

Psalms 83:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;

Analysis

Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre. The confederacy expands beyond Abrahamic relatives to include traditional enemies and commercial powers. Geval (גְּבָל) likely refers to Byblos (modern Lebanon), a Phoenician coastal city known for skilled craftsmen and seafaring commerce. Ammon, descended from Lot (Genesis 19:38), occupied territory east of Jordan. Amalek represents Israel's ancient, implacable enemy—the first to attack after the Exodus (Exodus 17:8-16), earning divine curse: "the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16).

The Philistines, Sea Peoples occupying coastal plains, constantly threatened Israel throughout the judges period and Saul's reign. Tsor (צָר, Tyre) was the preeminent Phoenician commercial power, famous for maritime trade and purple dye. Tyre's inclusion suggests economic motivation joining military ambition—control of trade routes, access to resources, commercial advantage. The conspiracy unites disparate interests: blood feuds (Amalek), territorial disputes (Ammon, Philistines), and commercial competition (Tyre, Gebal).

This diverse coalition reveals that opposition to God's purposes transcends normal boundaries. Nations with competing interests unite when facing common enemy: God's covenant people. Similarly, modern secularism, Islam, atheistic communism, and pagan spirituality—normally antagonistic—can cooperate in marginalizing Christian witness. Revelation 16:13-14 depicts similar end-times coalition: demons gathering "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" for battle against God.

Historical Context

These nations represented formidable military and economic power. The Philistines possessed iron technology superior to Israel's bronze (1 Samuel 13:19-22), giving military advantage. Tyre's wealth and naval power made it regional superpower (Ezekiel 27-28 details its extensive trade network). Ammon fielded strong armies (Judges 11, 1 Samuel 11, 2 Samuel 10). Amalek's guerrilla tactics threatened Israel throughout the wilderness journey and settlement period. This coalition represented comprehensive threat: military technology (Philistines), commercial power (Tyre), guerrilla warfare (Amalek), conventional armies (Ammon), skilled craftsmanship (Gebal). Israel faced overwhelming odds without divine intervention.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the diverse coalition in Psalm 83 teach about how disparate enemies can unite against God's purposes despite competing interests?
2. How do you see modern examples of unlikely alliances forming to oppose Christian truth or marginalize the church's witness?
3. Why does Amalek's perpetual enmity against Israel matter theologically, and what does it foreshadow about spiritual warfare?

Interlinear Text

גַּבְּלָה וְעַמּוֹן וְעַמְלָק וְלִשְׁתָּעַם עַמּוֹן וְשָׁבִי
Gebal and Ammon and Amalek the Philistines with the inhabitants
H1381 H5983 H6002 H6429 H5973 H3427

צָרָה

of Tyre
H6865

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:5 (Parallel theme): And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.

Ezekiel 27:3 (Parallel theme): And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.

Ezekiel 27:9 (Parallel theme): The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

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