

## **"What role does Iran play in the end times?"**

***Encouraging YOU to STUDY, THINK, and PRAY; as the End-Times are upon us NOW!***

There are several biblical prophecies of the end times that mention Iran, called Persia or Elam in the Bible. Given the fact that Iran is often in the news as a nation seeking armaments (possibly nuclear) and repeatedly issuing threats against Israel, students of Bible prophecy are taking note.

Iran does have a role to play in the end times, but, first, a little history of Iran and its neighborhood, as it relates to biblical history.

- Jeremiah prophesied that Elam, a nation east of Babylon, west of Persia, and south of Media, would be conquered and then rise to power again (Jeremiah 49:34–39). True to that prophecy, Babylon conquered Elam in 596 BC. But then Persia, under Cyrus the Great, took control of that area, and the Elamites and Medes became part of the Persian Empire.
- The Medo-Persian Empire ascended to power and conquered Babylon in 539 BC, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 21:2.
  - This happened during the time of Daniel (Daniel 5); in fact, Daniel later resided “in the province of Elam” in Persia (Daniel 8:2).
  - Persia is the setting for the book of Esther and the first part of Nehemiah.
- Alexander the Great’s conquests put an end to Persia as a world power, fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 8.
  - In the following centuries, Persia was ruled by the Seleucids, the Parthians, the Sassanians, the Romans, the Byzantines, and finally, in AD 636, the Muslims. In 1501, the state of Iran was founded.
- In the New Testament, men from Iran are mentioned indirectly as “Parthians, Medes and Elamites” were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9). All three of these people groups were Jews who lived in the area of ancient Persia, modern-day Iran, and they were present in Jerusalem to witness the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the empowering of the church.
- Iran’s involvement in the end times will be as one of the nations involved in the battle of Gog and Magog, which some Bible Prophecy Scholars believe occurs during the first half of the tribulation.
  - Ezekiel 38:5 specifically mentions Persia as an ally of Magog/Russia.

- Other nations included in this coalition will be Sudan, Turkey, Libya, and others. This vast army will come against Israel, who at that time will be “a peaceful and unsuspecting people” (verse 11).
- The outcome of this end-times invasion is predicted: God supernaturally intervenes, and Gog’s coalition is utterly destroyed.
  - “On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals” (Ezekiel 39:4–5).
  - Iran, allied with Russia, will think their invasion of Israel is a sure victory, but God has different plans. In protecting Jerusalem, God will send a strong message to the world: “I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the Lord am the Holy One in Israel” (verse 7).
- As foretold by Daniel, the Persian Empire lasted until it was conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great some 300 years before the birth of Christ. From that time forward, the land we know as Iran passed from one hand to the next. Not long after the foundation of Islam, Iran was invaded and conquered, and it became part of the Islamic Caliphate.
- The Mongols under Genghis Khan conquered Iran as part of the westward expansion of his empire. The region was a major battle ground for centuries until the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty some 1,500 years after the birth of Christ. They settled the borders of what is modern-day Iran, and ruled into the 1700s when the Ottomans from the West and the Russians from the north took much of their land and held it until after World War I.
- In 1925, a military coup placed Reza Shah in power, and he and his son Mohammed Shah Pahlavi ruled the country for most of the next 50 years until the Iranian Revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. This revolt, which was covertly and sometimes openly supported by many Western nations, including the United States under President Jimmy Carter, installed the radical Islamist regime that still holds power today as a bitter enemy of the nation of Israel. This represented a radical change for Iran, which under the Shah had been very friendly toward the Jewish state.
- This enmity is no surprise to students of prophecy. In describing the participants who will take part in the great end-time battle against the restored nation of Israel, Ezekiel lists Persia as one of the nations who will be drawn into the conflict in defiance of God and His Chosen People. It is not hard to see the prophetic pieces being positioned when we read the news day after day.

- No one knows the exact timing of the war to annihilate Israel foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, but we do know that it will certainly take place. Those who oppose the Jewish state and wish to see the Jewish people destroyed have taken sides in the ancient enmity between Satan and God over the fate of His Chosen People. And their judgment for doing so is certain.
- The Bible not only foretells this great battle, but it gives us the end result as well.

Ezekiel 38:22-23 NLT.

***“I will punish you and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! <sup>23</sup>In this way, I will show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”***

- Many people believe that the Bible foretells a nuclear strike against those who attempt to destroy Israel and the Holy City of Jerusalem. For example, the prophet Zechariah described the results of the battle in terms that certainly match the effects of a nuclear blast.

Zechariah 14:12 NLT

***“And the LORD will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.”***

- Whatever means is used to bring about their defeat, there is no doubt that the enemies of Israel, including Iran, will be destroyed for their attempt to touch the “apple of God’s eye”—the Jewish people. This Bible prophecy is just as certain as the many that have already been fulfilled. Though Iran certainly poses a grave threat to Israel, and their desire to see the Jewish state destroyed cannot be denied, ultimately, they will fail in their evil purpose because God has declared that He will do battle to defend Israel and bring glory to His name.