

How to Pray for Iran - Restoring the Fortunes of Iran

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After years of tension between Iran and Israel over Iran's nuclear weapons program, Israel finally launched a preemptive strike against Iran yesterday. In the first waves of the Israeli Air Force attacks, top military and governmental personnel, nuclear facilities, missile sites and scientists were targeted and eliminated. An all-out war between Iran and Israel, possibly involving the United States, could be on the horizon as many have feared. Another possibility is that Iran's heralded military infrastructure could be grossly exaggerated. As Iran tries to respond to Israel's aggression, this critical moment could expose Iran's bluff and the bankruptcy and weakness of their alleged military might.

I believe that this preemptive attack by Israel, backed up by the United States, potentially creates an unprecedented opportunity for a regime change in Iran as well as an explosion of growth for the Christian Church. Interestingly, the Bible seemingly prophesies of events that will occur in Iran related to these themes, which gives us a roadmap of how to pray in alignment to God's revealed will. Iran is a very strategic nation in the Bible with a clear prophetic future laid out for her.

The modern day nation of Iran is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament under its ancient names, including Elam and Medo-Persia. In this article, I will elaborate on the prophecies about Iran in the seeming order of how the future will play out.

The futurist interpretation of the vision in Daniel 8 clearly reveals Media and Persia (or modern-day Iran) as the predominant national power in the Middle East. Iran is pictured as the ram that magnified himself with no one to stop him. Then in the second part of the vision, the goat from the west comes and strikes the ram so that it has no strength to stand. The primary point of this vision is that Media and Persia starts out as the dominant regional authority but then dramatically loses its power and regional authority.

3Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. 4I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself....7I saw him come beside the ram, and he was

enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. (Daniel 8:3-4, 7)

“The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. (Daniel 8:20)

This same theme seems to be repeated in Jeremiah 49. Jeremiah is prophesying about different nations around the time of ancient Babylon's reign and demise. In doing so, he prophesies about other nations, including Elam and her future. This very insightful passage explicitly reveals that the bow of Elam is going to break before their enemies and the Elamites will be scattered. It appears as though both God and Elam's enemies will be bringing this judgment upon them. However, imbedded in this prophecy in verse 38 is the amazing promise that God will set His throne in Elam and destroy out of it king and princes. Could it be that the judgment that breaks Iran's leadership actually brings forth a regime change as well as revival and unprecedented Church growth? Verse 39 seems to imply a shifting of the culture or religion of the nation as God promises to restore the fortunes of Elam in the last days. What a promise for Iran!

Because this prophetic promise in Jeremiah 49 is so vivid, some believe Iran will even become a Christian nation! At the least, it seems to suggest that revival will come with the establishment of the kingdom of God so that Elam (Iran) will be able to accomplish God's purposes for them as a nation.

35“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to break the bow of Elam, the finest of their might. 36‘I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four ends of heaven, and will scatter them to all these winds; And there will be no nation to which the outcasts of Elam will not go. 37‘So I will shatter Elam before their enemies and before those who seek their lives; And I will bring calamity upon them, even My fierce anger,’ declares the LORD, ‘And I will send out the sword after them until I have consumed them. 38‘Then I will set My throne in Elam and destroy out of it king and princes,’ Declares the LORD. 39‘But it will come about in the last days that I will restore the fortunes of Elam,’” Declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 49:35-39

The overturning of the governmental authority and power of Iran would coincide with religious freedom and change since the current leaders operate under Islamic Republic governed by sharia law. Assuming that God moves in Iran to establish His throne, the entire religious atmosphere

would be vastly different. Then what Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 51:28-29 would make sense.

Jeremiah 50-51 is addressing the judgment on ancient Babylon. In the midst of this discourse, Jeremiah prophesies about the judgment of the future Harlot Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17-18. While Harlot Babylon is actively deceiving the world and persecuting the saints, God summons multiple nations to come and fight against her. In verse 28, the kings of the Medes and all the lands of their dominion are called and consecrated to resist the Harlot Babylon and fight against her. The characteristics of the Harlot Babylon are demonic and perverted (according to Revelation 17-18), so Iran will manifest the opposite characteristics of righteousness and purity so as to resist her. This only comes from the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within the midst of Iran!

28Consecrate the nations against her, the kings of the Medes, their governors and all their prefects, and every land of their dominion. 29So the land quakes and writhes, for the purposes of the LORD against Babylon stand, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitants. (Jeremiah 51:28-29)

Let's take the idea even further. Iran will be a righteous nation until the very end, when the Bible tells us that all the nations will turn on Israel and gather against her in the final battle of Armageddon. Persia (Iran) is also mentioned as one of the specific nations that gathers together for the war of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39. However, I believe that the battle in Ezekiel 38-39 is describing the same final battle that Revelation 16 prepares for and is seen in Revelation 19 after Jesus returns.

Revelation 16 reveals the bowls of judgment upon the Antichrist empire. The sixth angel poured out his bowl so as to dry up the Euphrates river so that the way to Israel was prepared for the kings from the east. Moreover, the kings of the east were resisting the Antichrist to the very end. We know this because verse 13 tells us that three unclean demonic spirits had to be released to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war of Armageddon. Putting this together, what if the kings of the east were not the far east like China etc. but east of the Euphrates as in Iran? If Iran was operating in the Holy Spirit and resisting the Antichrist, it would take demonic spirits being released to draw her to the final battle. This would be consistent with the premise that Iran was a righteous nation!

12The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. 13And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty....16And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon. (Rev 16:12-16)

This leads us to the question of how to pray for Iran right now, as Israel is currently attacking various sites within the country. Could this comprehensive attack on Iran be the time for the God's judgment to remove it's leaders and to build His throne there? I believe it is worth praying in this way; that a regime change comes about through the removal of military, religious and governmental leaders. Israel's military actions could give the Iranian people an opportunity to stand up against their oppressive government in revolution to make their voices heard. While praying for both of these possibilities, let's also pray for God's throne to be established and built in Iran. This includes an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the building up of the Church, the Gospel spreading rapidly with signs and wonders, and peace and confidence for the Iranian believers. We may be witnessing Biblical history taking place in Iran. The Bible gives us prophetic understanding of what God wants to do in Iran so that we can come into agreement with Him and partner with Him through our prayers. Let's take up the role as intercessors and pray for Israel, pray for Iran, and pray for God's kingdom to be established on earth as it is in heaven.