

THE RISE AND FALL OF AMALEK

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CONFLICT HAS PLAGUED HUMAN HISTORY since time immemorial, and yet, in 2025, most people in Western nations have never lived under the cloud of war. Few living today remember the 1940 Battle of Britain and the haunting sounds of air raid sirens. The horrific genocides in Rwanda (1994) or Darfur (2003–2005) occurred in recent history, yet those atrocities seemed distant from most of us. The devastating terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City unnerved the world—certainly the West—awakening many to the very real presence of unbridled evil. Then, when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, columns of tanks and bombed cities became common images on all news platforms.

AN ANCIENT FOE

Sadly, for the nation of Israel, war has made a permanent imprint and terrorism has become woven into the fabric of its daily life. Israelis would prefer not to identify their nation with conflict, as Israel boasts a vibrant life for families, innovation opportunities, endless history, art and music. Yet since the rebirth of the State in 1948, every generation of Israelis has had to stand in the gap to defend their nation. The miracles of victories they have achieved are legendary testaments to God's hand of preservation.

On October 7, 2023, the unimaginable happened. An evil was unleashed as thousands of Hamas terrorists—under a barrage of 4,300 missiles—penetrated deep into Israel and committed barbaric acts on everyone they encountered. Apart from kidnapping over 250 Israelis, none were spared. Young and old were butchered and tortured. Like wolves, Hamas looked for helpless, weak victims. Israeli security squads and soldiers, who raced to the south fought heroically as the nation soon repulsed the invaders.



Smoke rising from London after an air raid during the Blitz in World War II



Genocide Memorial, Rwanda



The attack on the World Trade Center in New York



A hotel in Ukraine destroyed by a Russian bomb

In what became a seven-front war, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) called up 300,000 troops, the largest army in its history, to defend the nation. At the epicenter of this war lies the Iranian regime. Likened to an octopus with its tentacles embedded in the region, Iran has slowly tightened its grip in an effort to destroy Israel, something it has vowed to do since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Yet Israel still endures.

How is this possible? For our answer, we turn to the Bible and examine how the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worked through the nation of Israel in history, vows to defend them in the present and remains their hope for the future.

A CRY TO GOD—ASAPH'S INTERCESSION

Do Not Be

Silent

Psalms 83, composed by Asaph, has been on my mind constantly since October 7, 2023, and I wish to begin here. Asaph lived during the time of King David (1000 BC) and is believed to have been one of the music directors in his court. Asaph begins Psalm 83 by crying out to God three times to neither be *silent*, hold His *peace* nor remain *still*. For the English reader, these words can all blend together, but Asaph chose them carefully.

Hold Not Your

Peace

Do Not Be

Still

The first Hebrew word, translated as “silent or quiet,” is *domi*, which means to “pause” or “rest,” as if to be so comfortable that one is unaware. Asaph urgently pleads for God to hear and remain vigilant as a threat is coming against Israel. The second word, *haresh*, often translated as “peace” or “quiet,” means “speechless” or “showing deafness.” This does not mean simply remaining mum or the impairment of deafness, but keeping silent deliberately without any motivation to act. This is an urgent call for action. Asaph, as a faithful Jewish man, understands that the God of Israel is also the God of the world, who is completely sovereign and knows everything. At the same time, he knows that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is like a husband to Israel (Isa. 54:5) and loves His people. He’s not indifferent but desires relationship and wants to hear from His children. As such, Asaph implores God with the reality his nation faces.

*“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’” (Ps. 83:2–4 emphasis added).*

Notice Asaph’s language, particularly the words in bold. He does not explain the situation, but instead goes straight to the source of *why* the enemies have rallied and conspire. They come against Israel because they hate the God of Israel! Ultimately, they are not Israel’s enemies. They oppose God! This is a timeless, prophetic declaration that reflects centuries of Jewish history and will continue until the Messiah comes to set up His Kingdom!

THAT GOD’S ENEMIES WOULD KNOW

Asaph lists Israel’s ancient enemies: Edom, Moab, Amalek, Philistia, Assyria and Midian. He calls out to God to deal with these violent nations who hate Israel. The judgment he pronounced upon them calls on God to pour out righteous vengeance. In strong words, Asaph demands that Israel’s enemies be reduced to *“refuse (dung) on the earth...whirling dust, like 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...”* (vv. 10b, 13–16a).

Interestingly, we also see a glimmer of Asaph’s heart, which does not simply seek the annihilation of the enemy nations, but asks that through their destruction and humiliation, *“...they may seek Your name, O LORD”* (v.16b). Before this thought reappears, Asaph returns briefly to righteous indignation against the bloodthirsty nations who hate Israel. *“Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever, and let them be humiliated and perish”* (v. 17).



He then reaches his climax, which is the ultimate heart of the matter for King David's music director. *"That they may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth"* (v. 18). This powerful meditation is reflected in other places of Scripture: when God told Moses He would demonstrate His power against Egypt so they would know that He is Lord (Exod. 7:5) or when Rahab told the Israelite spies that the news of Israel's victory over Egypt had reached Jericho and terrified the people (Josh. 2:9–13).

THE SPIRIT OF AMALEK

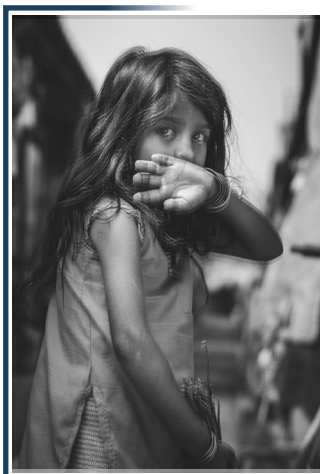
However, there remains one ancient enemy that continues to linger menacingly: Amalek. Exodus 17:8 introduces a hostile nation whose leader, Amalek, attacked Israel at Rephidim. Israel triumphed, but Amalek was so evil that God told Israel never to forget what Amalek had done to them (Deut. 25:17–19). This passage begins to paint a horrific picture of Amalek's sadism as

they provoked Israel into a war that resulted in their (the Amalekites') defeat. Deuteronomy 25:18 explains Amalek attacked the *"rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary..."* in a brutal and calculated manner. The word Moses used for "stragglers" is *hasal*, which means "feeble" or "weak".

In context, Amalek was smart enough to know they could not defeat Israel because Israel's God had just destroyed Egypt, the superpower of the day. However, Amalek was wicked as *"...he did not fear God"* (v. 18b) and thus chose to prey upon babies, children, pregnant women and the elderly. This was not traditional warfare with two armies facing each other but a calculated strategy

of murder and delight in slaughtering the defenseless. This was the darkness of Amalek's heart, which prompted God to command Israel to *"...blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget"* (v. 19b).

When I ponder these passages and the painful weight of the words, I cannot help but see the images and lived experiences from October 7, 2023, and the celebrated Hamas massacre of Israelis. Interestingly, the Hebrew word, *hamas*, means "violence."



In Jewish thinking, the figure of Amalek has come to represent a “Spirit of Amalek” that exists in every generation, embodied in an evil person who seeks to annihilate the Jewish people. Much of this thinking comes from the text in Exodus 17:16b, *“the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation”*. As Christians, we may think of the epitome of the future Antichrist (1 John 2:18), but the apostle John also mentions that other *“antichrists have come”*. Clearly, one can see people throughout history who fit the mold of the “Spirit of Amalek,” who possess a desire to wreak havoc upon the Jewish community wherever they may be found. Men such as Pharaoh, Haman, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler or the Iranian *ayatollahs* fit the “Spirit of Amalek” with uncanny accuracy.

GOD WILL DEAL WITH AMALEK

The reality is that God will deal with His enemies. Although He desires repentance, He also vows to act against Israel’s enemies. This is the biblical pattern. In Zechariah 2:8, God warns against touching the *“apple of His eye”* (Israel). When King Jehoshaphat cried out before the Lord, God comforts him and then fights on his behalf to destroy Judah’s enemies (2 Chron. 20:21). When King Hezekiah humbled himself in God’s presence, the Angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army of Sennecherib (Isa. 37:33–38). Esther 3:1 reveals the wicked Haman was a descendant of Amalek. God’s justice was meted out when he was hung upon the gallows he built for Mordechai, thus ending to his plans to slaughter the Jews of Persia. The prophet Zechariah vows that in the future, the Lord Himself will defend Jerusalem and eradicate her enemies (Zech. 14:12).

A popular T-shirt for sale in many of Israel’s souvenir shops lists the long list of Israel’s historic



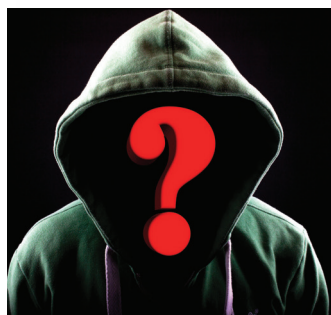
Joseph Stalin



Adolph Hitler



Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei



Who's Next – Spirit of Amalek

enemies: Ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Each name is crossed out. The final name on the list simply appears as “Iran...???” Written at the bottom are these words: “The Jewish People. The Smallest of Nations but with a Friend in the Highest of Places! So...BE NICE!” For Israel’s enemies as well as all violent people who seek to destroy her, the words of Jesus (Yeshua) are resounding, “*For all who take (live by) the sword will perish by the sword*” (Matt. 26:52).

Israel bears (*nasa*) the name of God (Exod. 20:7).

The etymology of the Hebrew word *nasa* relates to the nation being tattooed or sealed with God’s name. Because Israel bears God’s name, the world experiences “agitation” when they consider Israel or come into contact with them. The radical

expression of this agitation is what we would call antisemitism. However, the agitation can also act like an attraction that notices something unique and positive about Israel. Therefore, nations are often attracted to Israel, seeking cooperation and partnership, which Israel reciprocates. This agitation can also cause nations to ignore or be indifferent to Israel, even leading to irrational hatred, conspiratorial belief and open hostility. The same reactions towards the Jewish people can also be found on a microlevel within communities and individuals. There is a similar, relatable thread, which should also prompt something within Christians, as Jesus described the cost of being His disciples as bringing hatred and persecution upon themselves simply for testifying as His followers (John 15:18).

This seemingly long history of tension, suffering, war and tragedy will come to an end someday. This should stir hope in both Christians and Jews. The bottom line is that God will preserve His nation and deal with His enemies and all unrighteousness. God reigns over the earth and will one day fill the world with His knowledge as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). One day, the Gentiles will break out into glorious praise at God’s faithfulness towards Israel (Ps. 117). The King will reign and bring about righteousness. According to the Jewish prophets, the God of Israel alone will be worshipped. The prophet Zechariah expressed this succinctly and clearly: “*And the LORD shall be King over all the*

Israel
Nasa
**the Name
of God**

Sealed
**with the Name
of God**

earth. In that day it shall be—the LORD is one and His name one” (Zech. 14:9).” What a glorious day awaits the earth in the Messianic era when Amalek is no more than a distant memory, never to raise his ugly head again.



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Scripture from the New King James Version

TERMINOLOGY:

Many of our readers are seasoned supporters of Israel while others are just beginning to understand the importance of standing with God's chosen nation; some prefer the use of Hebrew names and terms, while others are comfortable with more traditional Christian terminology. Because we want to show respect to all of our readers while providing an enjoyable educational experience, we are making every effort to use both terms whenever possible. The following are some of the most common examples:

- Jesus (Yeshua)
- *Tanakh* (Old Testament or OT)—*Tanakh* is an acronym used in Judaism which stands for *Torah*, *Nevi'im* or Prophets and *Ketuvim* or Writings.
- *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.)

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