

Psalm 83 – The Arab-Israeli War

Psalm 83

A song. A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God.
- 2 See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads.
- 3 With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.
- 4 “Come,” they say, “let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel’s name is remembered no more.”
- 5 With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—
- 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites,
- 7 Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre.
- 8 Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot’s descendants.
- 9 Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon,
- 10 who perished at Endor and became like dung on the ground.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
- 12 who said, “Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God.”
- 13 Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like chaff before the wind.
- 14 As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze,
- 15 so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm.
- 16 Cover their faces with shame, Lord, so that they will seek your name.
- 17 May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace.
- 18 Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

Rapture in relation to the Arab-Israeli War

- Some scholars argue that Psalm 83:3 indicates that the rapture will occur prior to the Arab-Israeli war
 - Verse 3: ‘sheltered ones’ (NKJV), ‘hidden ones’ (KJV), or ‘those you protect’ (NRSV)
 - This is not a reference to the raptured church because the war described:
 - Is to destroy the Jewish state (Psalm 83:4)
 - Is to capture the promised land of Israel (Psalm 83:12)
 - Is not directed against Christians.
 - This is more likely a reference to the faithful remnant of Jews that are protected through the tribulation period.
- There is nothing that precludes the rapture from happening prior to the Arab-Israeli war
 - It would be a good catalyst to embolden Israel’s immediate neighbors into starting such a conflict.
 - The rapture would provide ideal conditions for this conflict to ensue.
 - It would likely reduce or eliminate United States influence in the Middle East region due to the significant number of Christians in the population.
 - This is not a necessary condition to enable a large-scale Middle East conflict.

The Arab-Israeli War

- This war is the prelude to the Gog and Magog war because it includes all of Israel’s immediate neighboring countries and enemies.
 - “The house of Israel will no longer be hurt by prickly briars or painful thorns from all their neighbors who treat them with contempt.” (Ezekiel 28:24)
 - Verses 5-8 list the alliance against Israel.

- “For they have conspired with one mind; they form an alliance against You—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarites, Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them; they lend support to the sons of Lot.” (Psalm 83: 5-8)
- The modern names for these adversaries are Jordan, Lebanon, the Negev into the Sinai, Gaza, Syria into western Iraq, the Palestinians, as well as Hamas, and Hezbollah.



- In addition to God’s judgments against Israel’s adversaries, Israel will also be punished for their disobedience.
 - “In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation.” (Isaiah 17:9)
 - There will be severe loss of life, but little structural damage.

- This may indicate that Israel will be attacked with chemical or biological weapons, which Syria is known to possess.
- At that time the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) will be “a vast army” (Ezekiel 37:10) and God will use that army to divinely judge those that attack Israel per His promise to curse those that curse Israel.
 - “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse.” (Genesis 12:3)
- Isaiah 17 describes the destruction caused by this war.
 - The people that “roar like the roar of surging waters” (Isaiah 17:13) are the Arab states listed in Psalm 83:6-8.
 - “See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites.” (Isaiah 17:1-3)
- Obadiah describes the judgment against Israel’s enemies.
 - “Then the house of Jacob will be a blazing fire, and the house of Joseph, a burning flame, but the house of Esau will be stubble; Jacob will set them on fire and consume Edom. Therefore no survivor will remain of the house of Esau.” (Obadiah 1:15-18)
- Ezekiel proclaims God’s declaration of judgment.
 - “I will make it a wasteland; they will fall by the sword from Teman to Dedan. I will take My vengeance on Edom through My people Israel, and they will deal with Edom according to My anger and wrath. So they will know My vengeance.” (Ezekiel 25:13-14)
- Jeremiah captures the sheer magnitude of this victory.

- “At the sound of their fall the earth will quake; the sound of her cry will be heard at the Red Sea.” (Jeremiah 49:21)
- It could be that Israel, after being attacked with chemical or biological weapons, responds with nuclear weapons.
 - The descriptions of the utter devastation from Isaiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah would fit this scenario.
 - In defeating these enemies, God fulfills his oath “that the nations around you will also suffer scorn.” (Ezekiel 36:7)
- At the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli war, Israel will have defeated all of the enemies bordering her land.
 - For the first time as a single unified country since the time of Joshua, they will have expanded the country’s borders back to what God had promised Abraham.



- Prophecy concerning Israel’s promised land:

- “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.’” (Genesis 15:18-21)
- “Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. (Joshua 1:4)
- “People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev. Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord’s.” (Obadiah 1:19-21)
- Boundaries and divisions of the land (Ezekiel 47:13-48:35)
- One result of this war is that Egypt will be desolate for 40 years.
 - “I will make the land of Egypt desolate among devastated lands, and her cities will lie desolate forty years among ruined cities. And I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. ‘Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt, the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom.’” (Ezekiel 29:12-14)

- With her enemies defeated, it appears that Israel will feel safe, live peacefully, and allow themselves to drop their guard and disarm.
 - ““No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briars and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.”” (Ezekiel 28:24-26)
- This peaceful state is a requirement for the Gog and Magog war.
 - ““After many days you will be called to arms. 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. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety... You will say, ‘I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars’... Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?’” (Ezekiel 38:8,11,14)
- There will be a spiritual awakening for the Jews in the wake of this war that will cause them to rebuild the temple and allow the sacrificial system to resume.

- “Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.” (Ezekiel 37:9-10)
- This spiritual awakening does not include an understanding that Jesus is their Messiah.
 - That revelation will not occur until the end of the Great Tribulation.
- This spiritual awakening provides further evidence that the rapture occurs in close proximity to the Arab-Israeli war.
 - “A partial hardening has come to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” (Romans 11:26)
 - Meaning that such a spiritual awakening would not begin until after the rapture of the church.
 - This provides an upper boundary for the rapture.
- Several facts point to the conclusion that the spiritual awakening occurs before the Gog and Magog war.
 - God divinely defeats Israel’s enemies in the Gog and Magog war, indicating that Israel has turned back to God.
 - Israel’s desire to rebuild the temple also indicates a return to God.
 - This construction will likely take several years to complete.
 - It is unclear whether the temple construction will begin before or after the Gog and Magog war.
 - It must be completed, and the sacrificial system must begin, with the start of the tribulation period.

- The temple will only exist for 42 months.
 - “I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, ‘Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.’”
(Revelation 11:1-2)
- The temple will be destroyed at the midpoint of the tribulation period.
 - “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27)

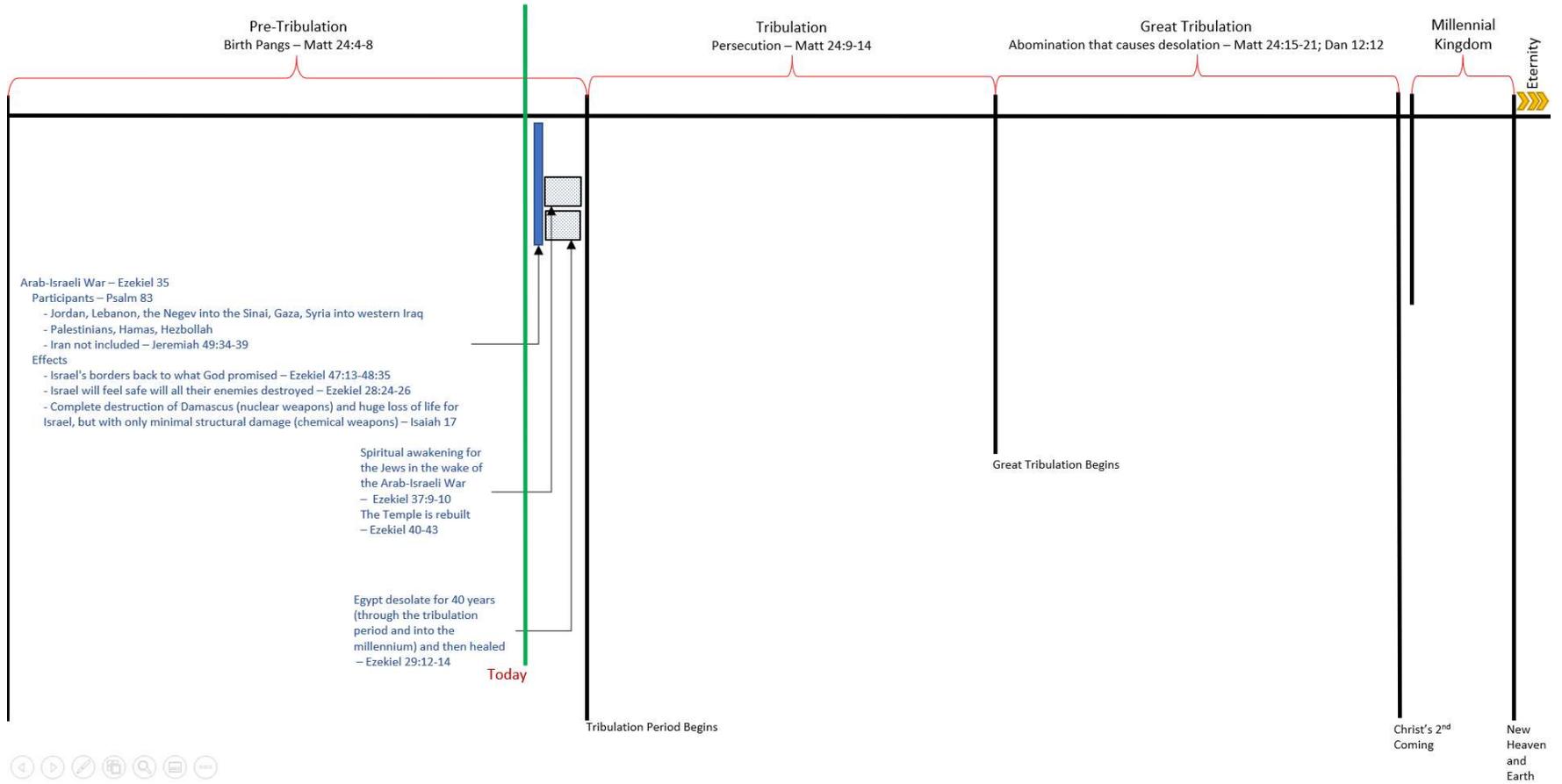


Figure 1: Timeline of the Arab-Israeli War Events

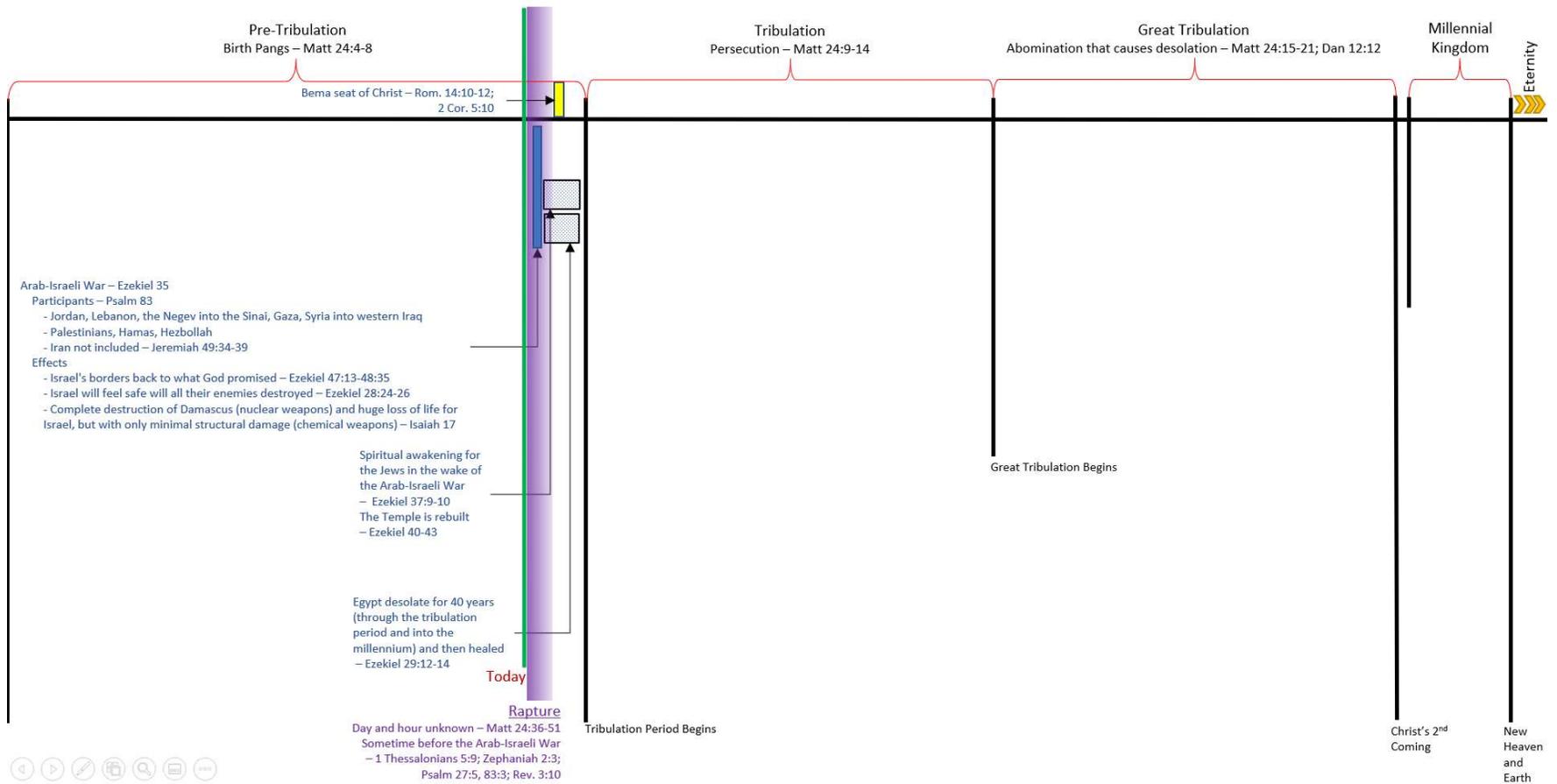


Figure 2: Timeline of End-Times Events