



AI Generated

Iran and Israel at War (Part 2)

By

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Iran and Israel are at war. War is a terrible thing to experience. However, Iran and Israel being at war is not new - not even close. As I shared in the first part of this series we saw Abraham (founder of Judaism) defeat the King of Elam (now known as Iran) about four-thousand years ago.

The relationship between Iran (e.g. Elam, Persia) and Israel is an interesting one. You might remember from the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament of the Bible that Persia defeated Babylonia in 539 BC. Daniel was an Israelite taken captive by the Babylonians about 605 BC. God blessed him in Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Many years later when the Persians defeated the Babylonians and took control of Babylon, God blessed Daniel again -

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Daniel 6:28

Speaking of 'Cyrus the Persian,' it was the same King Cyrus who freed the Israelites to return home to Jerusalem -

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which *is* in Judah. Who *is* among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He *is* God), which *is* in Jerusalem. And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem."

Ezra 1:1-4

The Israelites who returned to Jerusalem had many difficulties after Cyrus freed them. Other Persian kings also helped the Israelites finish rebuilding the city that the Babylonians had destroyed. You can read about those kings in the Old Testament Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (including the famous Persian King Artaxerxes). The Persian King Ahasuerus features prominently in the Book of Esther. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were also involved as Israel worked with Persia to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

I find this quite interesting in light of the war we watch now on the news and online. Ancient Persia (pre-Iran) actually helped Israel rebuild after being destroyed by the Babylonians. How things have changed.

Elam and Persia in the Bible

Elam and Persia are mentioned multiple times in the Old Testament. Elam is also mentioned once in the New Testament for a group of Jews who visited Jerusalem just days after Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead. They were in the streets of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God fell on Christ's disciples -

"And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia ..." Acts 2:8-9

The majority of Jews did not return to Israel after King Cyrus freed them. Many of them settled in various parts of Mesopotamia, which is why the Jews who returned to Jerusalem centuries later to celebrate the Spring Feasts (e.g. Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Pentecost) were identified as being 'Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia.' They were part of what was known as the 'Jewish Diaspora.'

Prophecies Against Elam

Now let's look at prophecies 'against' Elam. There are two particular prophecies I'd like to look at - beginning with the Prophet Jeremiah. God prophesied against several nations through Jeremiah including Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus (Syria), Kedar, Hazor, Elam, Babylon and Babylonia.

Here's God's prophecy against Elam -

"The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, The foremost of their might. Against Elam I will bring the four winds From the four quarters of heaven, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says the Lord; 'And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them. I will set

My throne in Elam, And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the Lord. 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,' says the Lord." Jeremiah 49:34-39

A primary question with Old Testament prophecies like this are whether they are 'near,' 'far,' or 'both near and far.' What I mean by that is whether God's prophecy against a nation, tribe, or person was completed close to the time of the prophetic announcement, will be completed in the future, or was a dual prophecy with prophetic accomplishments close to the time of the announcement and in the distant future. We'll look at those interpretations in detail as our series continues.

The next prophecy against Elam is found in Isaiah 21:2 -

"The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea. As whirlwinds in the South pass through, So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land. A distressing vision is declared to me; The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, And the plunderer plunders. Go up, O

Elam! Besiege, O Media! All its sighing I have made to cease."

Isaiah also included prophecies against other nations including Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Moab, Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Edom, Arabia, Shebna, Tyre, Samaria, and the entire Earth. Prior to Isaiah's prophecies against these nations are the famous Scriptures concerning the future Government of the 'promised Son.' Notice where and how **Elam** is mentioned in the prophecy:

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isaiah 9:6-7

"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight *is* in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord

As the waters cover the sea. “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” It shall come to pass in that day *That* the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the sands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; And the people of Ammon shall obey them. The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make *men* cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant

of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt." Isaiah 11

This raises the same question I had with Jeremiah's prophecy: near, far, or both? Given that Isaiah prophesied from the end of the 8th century BC to the early part of the 7th century, we can safely say that some of this prophecy contained a 'far' view. That's because New Testament writers of the 1st century AD quoted from this portion of Isaiah's prophecy. That's pushing close to a thousand years, which is definitely far. Whether there were some 'near' prophetic fulfillments is something we can look for and discuss, but I am confident that Isaiah was looking deep into the corridor of time as he prophesied about Jesus Christ, God's Son, coming from Heaven to Earth to pay the penalty for our sins and rise from the dead as the 'firstfruits' of the resurrection to eternal life.

Next Time

Isaiah's prophecy may go even deeper into time as he saw a time when Jesus Christ would 'strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.' Has that happened yet? What about the 'wolf' dwelling with the 'lamb,' and the 'leopard' lying down with the 'young goat?' Has that happened yet? How about the 'cow' and 'bear' grazing together? How about the 'lion' eating straw like the 'ox?' Or the 'nursing child' playing 'by the cobra's hole,' and the 'weaned child' putting his hand safely 'in the viper's den?' I'll look at how to 'rightly divide the word of truth' and correctly handle these Old Testament prophecies concerning Elam and other nations i

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