

Iran in the Bible (Elam; Medes; Persia)

The country of Iran is referred to throughout the pages of Scripture, not as Iran, but as Elam, Media, and Persia.

The first mention in Scripture of this country is by way of Elam the son of Shem. Elam was Noah's grandson. (**Genesis 10:22**)

NOAH (2346 BC)

It would seem apparent to the population of modern Iran that they are an ancient progeny with God-fearing roots: **the Elamites**. The Elamites were offspring of Shem (**Genesis 10:22**) the son of Noah. Indeed, Iranian museums, textbooks, and universities, all recognize this fact, yet today.

Ninety-nine percent of the people practice a dedicated form of Islam and call themselves Shiites. Shiites are followers of the Koran, not the Bible, and are becoming increasingly hostile to Christians and Jews. It is this national and religious hostility concerning the encroachment of 'western' ideology and power that has put this ancient land back in the headlines.

ABRAM (1996 BC)

The current rumblings for regional dominance coming out of the broader Middle East are by no means a new phenomenon. In Genesis an Elamite king by the name of Chedorlaomer led a group of Mesopotamian rulers in a military campaign to exact tribute and dominate the region of what is now modern-day Israel. Abraham was forced into the conflict because his nephew, Lot, was being taken captive by the invaders. Abraham defeated the multinational force with 318 of his own men through the faithful hand of God (**Genesis 14:1-24**). The Canaanite kings were grateful, but Abraham would not receive reward from them. They were the kings of the soon to be destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

DANIEL (554 BC)

Babylon (near modern-day Baghdad, Iraq) was in the geographic center of many powerful kingdoms, and eventually dominated the **Elamites of the south** and the **Assyrians of the north**. The **prophet Daniel** ended up in the Elamite city of Susa, serving Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian Emperor and later Cyrus, the Persian Emperor and his Median lord, Darius. It was in Susa that Daniel had his great vision of the Lord Jesus as the Ancient of Days (**Daniel 7:9-14**), similar to John's vision in **Revelation 4**. The angel Gabriel delivered a message from God to Daniel here that encouraged him about Israel's future restoration. From here on Elam is highlighted by its greater context as the Persian Empire. Daniel had envisioned this empire in a dream, as the representation of the arms and chest of silver (**Daniel 2:31-35**). This Empire surged from India to Ethiopia, and moved its capital from Susa to Persepolis. These ruins today lie near the modern-day city of Shiraz, southeast of the province of **Īlām** (from the name Elam).

The pages of Scripture are filled with the accounts of Persian rulers allowing, and even paying, for the return to Israel of the long-captive Jews. **Sheshbazaar, Zerrubabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Mordecai**, all served close to the seat of power and were players in the gradual restoration of legal rights, return of temple treasures, and rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple and walls. Iran is the background to all of these historical narratives concerning the repatriation of Jewish exiles from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. These political intrigues may have been an attempt to form a strong alliance with previously enslaved peoples in order to create a geographic buffer against the rising 'western' storm of Greek people and power infringing upon its empire. A similar encroachment is felt by Iran's Imams and Ayatollahs today, but they are not using a goodwill campaign to combat it at this time. They instead are using a campaign of regional guerilla warfare, global terror with weapons of mass destruction and threat of nuclear war justified upon Shia law.

Historically after failed western campaigns, the Persians then found themselves battling the young conqueror **Alexander**, who made quick work of their armies and burned the city of Persepolis as a statement to the nations of his new world order. After his death, the Greeks divided the vast lands and in the order of time they were reconquered or simply assimilated by the **Romans**. The Romans in turn divided their empire until the Byzantine Christian monarchs eventually had influence in the region. The Muslim movement however rejected the old Roman order and Byzantine rule, filling the void of the region's hunger for purpose and self-identity, eventually becoming the dominating force in Iran. It has been struggling to be even a third-rate power for 2,400 years, but now finds itself with the best opportunity for global advancement since the world was ruled from its cities.

ACTS (29 AD)

In the **book of Acts** in **Chapter two** we find God-fearing men and converts from all points of the compass including "Elam". It is incredible to think that the modern, mostly Bible-rejecting people of Iran, had representation at Pentecost. These Elamites heard Galileans speak, with perfect diction, the message of Christ's life and death in their native tongue! Bible truths were heard by Iranians! It was God's will! And so should it be today. There is a small but growing group of Iranian Christians who daily read the Bible in the Persian tongue, and who boldly, but carefully, distribute it to their countrymen.

The fact that American troops virtually surround Iran to-day has the current president Ahmadinejad and the military establishment there up in arms. They are pursuing nuclear power, backing terrorist organizations, purchasing advanced weapons at an alarming rate, and allying with a newly robust Russia. These facts also can be seen prophetically on the pages of Scripture.

Prophecies concerning IRAN: (References from JND translation)

Already Fulfilled:

Isa. 13:17-22; 21:1-10; 22:1-7

In **Isaiah 13 & 21 & 22** Elam is seen in conflict with the western nations of the Revived Roman Empire under the beast.

Jer. 49:34-38; 51:11-64

Jeremiah is quite mixed with some past and future prophetic passages. Some of the now historical passages are probably prophetic as well.

Future:

Jer. 49:39; 51:10-19

Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-14

Ezek. 32:24-32; 38:51-23

Ezekiel prophesies in **chapter 38-39** regarding the **last** confederate war against Israel. It involves the Last Assyrian, Gog and Magog (Russia) and Gomer and Togarmah (Turkey) who align with Persia (Iran) and Ethiopia and Libya against Israel, but are annihilated by the Lord Jesus Himself who roars out of Zion and does not allow the enemy to get into Jerusalem. At this time the 10 tribes have returned to the land and they are dwelling in peace. This confederacy comes to plunder and spoil.

In **chapter 32** there is a lamentation over Elam's death. Although historical it no doubt has a view of their future demise.