

Day 306 - THURSDAY: December 7th

2 Samuel 10, 1 Chronicles 19, Psalm 60, 83, & 108

2 Samuel 10:1-19 NKJV

It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not rather sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?" Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return." When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field. When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put them in battle array against the Syrians. And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might

set them in battle array against the people of Ammon. Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight." So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem. When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. Then Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

#### 1 Chronicles 19:1-19 NKJV

It happened after this that Nahash the king of the people of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him. And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David really honors your father

because he has sent comforters to you? Did his servants not come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. Then some went and told David about the men; and he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return." When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, Hanun and the people of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Syrian Maacah, and from Zobah. So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, with the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. Also the people of Ammon gathered together from their cities, and came to battle. Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field. When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best, and put them in battle array against the Syrians. And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set themselves in battle array against the people of Ammon. Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight." So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai his brother, and entered the city. So Joab went to Jerusalem. Now when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought

the Syrians who were beyond the River, and Shophach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came upon them, and set up in battle array against them. So when David had set up in battle array against the Syrians, they fought with him. Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his servants. So the Syrians were not willing to help the people of Ammon anymore.

#### Psalms 60:1-12 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Lily of the Testimony." a Michtam of David. For Teaching. When He Fought Against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab Returned and Killed Twelve Thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. O God, You have cast us off; You have broken us down; You have been displeased; Oh, restore us again! You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; Heal its breaches, for it is shaking. You have shown Your people hard things; You have made us drink the wine of confusion. You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and hear me. God has spoken in His holiness: "I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem And measure out the Valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver. Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me." Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.

### Psalms 83:1-18 NKJV

A Song. A Psalm of Asaph. Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God! 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; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; They have helped the children of Lot. Selah Deal with them as with Midian, As with Sisera, As with Jabin at the Brook Kishon, Who perished at En Dor, Who became as refuse on the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb, Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, Who said, "Let us take for ourselves The pastures of God for a possession." O my God, make them like the whirling dust, Like the chaff before the wind! As the fire burns the woods, And as the flame sets the mountains on fire, So pursue them with Your tempest, And frighten them with Your storm. 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.

### Psalms 108:1-13 NKJV

A Song. A Psalm of David. O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise You, O LORD, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your mercy is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth; That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and hear me. God has spoken in His holiness: "I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem And

measure out the Valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine; Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver. Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Over Philistia I will triumph." Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading program states: "This section of Scripture is quite interesting. Focus here is often placed on the fight against Aram, i.e., Syria, which stretched northeast to the Euphrates River. Yet across the Euphrates from Syria was the empire of Assyria—not yet risen to the major superpower it would ultimately become, but still a great force to be reckoned with. And, though Assyria is not directly mentioned here, we do see that there were forces arrayed against David from Mesopotamia (1 Chronicles 19:6), the land between the Tigris and Euphrates, which included Assyria. Indeed, it also included Babylon to the south. Some try to argue that the words translated "Mesopotamia," *Aram Naharaim*, denoted just a minor district on the upper Euphrates. But this is negated by the mention of 32,000 chariots (verse 7)—a huge number in any ancient context and unimaginably so if the traditional view of Israel fighting against just a few small neighboring powers is correct. At the height of his power, King Solomon had only 1,400 chariots (1 Kings 10:24-26). In addition to this, we know of 33,000 soldiers from the Aramaean, i.e., Syrian, states (2 Samuel 10:6), but there were probably untold thousands more in conjunction with the chariots sent from Mesopotamia.

While some might argue that the figure of 32,000 chariots is a copyist error, such an error seems highly unlikely since such a number of chariots would have screamed out at ancient readers and scribes as a mistake—unless it were known to be true. (While the Philistines were said to have had 30,000 chariots in 1 Samuel 13:5, it should be noted that these foremost of the Sea Peoples, who almost defeated Egypt shortly before the time of Saul, were a much greater force in the Mediterranean world than they are often reckoned to have been. The fact that Israel overcame them was itself miraculous.)

Surprisingly, then, it appears that what we may be looking at in our current reading is a massive Middle Eastern coalition that included the entire national armies of Assyria and Babylon—all engaged against David. The figure of 32,000 chariots is probably a combined total from all the armies fighting Israel.

What, then, of the instigation of this conflict by the disgracing of David's messengers by the Ammonites? Author Stephen Collins gives some intriguing insights in this lengthy quote from his book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!:* "The Ammonites were a small tributary nation subject to David and were no doubt aware that David had executed two-thirds of the Moabites who had rebelled against him. Why then would they dare to take the apparently suicidal action of humiliating David's ambassadors and provoking David into a warlike response (I Chronicles 19:1-5)? The only logical explanation is that the Ammonites were acting as agents for someone else who wanted to challenge David, and that the Ammonites knew they would be backed by powerful friends who supported their hostile action. The rest of the account supports that conclusion.

"I Chronicles 19:6-9 states the Ammonites 'hired' a force of 32,000 chariots and an uncounted number of Syrian and Mesopotamian warriors to fight King David's army on their behalf.... Since Ammon was paying

gold and silver as tribute to Israel already (I Chronicles 18:11), it hardly had the resources to hire virtually the entire national armies of the nations in Mesopotamia. Indeed, verse 6 indicates the Ammonites had no gold left with which to 'hire' mercenaries and could pay only in silver. Apparently, *the other nations wanted to challenge Israel in considerable force, and Ammon's revolt was the pretext to arrange such a conflict....* That this huge Mesopotamian army would allow itself to be 'hired' without receiving any gold at all indicates that their presence was a national policy of Assyria's king! A force of 32,000 chariots could only have been mustered with the approval of the Assyrian Empire, the dominant power of Mesopotamia.

"The Bible's use of the term 'Mesopotamia' to describe the homeland of this vast force of foreign troops [rather than a specific country] indicates that it was a *joint expeditionary force of many Mesopotamian nations (Assyria, Babylon, etc.)*. Verses 6-7 state that many Syrian troops were also 'hired' by the Ammonites to join the Mesopotamian armies in fighting King David. Since David had already conquered portions of Syria, the Syrians were eager to join a large alliance to fight against David. *This battle then was an effort by the king of Assyria to defeat the growing power of King David.* He arranged for virtually his entire army, along with other Mesopotamian allies and various Syrian kings to be 'hired' (for a pittance) by one of David's subject nations (Ammon) to get rid of the threat posed by King David's power.

"Interestingly, these Mesopotamian nations and Syria had enough respect for King David and Israel that they did not declare war openly, but allowed their national armies to fight as 'mercenaries' of a small nation. In this manner, if things went badly, they could go home and say that they were not technically at war with Israel on a national level. However, as evidence that these nations were actually arranging a war with King David, *the Bible states that 'the kings' of the mercenary*



*armies (the Mesopotamian nations and Syrians) came with their armies to personally watch the battle (I Chronicles 19:9)....*

"This battle for supremacy of the ancient world was fought in two stages. The initial stage of the battle is described in I Chronicles 19:8-15. Israel's army met the combined forces of Ammon, Syria, and the Mesopotamian nations, and defeated them in a two-front battle. The fact that Israel had to split its forces and fight in two separate directions indicates that Israel's army was not expecting to fight so large a force and found itself surrounded by a numerically superior army. Israel's army likely expected to fight only the upstart Ammonites, and was surprised by the presence of so many enemies. Nevertheless, *Israel's army won the battle*, and the Mesopotamian army (i.e. the Assyrian army) apparently retreated to its own territory as they are not mentioned in the second stage of the battle.

"David quickly realized that this conflict involved far more than a revolt by the little nation of Ammon. It was actually an attempt to destroy Israel's army and national power, and to prevent it from supplanting Assyria as the preeminent nation in the ancient world" (1995, pp. 8-10). The superscription of Psalm 60 shows that it refers to these events. David speaks here of having drunk the wine of astonishment or confusion. He speaks of trembling. David must have been overwhelmed at what was happening. But incredibly, the ultimate victory in this apparently titanic struggle was given by the Almighty Lord of Hosts to him and the men of Israel. As David notes in verse 12, it is "through God" that "we will do valiantly." David later uses much of this psalm to write the second part of Psalm 108 (verses 6-13—the first part of Psalm 108, verses 1-5, being taken from Psalm 57, written while David and his men hid from Saul in the cave at En Gedi, compare verses 7-11). Interestingly, Psalm 83, which seems to be a prophecy of end-time events, may also refer to this monumental battle we've been reading

about. A psalm composed by the Levitical chief musician Asaph, it concerns a huge Middle Eastern confederacy whose goal is to wipe out Israel—to which Assyria is joined. Perhaps a coming end-time fulfillment of the apparent prophecy here had a prototype in David's time. If so, the episode we've just read about would seem to be the only one that would fit. If Psalm 83 does refer on some level to this episode, we may regard the "inhabitants of Tyre" mentioned in the coalition as rogue elements in that city rather than King Hiram and those loyal to him, as he was a close ally to David and later to Solomon.

"In the second stage of the battle recorded in I Chronicles 19:16-19, the Israelites and the Syrians mobilized their entire national military resources and clashed anew. This time there was no more pretense that the Syrians were Ammonite mercenaries. Also, the Assyrians were apparently no longer engaged, but had retreated after being soundly defeated by the Israelite army. The account states that David 'gathered all Israel' and Syria 'drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the River' (meaning reinforcements from east of the Euphrates River). The second battle of this war involved King David and his fully-mobilized army marching eastward from the Jordan River to fight everyone the Syrians could muster. After suffering 47,000 dead, including their commander, the Syrians yielded to King David and 'became his servants,' meaning they became vassal nations of Israel who paid tribute to King David...."

"What began as an effort on the part of Assyria and its Mesopotamian allies to crush Israel's military power resulted in Israel becoming sovereign over all the engaged Syrians, and the Mesopotamian powers being put to flight. The Assyrians and their allies learned firsthand that they could not successfully stand against Israel's power" (pp. 11-12).

Indeed, Collins goes on to quote secular history as explaining that after this point, Aramaean invaders invade Mesopotamia and exhaust Babylonia and Assyria—and he points out that this is while the

Aramaeans are vassals to David, indeed that the Israelites might be referred to by the Assyrians as one and the same with these Aramaeans. "After David made the Aramaeans his vassals and (probably in concert with those vassals) subjugated Assyria and Mesopotamia, David was not just king of Israel and Judah, he was emperor over nations. He was the dominant ruler of the known world, and Israel had become an ancient 'superpower'" (p. 19).

David's faith in God to grant victory is expressed in Psalm 20: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright" (verses 7-8).

With the forces to the north defeated, there remains only a mopping-up operation to finish this whole episode. The terrified Ammonites, their help gone, flee to their capital city of Rabbah to hide behind its city walls. We will see the fight against them in our next reading."

I don't have anything additional to add to 2 Samuel 10.

Read: 1Chronicles 19, Psalm 60, 83, & 108

PSALM 60 – The UCG Reading Program states "Psalm 60 is the last miktam in the series of five here as well as the last in the sequence of seven prayers for help against enemies at the center of Book II of the Psalter. The superscription notes that it is "for teaching."

The setting of the psalm is not entirely clear. The superscription says that David "fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah." This would seem to be the war described in 1 Chronicles 19, where Syrian and Mesopotamian forces assisted the Ammonites against Israel (see especially verse 6), which in the end became a long Israelite siege against the Ammonite capital of Rabbah. The parallel account of this

episode is in 2 Samuel 10, though the Mesopotamian forces are not mentioned there.

However, the superscription's further note about Joab killing 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt (likely the desert south of the Dead Sea) seems more closely related to events in 1 Chronicles 18 and 2 Samuel 8, concerning an earlier conflict with Syria that ended with David killing 18,000 Syrians in the Valley of Salt (2 Samuel 8:13) and Joab's brother Abishai killing 18,000 Edomites there (1 Chronicles 18:12)--Joab being over the army (verse 15).

In fact, these earlier chapters concern Israel's campaigns against and subjugation of the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians and the Edomites. With that in mind, consider that the enemy nations mentioned in Psalm 60 are Moab, Edom and Philistia (verses 8-9). There is no mention of Syria, Ammon or Mesopotamia--though Ammon could be indirectly indicated in stating that Gilead (the area the Israelites took from Ammon) belongs to God (verse 7). Nevertheless, considering that formerly subjugated Syria rebelled against David in the later conflict, it could well be that these other nations also rebelled at this time, given the powerful assistance of the forces of Mesopotamia (and that this could also be the setting for the international coalition of Psalm 83). Psalm 60:10 indicates that Israel initially suffered a period of defeat--the occasion for the psalm--which is new information, as such defeat is not recorded in the accounts of either of the two conflicts mentioned above. Many question the scriptural validity of the superscriptions of the psalms, often deeming them later midrashic additions. Yet we need not ignore the superscriptions to explain apparent discrepancies. A number of possibilities exist for the current one. Perhaps Psalm 60 concerns the earlier conflict mentioned above and, though unrecorded in the account of that conflict, Mesopotamian forces were then involved as well. The differences in numbers killed in the Valley of Salt is reconcilable given

that different numbers are attributed to different commanders--David, Abishai and Joab. Alternatively, Psalm 60 could exclusively concern the later conflict, meaning that Moab, Edom and Philistia revolted and that Joab conducted a new campaign against the Edomites in the Valley of Salt. A further possibility is that the superscription is referring to the later conflict occurring after Joab's return from the earlier conflict. In the overall picture, these could be viewed as two phases in the same war. Perhaps most likely, given that neither Ammon, Syria nor Mesopotamia are mentioned in the text of Psalm 60 itself--and that Mesopotamia and Syria are solely mentioned in the superscription--is that the psalm was initially composed during the earlier conflict but then used as a rallying or marching song during the later conflict (perhaps at a point when things did not seem to be going so well). It seems highly unlikely that a forger would have read this psalm about fighting against Moab, Edom and Philistia and then written Mesopotamia and Syria into a fake title. A forger would rather have attempted to undo any confusion. Once again, what appears to be a contradiction is instead a mark of genuineness. As mentioned, things did not seem to be going well for David's army for a time. Perhaps in the case of the later conflict it was because the nations where David had garrisoned forces were nevertheless able to stage an international rebellion. David complains to God: "You have rejected us...and burst forth upon us.... You have shown your people desperate times; you have given us wine that makes us stagger" (verses 1-3, NIV). The Israelites were reeling, wondering how this could be happening. But David encourages his troops, confident in victory through God. The Expositor's Bible Commentary states in its note on verse 4: "The Lord has raised a 'banner' (nes; cf. Isaiah 5:26; Isaiah 13:2; Jeremiah 4:6 [and Exodus 17:15]) designating a place where the godly may find refuge under the protection of the Divine Warrior. The godly, those who 'fear'

(cf. [Psalm] 34:7, 9) him, will find protection from the attacks of the enemy."

The section of Psalm 60 that follows the *selah* ending verse 4 (i.e., verses 5-12), is later reused as the latter half of Psalm 108 (verses 6-13)--the first part of Psalm 108 coming from Psalm 57:7-11.

In Psalm 60:6, the phrase "in His holiness" can also be translated "in His holy place"--probably designating Israel as the land of His sanctuary.

Dividing Shechem and measuring out the Valley of Succoth represent God apportioning and parceling out the inheritance of the Promised Land to His people. "Shechem and the Valley of Succoth represent regions west and east of the Jordan River in the central parts of the land. Gilead and Manasseh are also regions east and west of the Jordan; Ephraim and Judah are regions in the north and south. The Lord was asserting His sovereignty over the entire land of Israel" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 6-8).

Moab being God's "washpot" (verse 8) or "washbasin" (NIV) refers to that used for washing the feet, which became rather dirty in a time of wearing sandals. The meaning? "Moab was doomed to the most abject and degrading servitude" (Barbara Bowen, *Strange Scriptures That Perplex the Western Mind: Clarified in the Light of Customs and Conditions in Bible Lands*, 1944, p. 25).

God next says He will cast His shoe over Edom (same verse). It could be that Edom is likened in this metaphor to the threshold of a house where shoes, considered dirty and defiling, were removed and left (Bowen, *Strange Scriptures*, pp. 67-68). Recall God demanding the removal of shoes in His presence (Exodus 3:5; Joshua 5:15). Yet it might refer "to the conventional symbolic act by which one claimed possession of land (cf. Ruth 4:7)" (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 60:8).

The final line of verse 8 is literally "Over me, Philistia, shout in triumph" (Green's Literal Translation). Perhaps the meaning is "Over me, Philistia, [is a] shout in triumph"--meaning by God's people. Yet the Jewish Tanakh renders the verse, "Acclaim me, O Philistia!"

David further proclaims that God, who for a time seemed to have abandoned Israel, would now lead them to victory (verses 9-10). And as we face enemies today, especially those spiritual forces that seek to destroy us, let us remember, as David said in the concluding verses, that only God can help us win the battle and grant us ultimate victory."

[END]

Verse 6 – When it speaks of dividing and measuring out land, it's a reference that when God would conquer those lands that Israel would divide out the land as inheritance to each tribe.

Verse 7 – Barnes commentary states "Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine - That is, My dominion or authority is extended over these regions - Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Judah. The idea here is substantially the same as in the former verse, that his dominion extended over the country on both sides of the Jordan; or that in the direction of east and west it embraced all that had been promised - "from the great sea to the river Euphrates." [END]

Verse 9 – Benson commentary states "As if he had said, These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, By what power shall I enter that strongly fenced city?... Edom was a high and rocky country, Obadiah Psalm 60:3, fortified by nature, as well as by art, and therefore not to be subdued without a divine hand." [END]

The answer is clear that it is only through God's miraculous strength that one can overcome such obstacles!

PSALM 83 – The UCG Reading Program states “Psalm 83 is the last of Asaph's psalms and the concluding psalm of the second cluster of Book III, implores God to rouse Himself against a confederacy of national enemies conspiring to wipe out Israel--these nations here declared to be God's enemies (compare Psalm 81:14-15).

Present in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary along with the account of the chariots of Mesopotamia helping the Ammonites against David's army is Psalm 83. This may be what is meant in Psalm 83:8: "Assyria also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot." The nations of Ammon and Moab were both descended from Abraham's nephew Lot. Yet there is a larger coalition mentioned in verses 5-7, containing nations not mentioned in 2 Samuel 10 or 1 Chronicles 19. However, some of these, having been subdued by David in earlier campaigns, could have been in revolt on this later occasion. Of course, considering that other prophecies of various nations here describe them rising up together against Israel in the end time, Psalm 83 may well be an end-time prophecy of "Asaph the seer" (see 2 Chronicles 29:30). Perhaps the song is dual in meaning--with an ancient coalition prefiguring a similar confederacy of the last days.

In the list of conspiring enemies, the foremost and perennial enemy of Israel is given first--Edom (Psalm 83:6), the nation descended from Jacob's brother Esau. David subdued the Edomites prior to the fight with Mesopotamian forces (see 2 Samuel 8; 1 Chronicles 18). But since the Syrians were also earlier subdued and rebelled at the time of the later conflict, it is possible that the same thing happened with the Edomites. In an end-time setting, which seems applicable here, the Edomites may be found among the Palestinians in Israel and Jordan, among the Turks,



among the Iraqis and other Middle Eastern peoples and, due to immigration, in growing numbers in Europe. (For more on the Edomites and their modern identity, see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Obadiah, Isaiah 34 and 63, Jeremiah 49:7-22 and Ezekiel 35.)

The Ishmaelites, listed second (Psalm 83:6), are the Arabs generally--descended from Abraham's first son Ishmael. The Arab nations of today stretch from across North Africa to Iraq.

Third on the list, Moab (same verse), as mentioned above, was, along with Ammon, descended from Lot (see verse 8). As with the Edomites, David subdued the Moabites prior to the fight with Mesopotamia's chariots (see 2 Samuel 8; 1 Chronicles 18). But, as with Edom, it may be that the Moabites rebelled during the later conflict. The Moabites are probably to be found today among the Palestinians in Jordan and Israel and among other Middle Eastern peoples.

Listed fourth are the Hagrites (verse 6). The Israelite tribes of Reuben and Gad fought against the Hagrites in the days of Saul (1 Chronicles 5:10, 1 Chronicles 5:18-19). As was noted in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on 1 Chronicles 5, the name Hagrites perhaps denotes descendants of Ishmael's mother Hagar (and thus Ishmaelite or related tribes). The conflict with the Trans-Jordanian tribes would make these north-ranging Arabs. Assyrian inscriptions mention Hagrites as part of an Aramean (i.e., Syrian) confederacy (Zondervan, note on Psalm 83:6). Thus, the Hagrites are perhaps to be identified in modern times with the Arabs of Syria.

Fifth is Gebal (verse 7). As The Nelson Study Bible notes on Ezekiel 27:9, Gebal was an important Phoenician port city "between Sidon and Arvad (see Joshua 13:5; 1 Kings 5:18). It was called Byblos by the Greeks and Romans, and Gubla by the Assyrians and Babylonians." The Phoenician city is today known as Jbail or Jubayl in Lebanon, 25 miles north of Beirut. Yet the name Gebal, related to the Arabic Jebel, is

simply the word for "mountain," and many believe another location could be meant. "Some interpreters...conclude that the reference here is to a place or region in Edom [southern Jordan], south of the Dead Sea near Petra" (Zondervan, note on verse 7).

Sixth on the list is Ammon (same verse). It was the conflict with Ammon that led to the fight against Mesopotamia's forces. The Ammonite capital, Rabbah, is now Amman, the capital city of Jordan. Like the related Moabites, the Ammonites today are probably to be found among the Palestinians in Jordan and Israel and among other Middle Eastern peoples.

Seventh is Amalek (same verse). The Amalekites were a hostile Edomite people of southern Canaan (Numbers 13:29) who ambushed the stragglers in the Israelites' rear ranks when they came out of Egypt. For this ruthlessness God said He would have war with them from generation to generation and eventually cause them to be wiped out (Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19). Though suppressed under Saul and David, the Amalekites remained. They appear to have eventually ranged over a large territory--some migrating all the way up into Central Asia (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Obadiah and Esther 3). The Amalekites today may be among the Palestinians, Central Asian Turks and other Middle Eastern peoples.

Philistia, land of the Philistines, eighth on the list (Psalm 83:7), was located along the southwest coast of Israel. David had subdued the Philistines prior to the engagement with the Mesopotamian forces (see 2 Samuel 8; 1 Chronicles 18). But, as with Edom and Moab, it could be that the Philistines revolted at the time of the fight against Mesopotamia. A significant portion of the area of ancient Philistia is today the Palestinian Gaza Strip--Gaza being one of the ancient Philistine cities. The Philistines gave their name to Palestine, the name used by the

Greeks and Romans for the land of Israel. And there may be some Philistines among the Palestinians of today.

Listed ninth are "the inhabitants of Tyre" (Psalm 83:7). It might seem problematic for this to apply to the time Asaph wrote--as King Hiram of Tyre was closely allied to David and Solomon. The same problem exists for a Phoenician Gebal if that is the city intended, as Gebal was under Tyre's dominion. Yet it could be that there were rogue elements in Tyre favorable to the Mesopotamians against Israel. Perhaps this is why the wording "inhabitants of Tyre" is used instead of just Tyre. On the other hand, it could be that the psalm simply did not concern events of Asaph's time--that it was instead exclusively a prophecy of the end time. In a modern setting, Lebanon could be indicated. However, modern descendants of the Phoenician Tyrians, along with modern descendants of the Babylonians, may be found in southern Europe (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Isaiah 13:1-14:2). And ancient Tyre prefigured the end-time European-centered Babylonian commercial system of the last days (see Ezekiel 27; Revelation 18).

Listed tenth and last is Assyria (Psalm 83:8). This was probably the principal Mesopotamian power involved in the conflict with David. In a modern setting, the land of Assyria could perhaps indicate northern Iraq. However, it could be that the modern descendants of the ancient Assyrians are intended--apparently, as noted in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Isaiah 10:5-34, to be found among the Germanic people of Central Europe. As the same comments note, the early Catholic theologian Jerome applied Psalm 83:8 to the Germanic tribes invading western Europe along the Rhine.

In modern times, all the various Middle Eastern peoples listed here have fiercely opposed the people of Israel (foremost among "Israel" being the United States and Britain) and Judah (the Jewish people, including the modern Israeli state)--constantly plotting and conspiring against them

and at times actually fighting them militarily or through terrorism, with many shrieking "Death to Israel!" and "Israel into the sea!" After the Arab states came together in the Arab League at the end of World War II, one of its first major actions was a joint attack on the Israeli state when it was established in 1948. Conflict has erupted numerous times since, with Israel fighting several wars for survival against overwhelming odds.

As for European involvement, Germany fought America and Britain in World Wars I and II and waged the terrible Holocaust against the Jews. The Germans were allied with the Ottoman Turks in World War I and with anti-Semitic Arabs in World War II--the Muslim Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al Husseini, finding common cause with the Nazis. As pointed out in a recent article, "In late March 1933, al-Husseini contacted the German consul general in Jerusalem and requested German help in eliminating Jewish settlements in Palestine--offering, in exchange, a pan-Islamic jihad in alliance with Germany against Jews around the world" (David Dalin, "Hitler's Mufti," Human Events, Aug. 3, 2005). And since the formation of the state of Israel shortly after World War II, Germany and other European nations have politically and economically supported the Palestinian cause against what they see as Israeli "occupation" and "oppression."

This decades-long hostility (with its intermittent wars and intifadas) may be what is meant in Psalm 83, though the song could parallel other end-time prophecies in foretelling a more concerted and severe onslaught closer to the end of the age.

Asaph calls on God to deal with the enemy forces as He dealt with seemingly overwhelming enemies before (verses 9-12). "As with Midian" (verse 9) refers to God's victory accomplished through Gideon in Judges 7. "As with Sisera, as with Jabin at the Brook Kishon" (Psalm 83:9) refers to God's victory accomplished through Deborah and Barak

in Judges 4-5. Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna (Psalm 83:11) were leaders of the Midianites killed by Gideon and his men (Judges 7:25-8:21).

Asaph then calls for judgment on the enemy nations--remarkably for the cause of redemption. He asks that God would pursue, frighten and shame the enemies so that they would repent and seek a relationship with God (verse 13-16). He further prays that they be dismayed, confounded forever and shamed and that they perish (verse 17). Is there a contradiction here? Some think Asaph seeks for the enemies to repent but, if they still refuse, for them to then be destroyed. That may be, but the passage is not directly worded that way.

We should realize that the word translated "forever" in verse 17 does not necessarily mean for all eternity as in modern English usage (compare Exodus 21:6). Indeed verse 18, which says that the punishment is so that the enemies will know that God is "the Most High over all the earth," appears to hint at the second resurrection. For how will these enemies know anything if they are dead forever? While the lesson will of course be learned by those left alive, a straightforward reading of these verses would seem to say that the lesson is for those who perish. The desire in verse 18, then, seems to be that the mortal defeat the enemies experience from God in this age will convince them of His sovereignty when they are raised in the future--leading them to the repentance mentioned in verse 16. (Jesus spoke of this resurrection to repentance in Matthew 11:20-24 and 12:41-42, and the Bible mentions it in several other references. To learn more about God's plan to offer salvation to all human beings who lived without a proper understand of His ways, see our free booklet *What Happens After Death?*)" [END]

PSALM 108 – The UCG Reading Program states “Psalm 108 is titled a psalm of David, being a combination, with slight modifications, of parts

of two other psalms of David, Psalms 57 and 60 (compare Psalm 57:7-11 with Psalm 108:1-5 and Psalm 60:5-12 with Psalm 108:6-13). As their superscriptions attest, Psalm 57 was written when David and his men hid from Saul in the cave near the desert oasis of En Gedi, and Psalm 60 was written when David fought against the forces of Mesopotamia and Syria

The first part of Psalm 108 (verses 1-5), the part also found in Psalm 57:7-11, praises the extensiveness of God's *hesed*--His steadfast covenant love and mercy. In fact, where Psalm 57:10 said it reaches to the heavens, Psalm 108:4 is slightly reworded, saying it is great above the heavens. Based on this pervasiveness of God's covenant faithfulness, the latter part of Psalm 108 (verses 6-13), the part taken from Psalm 60:5-12, is a prayer for deliverance from and help against Israel's national enemies. While the later song could have been composed shortly after the former, so that the circumstances described still existed, it may be that the later composition was much later--so that circumstances were completely different yet the same general need for God's intervention was present (evidently after a period of things not going so well). As in Psalm 60, the song is adamant in proclaiming that only through God can we attain ultimate victory.” [END]