



Study Guide #3

Signs of the Times: Prophecies Already Fulfilled – Part 1

Welcome back Bible students! I hope you enjoyed a dig into God's Story of salvation (Study Guide #2). The goal of VISION 2020 is to get into God's Word, understand His plan and purpose for the days in which we live, and share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. God's Word is God's Story! When is the last time you shared it with someone? Why not take a moment right now to stop and ask the Lord to reveal something new and different, and to provide you the opportunity to share it with someone! God is faithful to use those who commit themselves to Him. Go for it!

If you're just joining us, WELCOME! New study guides are posted every 10-14 days, giving you plenty of time to dig into God's Word. Avoid the pressure of trying to do it all in one sitting. Study guides are purposefully divided into parts, marking good stopping places. You may also create your own stopping places! Just come back to finish another day. Don't rush through this...you've got time!

Let's dig into specific, Biblical signs that God has fulfilled in the past, so we can have confidence He will fulfill future ones as well! Always keep this in mind when studying prophecy:

Prophecy is not meant to **SCARE**, but to **PREPARE!**

In fact, Jesus Himself gave His disciples great encouragement that reaches all the way through the centuries to us. Open your Bible and read [John 14:1-3](#). That's terrific encouragement, isn't it! Personalize those verses and summarize them in your own words:

Bible scholars and prophecy experts may have different opinions about the most profound prophecy regarding end times, but one would be hard pressed to find more profound signs of the times than those related directly to Israel. That's where we will begin our study!

Part 1: Israel's survival

In many ways, Israel IS God's Story. Has we studied in the first study guide of VISION 2020, God has a unique relationship with Israel. It doesn't mean Jews and/or Israelis are any better than anyone else...just that God gave them a unique calling. Before we dive into Israel's survival, let's recall what that unique calling is. You've studied it already, but re-read [Genesis 12:1-3](#). God called Abram from a distant country and made 7 promises to him. Write out that last promise (last sentence of verse 3) here:

Indeed, God promised to bless all the families of the earth through Abram and his descendants (Israel), and we know that blessing to be salvation.

So, I ask you: How could God bless the world with salvation if Israel was wiped out? Israel must exist, or God's promise is null and void, and His plan would collapse! Therefore, God's deep love of Israel is mentioned and displayed throughout Scripture. One such place is Isaiah 43. As Christians, sometimes we personalize passages, at times forgetting that the passage was written specifically to Israel! That's the case here! Read [Isaiah 43:1-7](#) slowly and carefully, and note all the ways God expresses His love and care toward Israel.

We get a glimpse of God's love in [Zechariah 2](#) as well. According to verses 1-5, describe what you believe God's heart is toward Jerusalem.

Now read verses 6-8. After God admonished Israel for "living with the daughter of Babylon," He sends a messenger against the nations who plunder Israel. What is God's warning in the last phrase of verse 8?

Thus, Israel must survive for two reasons:

1. God's plan depends upon it,
2. God loves her supremely and will defend her existence!

One of the key end time prophecies is that Israel MUST survive! Perhaps someone should warn Iran and its proxies, who continue threatening to "wipe Israel off the map!"

Twice, Israel has been exiled...completely driven from the land of Israel. The first was to Babylon in about 586 BC. Take time to examine this short synopsis of the [Babylonian Captivity](#).

While in captivity, God allowed the Persians to conquer Babylon, then He miraculously used a Persian king named Cyrus to liberate the Jewish people and allow them to return to Israel to rebuild the house of the Lord! Read the account in [Ezra 1:1-4](#) and summarize that event.

The second exile was to the four corners of the earth after the Romans drove the Jews from Jerusalem in 70 AD. Beyond that, there were other attempts to wipe them out, including Haman's attempt, described in the [Book of Esther](#). (Read it sometime...it is fascinating!) Later came other major attempts, such as the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition and the Holocaust.

Though the Hebrew language died out (only to be revived when Jews returned to the land), God sustained them, and Jews remained Jews wherever they went. They were never absorbed into another culture or nationality, but rather maintained their Jewish identity.

The Bible predicted it and God fulfilled it by His mighty hand of protection. Today, Israel not only survives, but thrives! Despite its tiny size, Israel is a world leader in agriculture, medicine and technology. Their military capabilities are among the most powerful in the world and their military intelligence is cutting edge. While nation's economies are collapsing all around them, Israel's economy is booming.

Despite frequent threats, Israel will still exist in the last days, and those who wish to challenge her will be met by the fierce jealousy of the Almighty God whose plan will not be thwarted!

Israel IS God's Story! For those on Facebook, why not share your thoughts and words of encouragement on the VISION 2020 group page.

Part 2: God deals with the enemies of Israel

Not only is Israel's survival part of God's Story, but that story continues with His faithfulness to Israel! [Genesis 12:3](#) is very familiar, but review it and record God's promise toward nations, based upon how they treat Israel.

Throughout history, Israel's enemies have attempted to destroy her, and throughout history, God has cursed those who cursed Israel. Let's go back in history to discover some of the early "Israel cursors."

Even before the Israelites left Egypt, God warned Moses that there would be those who would hate them. In fact, He laid it out very clearly in [Deuteronomy 7:1-2](#). Turn there and identify the seven enemies of whom God warned them:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

According to verse 2, what instructions did the Lord give to Moses and the Israelites?

Now read [Deuteronomy 7:12-16](#). Carefully count the promises of God and record a few here. How many did you find? (Hint: at least a dozen!)

According to the last phrase in verse 16, why was it important that the Israelites not pity them or serve their gods?

We will break down those 7 “ites,” beginning with the Canaanites in general, since the Promised Land which God gave to the Israelites was called Canaan. “Canaan” is a broad term, encompassing the other 6 factions that make up the seven enemies of Israel.

Canaanites (“humiliated” or “disgraced”)

The first mention of Canaan is found in [Genesis 9:18](#) and identifies who Canaan is. Write or summarize that verse here:

Verses 22-27 describe Ham’s unrighteousness toward Noah, and a curse that came upon Canaan. Ultimately, Canaan’s descendants settled west of the Jordan River, bringing the curse with them. [Genesis 10:15-20](#) detail the territory Canaan and his sons occupied, and they were characterized as idol worshippers, involved in incest, bestiality, adultery, child sacrifice, rape, temple sex with prostitutes, orgies, and other sexual deviances. Today, excavations reveal one of the most horrific practices ever imagined. Read [Jeremiah 32:35](#) and record what you believe that practice was. Is there anything remotely like it today? If so, list that too.

Read [Leviticus 18:24-30](#). According to verse 28, what would happen to those who defile the land? Can you think of examples where that has happened?

Amorites (“talkers”)

Descendants of Canaan’s son, Emer, the Amorites found a home in the hill country west of the Jordan River, as well as east of the Dead Sea (modern-day Jordan). They were very powerful and [Amos 2:9](#) describes them this way:

Now back up to [Number 21:21-32](#). This account is prior to the Israelites entering the Promised Land. According to that passage, what took place between the Israelites and Amorites on that journey?

Where were Joshua and the people of Israel living when Joshua pronounced those famous words of [Joshua 24:15](#)?

Hittites (“terror”)

Descendants of Canaan’s second son, Heth, became known as the Hittites, and they settled in the territory near modern-day Hebron. Of note, Abraham bought a cave from a Hittite in order to bury his wife, Sarah; and David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of a Hittite. However, mountainous regions of Turkey and Syria became home to the Hittites as well.

Worshippers of nature, it is believed the Hittites were eventually absorbed into surrounding cultures and lost their distinctive identity. But not before ensnaring God’s people in pagan idol worship. Regarding the Hittites and others, what were God’s instructions in [Exodus 23:32-33](#)?

Girgashites

Etymologically related to the “region of the Garasenes” ([Mark 5:1](#)) and the “region of the Gadarenes” ([Matthew 8:28](#)), many believe the Girgashites settled in the Galilee region. According to Josephus (an early historian whose historic recordings are often used as a secondary resource), the Girgashites descended from Gergesus, Canaan’s fourth son. Though God gave Moses the command to destroy them, rabbinic tradition indicates they fled to North Africa.

Though not mentioned or described to any great extent in Scripture, God did see fit to include them in the list of enemies of Israel. Thus, it can be assumed they had undesirable impact on God’s people unless and until the Israelites drove them out.

Perizzites (“dwellers in open country”)

[Genesis 13:7](#) and [Genesis 34:30](#) clearly indicate the presence of Perizzites alongside Abraham and Jacob. [Joshua 11:3](#) and [Joshua 17:15](#) identify the hill country of Ephraim as territory in which the Perizzites inhabited.

According to [Ezra 9:1-2](#), what might be one reason God considered the Perizzites to be enemies of Israel?

Similar to the Girgashites, there is little further mention of the Perizzites in Scripture or other reliable historical ancient literature. Yet, they are named among the enemies of Israel.

Jebusites (“trodden”)

Descending from Canaan’s third son, Jebus, a bit more is known about the Jebusites than is known about the Girgashites and Perizzites. [Judges 1:16-21](#) recounts Judah’s battle against various Canaanite tribes (of which the Jebusites are one). Describe the problem in verse 21:

The Jebusites held Jerusalem, which is obviously an issue in which God gave commands to resolve. No one seemed to be able to drive out the Jebusites until a mighty king named David came to power! Read the account in [2 Samuel 5:6-10](#). In verse 7, David identifies Jerusalem by two other names. What are they?

Verses 9-10 are important to Jewish history. What do you believe is significant about David's defeat of the Jebusites?

[2 Samuel 24:18-25](#) provide some of that critical history, and it also has to do with the Jebusites. What significant event took place in these verses, and why do you think it is important?

That place later became the location David's son, Solomon, would build the Temple!

Hivites ("wicked")

During the time of Jacob, the Hivites were known to live in areas near Mount Hermon and Shechem. Some believe the Hivites were closely related (if not the same) as the Gibeonites, who made a peace treaty with Joshua. ([Joshua 11:19](#))

Take a look at [1 Kings 9:15, 20-21](#). As Solomon built the Temple, what was the relationship between the king and the Hivites (and other tribes)?

So, there you have seven ancient enemies of Israel. Though the Israelites, particularly under Joshua's leadership, controlled most of the Promised Land, they failed to carry out God's command to utterly destroy their enemies. It wasn't long until Baal worship and other problems seeped in and proved their undoing for centuries.

In Part 3 we will look at a later set of enemies, but before we do, let's go back to our point in Part 2 regarding the signs of the times: God's curse upon those who wish to destroy Israel. Though the Hebrew people did not fulfill God's command, God fulfilled His promise. Lack of obedience brought curse upon God's chosen land and God's chosen people, yet God's curse upon Israel's enemies is evident.

How so? Easy to discern. Where are the Canaanites? The Amorites? The Hittites? The Girgashites? The Perizzites? The Jebusites? The Hivites?

They have disappeared. They cease to exist. They are no more. Yet, Israel lives! Is it because Israel is any better than the others? No. Sin is sin, and Israel is as guilty as any other people group. Yet, God remains faithful and true to His promises. He needs no reason. He chose them simply because...well...He chose them!

Indeed, God will curse those whose determination it is to destroy His people physically or spiritually. They will not succeed. But it is not for Israel's sake! Let's close Part 2 by studying repetitive phrases in [Ezekiel 20](#). As you read verses 9, 14, 22 and 44, what is the common theme?

Great job! Way to hang in there today! If you are on Facebook, why not go to the [VISION 2020 group page](#) and share a thought or a comment. The vision is to share, and that's one way to do so! Otherwise, share it with a friend!

Stick with us for Part 3!

Part 3: Fulfillment of Psalm 83

Welcome back, study friends! We're considering God's vision, as spoken to the Old Testament prophets about things to come. God has a story to write throughout all eternity, and He desires that we know and understand His plan. The Bible is composed of about 30% prophecy, so it is important to understand what has been fulfilled already, in order to trust what will be fulfilled in the future.

In this study, we focused first on Israel's survival, then turned our sights to the demise of enemies who cursed Israel. We'll end this study guide looking at the Psalm 83 prophecy. In that chapter, we find another list of enemies with bad intentions toward Israel. We will examine them, then determine the timing of fulfillment of this prophecy.

Read [Psalm 83](#) in its entirety, paying close attention to the threat made toward Israel. Did you find it? If not, re-read verse 4 and write it here:

Before diving in too deeply, be aware of a wave of theological opinion being developed regarding the prophecy of Psalm 83. There are various theological opinions regarding exactly who the nations are, and whether or not the prophecy has already been fulfilled. Having spent a considerable time studying it, there is a definite position I hold, but it is not a "salvation issue," so if you hold a different position, you have the right to be wrong! (Of course, I'm kidding! Your position may have merit. The key point is to be a Berean and study diligently to understand God's Word.)

Psalm 83 opens with a sincere plea from the psalmist, Asaph, imploring God to act on Israel's behalf. Did this plea for help involve Asaph's current situation or a future one...or both?

Some prophecies are partially fulfilled at one time, and fully fulfilled in the future. Could that be the case with Psalm 83? Let's discern the answers for ourselves as we dig into God's Word.

Verses 1-5 certainly indicate evil intentions against God's chosen people and God's chosen land. In fact, the Bible very accurately predicts threats we still hear uttered today. Verse 4 contains a prime example. What nation(s) have uttered those threats lately?

Verses 6-8 identify enemy nations who "conspire together with one mind." Later in today's study we'll take a look at who some scholars say those modern-day nations are, but for now let's finish our survey of the chapter.

Asaph's plea for the destruction of these lands is recorded in the final verses (9-18) of Psalm 83. However, Asaph's tone seems to change in verse 18. Why do you think his tone changed, and what is his desire according to that verse?

So, who are these hoodlums, ganging up to wipe Israel out as a nation? Again, scholars may differ on who these people groups are, so let's avoid being dogmatic. The point is we can, with some degree of accuracy, identify the primary areas of which those ancient names now apply. People groups (enemies of Israel) listed in Psalm 83:6-8 appear to be:

- Edom = Palestinian refugees and Southern Jordan
- Ishmaelites = Saudi Arabia
- Moab = Palestinian refugees and Central Jordan
- Hagrites = Egypt
- Gebal = Northern Lebanon
- Ammon = Palestinian refugees and Northern Jordan
- Amalek = Sinai and Arabs of South Israel
- Philistia = Palestinian refugees and Hamas of the Gaza Strip
- Tyre = Hezbollah and Southern Lebanon
- Assyria = Syria and Northern Iraq
- Children of Lot = Moab and Ammon (above)

Do you recognize these as neighbors and current "thorns in the side" of Israel? What we know for sure is the people groups listed in Psalm 83:6-8 have evil intent toward the Jewish state. Scholars debate whether Psalm 83 is a separate, stand-alone action against Israel, a part of the Ezekiel 38 Invasion, or something entirely different. It seems most likely the Psalm 83 prophecy was fulfilled in wars with Israel in 1948 (War of Independence), 1967 (Six Day War) and 1973 (Yom Kippur War). In general, I hold to that view for several reasons, one being that, until that time, the goal of those warring people groups was to wipe Israel out. Today, Israel holds military superiority over those groups and they either no longer try to wipe Israel out, or understand they would be very quickly annihilated if they do. Only Iran is spouting the "wipe Israel off the map" mantra these days, and they are not included in the Psalm 83 prophecy.

Today I want to do something different. Rather than regurgitate what I believe to be true about Psalm 83, I will default to one who has proven much more capable of articulating the position from a Messianic

Jewish perspective. Please carve out half an hour to hear Amir Tsarfati explain the Psalm 83 prophecy. You will be blessed. ([Click here to view that video](#). Conversation begins at the 2:00 mark.)

According to Amir, when do/did the events of Psalm 83 take place?



Amir mentioned the “first tier” of nations against Israel. He is referring to Israel’s immediate neighbors...those with whom they share a border. What nations are they? (See map to the left.)

If you said Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, you are correct! All of those nations attacked Israel in 1948; and all are part of the “first tier!” According to Amir, what historical change “drove them nuts,” inciting the attack in 1948?

Who are the “second tier” nations, and what familiar Bible prophecies speak of them?

If you hold a different position regarding Psalm 83, please briefly describe it here.

For an added blessing, check out [Amir’s 12-minute interview with TBN-Israel](#).

We have uncovered some interesting thoughts and ideas, haven’t we! Regardless of your position, it is clear that Israel is surrounded by those wishing to do her harm. Be diligent in your prayers for the peace of Jerusalem. Furthermore, study faithfully, dear friends, as God commands. Soon enough the Lord will reveal Himself completely in His return. Let’s be found faithful in rightly dividing the Word of Truth!

You have studied well and we’ll give it a break here. Be sure to share God’s Story, whether it is prophecy, your testimony or any other story that brings Him glory. Our [VISION 2020 Facebook group](#) is designed to be an outlet for sharing, questions and encouragement. Please use that resource!