

Is the Gaza War Part of End Times Prophecy? What About Psalm 83? What Do the Bible's 20 References to Gaza Tell Us?

October 17, 2023

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL – As the situation here in Israel goes from bad to worse, and the death toll and number of wounded continues to climb on both sides of the border, Christians around the world are sending me great questions via email, text message, WhatsApp, and Twitter's Direct Messaging.

Christian leaders, journalists, and broadcasters also asking me during radio, TV, digital, and print interviews, and on podcasts.

Above all, they want to know not just what's happening moment to moment but where is this all going and what it all means from a biblical perspective.

I'm so glad they're interested.

It means they care.

My colleagues and I created ALL ISRAEL NEWS, ALL ARAB NEWS, and THE ROSENBERG REPORT on TBN to provide Christians with answers to these and similar questions.

In fact, on the special edition of THE ROSENBERG REPORT that I hosted on Saturday evening, I addressed three specific variations of these questions.

First, what exactly does the Bible say about Gaza's past, and

its future?

Second, is this horrific war in Gaza part of End Times Bible prophecy?

Third, what about Psalm 83 – does it reveal something important about the current Gaza war?

You can watch the full program here on YouTube.

Here, too, is a partial transcript of the program so you can study the answers more carefully.

Please share this article with family and friends on social media, and with your pastors and Bible study leaders so it can be a helpful resource to them as well.

What Does the Bible Say About Gaza?

What's interesting to me is that Gaza is actually mentioned no less than 20 times in the Bible – in both the Old Testament and the New.

Sadly, most references to Gaza are about how wicked its people and leaders are, how much they hate Israel and the Jewish people, and how God repeatedly sent His prophets to warn of Gaza's impending judgment.

The first time Gaza is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis, chapter 10, where God describes Gaza as part of the land occupied by the Canaanites, the mortal enemies of God.

“The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah....” (Genesis 10:19)

Later in the scriptures, Gaza is described as the base camp of the Philistines, who were constantly attacking and terrorizing the Jews of Israel.

In the Book of Judges, chapter 1, the Lord directed the armies

of the Israelites – specifically the armies of the tribe of Judah – to conquer Gaza, and they did.

In Judges 1:18-19, we read: *“And Judah took Gaza with its territory and Ashkelon with its territory and Ekron with its territory. Now the Lord was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country.”*

Later in Judges, of course, we read the famous stories of Samson.

Samson, admittedly, was a deeply flawed character.

But God used him to go into Gaza and destroy their wicked leaders, even though it cost Samson his own life.

In Jeremiah 47, we see that one of the Pharaohs of Egypt conquered Gaza, beginning a very long and complicated relationship between Egypt and Gaza that remains complicated to this day.

The Hebrew prophet Amos was told by God to write about the wickedness of Gaza and the divine judgment that was coming upon it.

“Thus says the Lord, ‘For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its , I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza and it will consume her citadels.’” (Amos 1:6-7)

God also told the Hebrew prophets Zephaniah and Zechariah to warn of judgment coming to Gaza and its nearby Philistine cities.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

“For Gaza will be abandoned and Ashkelon a desolation; Ashdod will be driven out at noon and Ekron uprooted.” (Zephaniah 2:4)

"Ashkelon will see it and be afraid. Gaza, too, will writhe in great pain; also , the king will perish from Gaza..."
(Zechariah 9:5)

That said, the Bible does have at least one positive reference to Gaza, in the New Testament, in the Book of Acts.

"So, when they [the apostles] had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord [all over Israel], they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans [in what is now known as the West Bank]. But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, 'Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a desert road)." (Acts 8:25-26)

And, of course, as he goes to Gaza, Philip comes upon someone who is reading a scroll written by the Hebrew prophet Isaiah.

The man is literally reading the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 53 about the coming death and resurrection of Jesus.

But he doesn't understand what he's reading, so he asks Philip to explain the passage to him.

Being an evangelist filled with the Holy Spirit, Philip is more than happy to explain both the prophecies and how Jesus fulfilled them and how he is, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah.

And right there, on the road leading into Gaza, Philip helps the man repent of his sins and receive Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

Then the man asks Philip to baptize him, and Philip does.

Just as Paul came to Christ on the road leading into the Arab city of Damascus, so this man came to Christ on the road leading into Gaza.

I love that story because it reveals an important truth.

Yes, many of the leaders and people of Gaza are wicked.

Yes, they hate Israel and the Jews.

And yes, if they don't repent and turn to Christ, they will face judgment.

But God loves the people of Gaza.

Christ commands us to love Israel and her neighbors.

He sends His servants to bring the gospel to Gaza.

Perhaps many Palestinians in Gaza will reject the gospel.

But some won't.

Some will receive Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Lynn and I personally know people from Gaza who have come to faith in Christ.

Through the work of **The Joshua Fund**, we have ministered to Christ-followers who live in Gaza.

We have welcomed some of them into our home.

We have given them platforms to share their remarkable stories with others.

So, please – as you pray for the Lord to give victory to Israel over the wicked leaders of Hamas – please also pray for the people of Gaza.

They need to be liberated from the slavery and oppression of Hamas.

And from the slavery and oppression of Satan and sin.

Pray, too, for the terrorist leaders and members of Hamas – pray that God would convert them to Christ before it's too late.

I know former Muslim terrorists who have come to Christ and been radically changed.

I've interviewed them for my books – and prayed with them – and studied the Scriptures with them – and ministered to them.

I even know a former Hamas leader who used to be a terrorist and Christ miraculously changed the entire direction of his life, turned him against Hamas, and used him to save many Israeli lives from Hamas terrorist attacks, including suicide bombers sent to kill them.

So, I know that God can do anything.

That's why I'm telling you that it's our job to pray without ceasing not just for the rescue, salvation, healing, and blessing of Israelis, but also for God to do miracles in the lives of Palestinians in Gaza, including the leaders and foot soldiers of Hamas.

"For," as the Scriptures teach us, "nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

What Does Psalm 83 Tell Us About the Current War in Gaza?

There is a specific Bible passage you need to study carefully.

Why?

Because it reveals to you what's driving the demonic hatred in the heart of Hamas.

And the judgment coming against every member of Hamas – and every supporter of Hamas – who refuses to repent and give his or her life to Jesus Christ.

The passage I'm referring to is Psalm 83.

Starting in verse one we read: *"O God, do not remain quiet; do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted*

themselves. They make shrewd plans against Your people, and conspire together against Your treasured ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, that the nation of Israel be remembered no more.' (Psalm 83:1-4)

Don't tell me the Bible is a dusty old book that isn't relevant.

Today's headlines are ripped right out of the verses in Psalm 83.

In verses 6 through 8, we read exactly where these various enemies of Israel and the Jewish people live.

"The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites"—that's southern Jordan and Arabia.

"Moab and the Hagrites"—that's central and north Jordan.

"Gebal and Ammon and Amalek"—that's Lebanon and Syria and the Sinai peninsula.

"Philistia"—that's the Gaza Strip.

"With the inhabitants of Tyre"—that's more of Lebanon.

"Assyria also has joined with them" – that's Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

Right here, in this brief prophetic Psalm 83—only 18 verses in English—God is warning us that people who live in these countries will hate Israel and the Jewish people.

Why?

Because they hate the God of Israel—the God of the Bible.

Right?

That's what the writer tells us.

Led by the Holy Spirit, he is telling God, *"For behold, Your*

enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted themselves” and “they make shrewd plans against Your people.”

Murderous plans.

Genocidal plans.

These mortal enemies of the God of Israel—including some of the Palestinian leaders and people in Gaza, those who connect themselves to the ancient Philistines—say, *“Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more.”*

That’s exactly what Hamas wants.

Don’t misunderstand me; I don’t believe that all Palestinians in Gaza agree with Hamas and want Israel to experience a genocide.

But clearly some do.

And they will lose.

They are attacking the apple of God’s eye.

They are refusing to understand what God told Abraham in Genesis 12—*“those who bless you I will bless, but those who curse you I will curse.”*

And what does the writer—led by the Holy Spirit—pray?

“O God, pursue them with Your storm.”

He asks God to bring fire upon them, and disaster, and humiliation, and shame.

Why?

Just so they will lose?

No—also so that they will repent and turn to the Lord.

Look at verse 16—the writer brings for disaster to come upon all who seek to wipe Israel off the map *“that they may seek Your name, Lord.”*

And again in verse 18—*“that they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth.”*

Amen.

That is a Spirit-led prayer.

And it's going to come true.

So, please join me in praying for Israel—absolutely—but also for the Palestinians of Gaza that they might turn away from their hatred and give their lives to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. {eoa}

This article originally appeared on ALL ISRAEL NEWS and is reposted with permission.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Joel C. Rosenberg is the editor-in-chief of ALL ISRAEL NEWS and ALL ARAB NEWS and the President and CEO of Near East Media. A New York Times best-selling author, Middle East analyst and Evangelical leader, he lives in Jerusalem with his wife and sons.