Independence in 1947-1949, the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, all included Egypt as a major player. Egypt is not in Psalm 83. The other wars did not include a large number of enemies. To me this does not seem to be a war already fought, although others who have studied this far more than I have appear convinced that this refers to the previous wars between Israel and its enemies.

- F. Those who see this war as one coming in the near future suggest that a decisive victory by Israel may set the stage for the time of peace in Ezekiel 38:8-11.

XIII. Ezekiel 38:1-39:29

- A. Is the attack on Israel in Ezekiel 38&39 a last days event?

1. Context

- a. Why Israel was scattered "over the whole earth" (verse 6) and how God will bring them back. Ezekiel 34
- b. The claiming of the land by the descendants of Esau, their bloody conflict with Israel and Israel's victory. Ezekiel 35:1-36:5
- c. Why Israel went into captivity and why God is going to bring them back. Ezekiel 36
- d. The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones – the restoration of Israel. Ezekiel 37:1-14
- e. Israel to come back as one nation. Ezekiel 37:15-28
- f. The Kingdom Age Temple: its dimensions and worship described. Ezekiel 40:1-48:35

2. Ezekiel 38:8

3. Ezekiel 39:21-23a

- B. Who are the nations involved?

1. Verse 5: Persia is modern Iran, Cush is the upper Nile region – Northern Sudan and perhaps Ethiopia and Put is Libya. These identifications are almost universally accepted.
2. Gog seems to be the leader of Magog in 38:2,3,14,16,18,21 and etc.
3. Who is Gog of Magog?
  - a. The NIV says he is the "chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" Ezekiel 38:2, 3 & 39:1
  - b. The NKJB and NASB say "he is the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." The NIV has this reading in the margin. The NASB has the NIV reading in the margin.

- c. Historically, most commentators have identified Magog as Russia for the following reasons: Josephus in the *Antiquities of the Jews* identifies Magog as Scythia, who are the modern Russians. The translation of "Rosh" as a noun is said to confirm this. The troops come from "the far north" (38:6), "from your place in the far north," (38:15) and "from the far north," (39:2). The NASB translates "far north" as the "remote parts of the north." Meshech is then identified as Moscow and Tubal as Tobolsk, both a city and a river. Moscow is almost due north of Jerusalem. Jeremiah predicted that the Jews would return from the land of the north. Jeremiah 3:18; 16:14&15 & 23:7&8 When the second re-gathering of Israel began, over ½ of the world's Jews lived in Russia and the area that became the USSR. Yet another reason for identifying Magog as Russia is that the Septuagint translation of Ezekiel translates the verses as "he is the prince of Rosh, Meshech And Tubal," not as the "chief prince of Meshech and Tubal."
- d. More recently, some commentators have identified Magog as Turkey and Meshech and Tubal as cities within Turkey. The capital of Turkey is also almost due north of Jerusalem. They then identify Gomer and Beth Togarmah as Muslim nations east of Turkey, making the entire group of attacking nations Islamic. And some modern commentators see Magog as Russia and Meshech and Tubal as cities in Turkey.
- e. Modern Jews usually identify Gomer as Germany. One of the sons of Gomer was Ashkenaz (Genesis 10:3). Ashkenazi Jews are Jews from France, Germany and Eastern Europe as opposed to Sephardic Jews who are from Spain, Portugal, North Africa and Middle East. Gomer is a son of Japheth, making him most likely Caucasian, not Semitic. Those who think Turkey is Magog think Gomer is east of Turkey.
- f. Beth Togarmah is the house of Togarmah, another son of Gomer. They are said to be from the far north. (38:6) Again, those who see Magog as Turkey see Beth-Togarmah as a Muslim nation near Turkey.
- g. Edom is not included, which is logical because the destruction of Edom is mentioned in Ezekiel 35:1-36:5.

- C. The "Peace Problem" in Ezekiel 38:8, 11 & 14
1. There certainly is no peace and safety in Israel today.
  2. The last 3½ years of the Tribulation are certainly not a time of peace. Daniel 9:26&27; 12:1
  3. The first 3½ years begin with a promise of peace, but war breaks out almost immediately. Revelation 6:7&8 seems to mean that ¼ of the world's population dies before the Great Tribulation, the last 3½ years, begins. Placing this event immediately after a covenant is confirmed between the "ruler who will come" and the "many" of Israel (Daniel 9:26&27) is possible, but these nations attacking Israel just after a covenant is signed with "the ruler who will come" seems unlikely without his tacit support, which is possible but not likely.
  4. Placing this event after the rider on the red horse, the second seal of Revelation chapter six, also seems unlikely because "Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other." Revelation 6:4
  5. Also placing this event anywhere but very early in the Tribulation does not seem to leave room for Ezekiel 39:9 to be fulfilled.
  6. That leaves us with this event happening before the Tribulation during a time of peace and safety in Israel. I see no real possibility of peace and safety in Israel without the threat of Muslim terrorism coming to an end. And although that seems unlikely, I think it is perhaps the most likely scenario. Those who believe Psalm 83 describes an imminent war also usually believe it leads to both an expansion of Israel's territory (Isaiah 11:11-14) and the time of peace and safety predicted in Ezekiel 38. It is also interesting to note that four of the Psalm 83 countries are specifically mentioned in Isaiah 11:14.
- D. Is this event before the Rapture? I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:50-57
1. The Rapture is mentioned only in the New Testament and this event only in the Old Testament in Ezekiel, so certainty is impossible.
  2. I personally believe it is unlikely that God will remove the church from the earth until after He has worked so powerfully on Israel's behalf that anyone who wants to know Who God is will know that He is the God of Israel revealed in the Bible.
- E. Ezekiel 38:1-39:29 expounded
1. "Set your face against Gog...prophecy against him" 38:1&2 The prince of

- Magog is the obvious head of this coalition. "Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them." 38:7  
 "You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land." 38:9
2. The nations involved Magog (probably Russia), Persia (Iran), Cush (Northern Sudan & perhaps Ethiopia), Put (Libya), Gomer and Beth Togarmah from the far north and many nations with you. 38:2-6
  3. When: "After many days"... "In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate." 38:8  
 "They had been brought out from the nations and now all of them live in safety." 38:8 "I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people – all of them living without walls and without gates and bars." 38:11 "when my people Israel are living in safety" 38:14
  4. An evil scheme: "I will plunder and loot" (38:12) "Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?" (38:13) 38:10-13 Note there is no religious or nationalist motive given for this attack, although it doesn't say there isn't one.
  5. An ineffectual protest from Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages. 38:13
    - a. Most scholars place Sheba and Dedan in what is now Saudi Arabia and perhaps Yemen. Since most Muslim Arabs claim descent from Ishmael this leads to an interesting situation with Psalm 83.
    - b. The merchants of Tarshish are traders with close ties to Tyre who are located in the Western Mediterranean. They are descended from Javan who is descended from Japheth. (Genesis 10:2-4) Josephus says in *The Antiquities of the Jews* that Javan is the father of the Greeks, which seems to be correct. He also ties Tarshish to Tarsus in Cilicia, which does not seem to be correct. The actual city of Tarshish is usually located in Spain, although Sardinia, England and Carthage are also contenders. There are those who believe that "the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages" or "all her young lions" refers to the colonies established as trading centers by the merchants of Tarshish and include the United States and other former British colonies in this grouping.

"Ships of Tarshish" may mean any ship capable of long distance voyages.

6. Again, the message is directed to Gog who comes from the far north with cavalry and perhaps an air force ("like a cloud that covers the land"). The purpose is that "the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." Ezekiel 38:14-16
7. When Gog attacks Israel, God will defend them. There will be a great earthquake (verse 19), "plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops." (verse 22) "Every man's sword will be against his brother." (verse 21) Ezekiel 38:17-23
8. God is the one who will bring Gog against Israel. (Ezekiel 38:4; 39:2) God will destroy their weapons. (Ezekiel 39:3) God will give the armies of Gog "as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals." (Ezekiel 39:4 "I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord. (verse 6) Ezekiel 39:1-6
9. "I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel." Ezekiel 39:7&8
10. Israel will use the weapons for fuel for seven years. This puts this battle at least seven years (actually at least five full years and two partial years the way the Jews count time) before the battle of Armageddon which appears to be fought in the same area. Ezekiel 39:9&10
11. It will take at least seven months to bury the dead. Ezekiel 39:11-16
12. The birds and wild animals will feast on the slain until they are buried. Ezekiel 39:17-20
13. "From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me." Ezekiel 39:21-24
14. God will bring all Israel back to the land, "not leaving any behind." "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God." (verse 28)

The rising tide of antisemitism may be the reason all the Jews go back to Israel. "I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel," (verse 29) The giving of the Spirit appears to be the last event in the prophecy, which means the Jews will return to the land in unbelief. Compare with Ezekiel 37:1-14; Zechariah 12:3&10; Ezekiel 39:25-29

- XIV. Israel and the Treaty that begins the Tribulation Daniel 9:24-27
- A. The background of the "seventy sevens"
    - 1. Exodus 23:10&11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Leviticus 26:33-35, 43
    - 2. Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10
    - 3. 2 Chronicles 36:20&21
    - 4. Daniel 9:1&2
  - B. What will happen during the "seventy sevens." Verse 24
  - C. From the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8) until the Messiah (the Anointed One) will be 483 years (69 "sevens"). Verse 25
  - D. After the 483 years the Messiah will be cut off and "the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. This was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Roman legions conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, not leaving one stone upon another. Verse 26; Luke 21:5-7, 12-24
  - E. War shall continue after this until the end. Verse 26
  - F. The logical antecedent for the "he" that begins verse 27 is "the ruler who will come" whose "people" destroyed the city and the sanctuary in 70 AD. The "people" who destroyed the city and the sanctuary were the Roman Legions under Titus, who succeeded his father as emperor of Rome from 79-81 AD.
  - G. "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'" (Verse 27) This is the only verse in the Bible that talks about a seven year period we call the Tribulation, although there are many references to the second half of it as "a time, times and half a time," (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:14) "forty-two months" (Revelation 11:2: 13:5) and "1,260 days" (Revelation 11:3; 12:6).
- XV. Further reasons to consider the "ruler who will come" heads up a "Revived Roman Empire."
- A. Daniel 2:31-40 predicts four world empires.
    - 1. Neo-Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 2:32, 37&38
    - 2. A second kingdom which is not described. Daniel 2:32, 39
    - 3. A third kingdom which is not described. Daniel 2:32, 39

4. A fourth kingdom: "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay." Daniel 2:32-35, 40-45
  5. God will destroy the kingdom symbolized by the feet and toes and set up His kingdom on earth. Daniel 2:44&45
- B. Daniel 7:1-27 also predicts four world empires symbolized by four beasts:
1. A lion with eagles wings that are plucked, who then receives a human mind. Daniel 7:4, 17&18 Nebuchadnezzar and Neo-Babylon (compare with chapter 4:1-27)
  2. A bear raised up on one side (Daniel 7:5): Medo-Persia who conquered Babylon (see Daniel 5:1-30) and is described as a ram with two horns, the longer horn coming up last in Daniel 8:1-4,20.
  3. A leopard with four wings and four heads (Daniel 7:6): The Greek empire started by Alexander the Great that split into four pieces when he died. It is described as male goat with a large horn coming from the west without touching the ground in Daniel 8:5-7. Daniel 8:8 and 21&22 says it is Greece and the large horn is the first king and that the four horns that replace it when it is broken off are the four kingdoms that will come out of it.
  4. A terrifying beast with iron teeth and bronze claws and ten horns. Another horn comes up among the ten who is described in great detail. He is the ruler God defeats when the Son of Man comes to set up His kingdom. Daniel 7:7-27 The Roman empire followed the Greek empire and was famous for its "iron legions." The culture (bronze claws), however was Greek.
- C. Comparing Revelation with Daniel.
1. The beast out of the sea has ten horns and "was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion." Revelation 13:1-7 The description in 13:5&6 sounds much like Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 23-25.
  2. Revelation 17:16&17 says the ten horns are ten kings who give their power to a ruler who comes after them. The woman who rides the beast is said to sit on seven hills (17:9) and is said to be "the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. (17:18)
- D. Since the church age does not really appear in Bible prophecy, it seems that we are heading to a "reviving" of the Roman Empire as a confederation of strong (iron) and weak (clay) nations that will eventually come under the control of a

strong leader who will confirm a seven-year covenant with Israel and go on to eventually rule the entire world for a time.

- XVI. The rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of temple worship and the "abomination that causes desolation."
- A. When Daniel was given the vision about the "seventy sevens" the first temple had been destroyed seventy years earlier. Yet Daniel predicted that after the Messiah was cut off the sanctuary would be destroyed, effectively predicting the building and destruction of the second temple. (Daniel 9:26) But after predicting the destruction of the second temple in Daniel 9:27 Daniel predicts that the temple offerings will cease in the middle of the final "seven" and that "an abomination that causes desolation will be set up."
  - B. Jesus made it very clear that this "abomination that causes desolation" is still future in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.
  - C. The prediction of a "little horn" out of one of the four sections of the Greek empire that would desecrate the temple in "the rebellion that causes desolation" gives us a preview of the kind of person the beast of Revelation will be and some of the actions he might take. Daniel 8:9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 13:11-17; Daniel 12:1
  - D. It would appear that the power of Islam will be broken either before the attack by Gog and his followers on Israel or by God's defense of Israel when that attack happens. With Russia and Iran out of the picture as major world powers and with Islam in disarray, Israel will be able to build the third temple on the temple mount and re-establish the worship of God as it was given in the Old Testament. The defeat of Gog will certainly lend impetus to re-establishing the worship of God. A covenant being confirmed between Israel and a "Revived Roman Empire," which will most likely come out of what is now the European Union, will set the stage for a period of peace at the beginning of the final "seven." This peace, however, will be short-lived as the beast moves to consolidate his power over the rest of the world. War will be followed by famine and plague and attacks by wild animals (Revelation 6:1-8 – The first four seal judgments). After he has brought the rest of the world under his power, the beast will turn on Israel and demand that they also worship him. This will start the Great Tribulation which includes the trumpet judgments of Revelation chapters 8&9 and 11:15-19.
- XVII. Israel during the final three and one-half years
- A. 144,000 sealed. Revelation 7:1-8
  - B. The Two Witnesses in Jerusalem. Revelation 11:1-13

- C. Israel persecuted and protected. Revelation 12:6, 14-17
- D. The beast and his image worshiped by all inhabitants of the earth. Revelation 13:1-18 Those refusing to worship the beast are killed. Revelation 7:9-17; 14:1-5
- E. Resistance to the beast continues to center in Jerusalem and the beast brings the armies of the world to Israel (Revelation 16:12-16) and attacks Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:1-5; 14:1-3).
- F. Jesus comes back to defend Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:7-9; 14:3-5, 12-15; Revelation 19:11-21).
- G. The Jewish people "look on me, the one they have pierced," and go into mourning. Zechariah 12:10-13
- H. The beast and the false prophet are thrown into "the fiery lake of burning sulfur." Revelation 19:20
- I. Satan is seized and thrown into the Abyss. Revelation 20:1-3
- J. The very Jewish 1,000-year reign of Christ begins. Revelation 20:4-6; Zechariah 14:16-21; Ezekiel 34:23&24; 37:24-28; 40:1-48:35
- K. Satan is released from the Abyss, gathers an army, and attacks the city God loves. He is defeated and thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. Revelation 20:7-10
- L. After the unrighteous dead are judged, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down to earth, and God lives among men for eternity. Revelation 20:11-22:21

