

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



U.S., IRAN AND DANIEL 8

Introduction

Periodically we'll address current topics with prophecy because it gives us the opportunity to apply Biblical principles and see where we stand in regards to truth.

Paul the Apostle instructed Timothy about being careful when giving authority to people.

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22 NIV

This is a general principle. Let me make this a bit broader. Do not be hasty or draw conclusions too quickly and be in agreement too easily because you might find yourself partially responsible with who you are in agreement with. As a church and as a people we have strongholds in our thinking that permit us to be in agreement with things that are contrary to God's principles and purposes. When we align ourselves with the wrong kingdom we give that kingdom authority in our lives by our agreement.

It is within this context that I want to talk about the U.S., Iran and Daniel 8.

Taking Sides

Step one is to determine not to take sides. The danger of taking sides is to participate in the sins of others. Look at a verse that we've reviewed before:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 2:1-2 NIV

When we look at the present condition or the history of this world we should not forget that the enemy dominates the atmosphere. Assume then that everything and everybody has been compromised with the "possible" exception of the children of God. Possible means that it is possible for the children of God to escape or resist the domination of the enemy, but it is no guarantee. These teachings are geared toward helping you. However, those that are not children of God have no chance until they bring someone into their life that can usurp the existing rule of the enemy. There is only one person who can do that, Jesus, the Son of God.

So assume there are no acceptable sides to take and any side will be sharing in the "**sins of others**" and aligning yourself with the wrong kingdom. This is the danger and the error of Christian Nationalism so prevalent in America today. I hope to do a separate study on this topic at a future date.

We can understand a little more about God's view in taking sides by looking again at Joshua and Jericho. We last looked at Joshua and Jericho in the study called **A Bartimaeus Generation**. That was because Jesus had healed Bartimaeus in Jericho and the setting was important to the study. Revisiting Jericho for another moment.

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Joshua 5:13-14 NIV

Notice how the angel of the Lord replies when Joshua asks whose side he is on. Joshua was expecting that the angel would be on his side, because Joshua had been instructed from the Lord on what to do. The angel still says neither. He only serves God's interests. Now the Lord wants us as the church to get to this place. Anything else compromises our voice and authority and brings confusion to those searching for truth. Again, whenever we see where we need to be we need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us get there.

Is War Between Iran and the U.S. Inevitable?

Through the comments of the media, the current U.S. administration as well as some European countries, it seems that still another war is on the horizon. As believers in Christ we need to pay attention. We cannot just go about our business oblivious to the issues of the world when people are really suffering and dying.

We have to wonder if the volume of violence that we see simulated in movies and television has affected our conscience and created a numbness and indifference to real suffering and real death in the world. Where do you think God's heart is in all this?

Part of Paul's prayers for the Philippians is:

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, Philippians 1:9-10 NIV

The goal he says is to be pure and blameless so he prays that their love would abound in knowledge and depth of insight. I hope that's clear. The Lord is interested in expanding our love with knowledge and depth of insight. This prayer is just as critical for us as it was for the Philippians almost 2,000 years ago. So the goal of this study is the goal of all my studies, help us see where we are and where we need to go and to tune our thoughts and our prayers accordingly.

In this study I want to look briefly at some root issues surrounding the tension between the U.S. and Iran and then finally take a look at what scripture has to say from the prophetic writings in the book of Daniel.

Iraq Briefly

Before talking about Iran I just want to mention Iraq briefly. As Christians our prayers cannot just be limited to praying for American troops. This lacks any insight. Is Christianity a nationalistic endeavor only? Does your Christianity extend beyond your household, your family and your country? We must pray for the innocent and the helpless everywhere, including Iraq. Remember who is running this world. Remember so we don't demonize people, we only demonize demons. We must pray for an end to bloodshed. If you are from America or the UK or any of the invading/occupying countries, you must repent for the innocent lives that have been lost and the enormous amount of suffering your nations have inflicted upon the Iraqi people - or share in the judgments coming to those nations. Again we should be careful with whom we align with and never be surprised at the righteous judgments of God. His righteous judgments are rooted in the fullness of knowledge and understanding of all things, including the thoughts and motives of the heart. I just want to sum up Iraq by saying we all need to remember to fear God especially in America.

What are the roots of Iranian distrust of the U.S.?

First, I am no historical scholar, but information is readily available online these days so what I say can easily be supported. The truth can be difficult almost impossible to bear without the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples this very thing.

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth...” John 6:12-13 NIV

At what point in our maturity as believers and as a church do we begin to bear more and more truth?

From an audience perspective, I would venture to say that most of this information is readily known by people outside the U.S. and generally unknown to Americans. The question is, does Iran have a legitimate gripe against the U.S.? The answer is yes, of course. Let me summarize a few key points with a little bit of history.

1. U.S. once coordinated the overthrow of their government under the code name Operation Ajax

This first point requires a bit of background. Iran had two things that made it very strategic: its location relative to Russia and its oil. In 1941 the British and the Russians invaded Iran for many reasons, one of which was to secure a supply line to

Russia. This supply line would be called the Persian Corridor. After the successful invasion, the invading forces exiled the current ruler of Iran and allowed his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, later to be known simply as the Shah of Iran to reign in his place, thinking he would better serve their interests. The Shah of Iran would reign from 1941 to 1979 when he was exiled during the Islamic revolution.

In 1951 Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq rose to power and became Prime Minister with the Shah still the monarch. Prime Minister Mossadeq intended to nationalize the Iranian oil industry, which was under the control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, later known as British Petroleum. The British looking to defend their interests requested help from the Americans. Operation Ajax was the code name of the U.S./British project run by the CIA during the Eisenhower Administration to overthrow the Iranian democratically elected government. In 1953 after a first failed attempt the U.S. was successful in driving the Prime Minister out of power and into prison and protecting the British's petroleum interests. The Shah who had briefly fled the country after the first failed attempt would return. [1]

2. U.S. helped to setup an organization that terrorized Iranian people

SAVAK was the Shah's secret police. It was formed in 1957 with the help of the Americans and was loosely patterned after the CIA. For twenty years SAVAK terrorized all that opposed the Shah's rule. They ruled through fear and intimidation using ruthless tactics such as false imprisonment, torture and assassination. It was disbanded in 1979 with the Islamic revolution. [2]

3. U.S. was seen as not meeting the terms of the Algiers Accords

The Algiers Accords of 1981 was the agreement that allowed Iran to release the hostages taken from the U.S. Embassy in 1979. Part of the agreement was the U.S. would cease intervening in Iranian affairs and release all Iranian assets that were frozen in reaction to the Islamic revolution. [3]

4. U.S. Support for Iraq in the Iraq-Iran War from 1980 - 1988

The U.S. provided active support for Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War. They provided funding, technology, intelligence and weapons to help Iraq defeat Iran. [4]

5. U.S. Policy of regime change in Iran

In 2006 the U.S. Congress passed a bill called The Iran Freedom and Support Act that provides \$10 Million for the support of groups that actively oppose the Iranian Government. [5]

6. U.S. pressuring Iran to terminate its uranium enrichment

With the backing of United Nations Security Council, the U.S. has been trying to force Iran to terminate all its activities related to uranium enrichment. Iran believes it has the right, like any country under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty to pursue peaceful nuclear technology. [6]

7. U.S.'s support for Israel

The last but definitely not least issue would be the U.S. support for Israel and Israeli policy. Iran does not formally recognize Israel as a country nor have diplomatic relations. [7]

What are roots of U.S. distrust for Iran?

1. Iran defying the UN Security Resolutions about its nuclear program

On July 31, 2006 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1696 directing Iran to immediately halt all uranium enrichment activities. Subsequent resolutions 1737 and 1747 have been passed adopting economic sanction against Iran for continuing to defy the Security Council. As of August 30, 2007 Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the UN International Atomic Agency states that it remains inconclusive as to the nature of Iran's nuclear activity, whether it is for military or peaceful purposes. [6][8] The U.S. however, feels that nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran would result in the following:

- Alter the balance of power in the Middle East and strengthen Islamic fundamentalism possibly leading to WWII
- Become an even more dangerous threat to Israel
- Terrorist organizations with nuclear weapons

2. Iran support for both Hezbollah and Hamas

Hezbollah is an Islamic movement formed in 1985 in Lebanon with the goal of ridding the country of all foreign powers. Hezbollah has used suicide bombing and assassinations to achieve their objectives and have been designated by the U.S. as a terrorist organization. Being from the same religious affiliation as Iran, they have received support from Iran or groups operating in Iran. [9]

Hamas is a Palestinian organization that was created in 1987. Its goal is the destruction of Israel and its replacement with a Palestinian state. It has used tactics of suicide bombings against both military and civilian targets. In 2006, Iran provided \$250 million to the Hamas led Palestinian government to counter the effects of the U.S. government freezing Palestinian aid. The U.S. had frozen all aid when Hamas

assumed power in the Palestinian government and refused to recognize Israel. The U.S. has listed Hamas as a terrorist organization as well. [10][11]

3. Iran support for the Iraqi insurgency

The U.S. Military has charged Iran with supplying military equipment, notably IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) to the Iraqi Shia insurgency which are being used to kill Americans soldiers. [12]

4. Iran is seeking to establish a bourse (exchange) to sell oil that does not use the U.S. dollar

Again, another disclosure, I am not an economist. However, if countries were to switch to a non U.S. dollar market for oil, the U.S. economy could be greatly impacted. Currently all nations purchasing oil must use U.S. dollars. This forces all countries to hold U.S. dollars as their reserve currency, spurring investment in the U.S. and enabling the U.S. to carry huge financial deficits. An oil exchange would pose a direct challenge to these economic advantages. [13]

Daniel 8

The above exercise shows that there are a number of valid reasons for dislike between these countries to the extent that war seems almost inevitable. Now that we have laid the groundwork, does the Bible speak prophetically of a coming conflict between the U.S. and Iran?

Getting right to the text in Daniel 8:

1 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. 2 In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.

Now Susa in Daniel's time was the capital city of Persia. It remains a real city and is populated even to this day. So Daniel had a vision that he was in Persia.

3 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. 4 I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

Daniel saw a powerful ram with 2 horns. Here comes the goat.

5 As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.

Daniel saw a goat with a prominent horn coming from the west from a far distance “**without touching the ground.**” The phrase “**without touching the ground**” may not have made sense to Daniel since he lived in the 6th century B.C. However, it is something that would not alarm us.

The goat wins with irresistible power and no one comes to the aide of the ram.

6 He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. 7 I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power.

Our goal then in understanding this prophecy is pretty straightforward.

1. When does this all take place?
2. Who is the ram?
3. Who is the goat?

If we continue to read, we get help in understanding this vision because an angel comes to Daniel and tries to explain it to him.

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

Daniel sees an angel and it shows by his expression.

17 As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

First thing to understand is that the vision concerns the “**time of the end.**” This means it is an end of time prophecy.

Again the angel, Gabriel speaks.

19 He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.

Again the angel says that the vision concerns **“the time of wrath”** and **“the appointed time of the end.”** This second clarification should relieve any doubt about when this event occurs.

1. When the goat battles the ram that is a signal the end is near.

So there it is. One of the key reasons we keep an eye on the goat and the ram is because their battle indicates the final countdown has begun. This battle is a trigger. When we see this trigger we need to pray that we will survive these times.

Next, who is the ram? Again the angel tells us.

20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

The ram then is Persia. The area of Media and Persia was renamed to Iran in 1935. Media could include Iran and possibly Kurdistan. We could be safe in saying that this is Iran.

2. The ram that was defeated is Iran.

Next who is the goat? Again the angel tells us.

21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

Okay, now it gets tricky. The shaggy goat is Greece. But what about the U.S.? How would you identify a nation that was not on the scene during Daniel’s time? Could you identify it by its precursor? Now if you do a tiny bit of research on Greece you will see that it is regarded as the foundation of western civilization. We can therefore say that the U.S. at this time is the pinnacle of western civilization. If you had to explain the U.S. to a man in the 6th century B.C. you could identify the civilization by its seed which was Greece.

Okay but most of Europe owes its foundation to the Greek civilization as well. Why couldn’t it be the EU? That’s possible but here’s why I lean toward the U.S. Because Daniel states:

5 As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.

The goat **“came from the west crossing the whole earth.”** The goat then is clear across the world to the west. The term **“without touching the ground”** would indicate by plane or an arial attack. This makes a very strong case for the U.S. strike against Iran.

3. The goat represents the U.S.

Lastly remember Daniel is standing in Susa or Iran and witnesses the goat come from a great distance and destroy the ram. The location of this battle is in Iran.

Summary

I'm not trying to scare you. I want to say though that it seems that scripture indicates the U.S. will initiate an aerial attack on Iran and will be victorious. This could happen in this current administration or in a future one. When it happens, it could be an indication that the end of time has arrived. I just want you to be aware if this occurs in our lifetime.

If it occurs in my lifetime the first thing I will do is say: Lord is this the start of the end times? Lord is this what was prophesied in Daniel 8?

Could I be wrong? Absolutely. We know God hides things. We know that scribes that did nothing but study scripture have proven time and time again to be wrong. Notice that even when Daniel had the vision explained to him stated:

27 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

What God hides must be revealed or we are helpless.

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 1:12 NIV

Many conventional prophetic interpretations have thought that the goat was Alexander the Great, the Greek emperor, since he did defeat Persia at a later time. This interpretation can be true without negating the much later event. That's just how tricky God is.

God can speak to both the present and the future with the exact same words. He can speak both figuratively and literally at the same time with the same words. Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. John 5:25 NIV

For example when Jesus spoke these words he was talking about people right then and there who were spiritually dead yet who would live because of their trust in him. He was also talking about the resurrection of those who had died before he walked the earth. This

verse then speaks to both the present and the future to both the spiritually dead and the physically dead at the same time with the same words.

It is only after God reveals things do they become obvious. Paul talks about the concept of attaining salvation from God without having to follow the law. This too was hidden and the scribes never figured it out until God had revealed it.

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:17 NIV

See the statement "The righteous will live by faith" was recorded in the Old Testament in Habakkuk 2:4 but the scribes understood neither the relevance nor the immensity of that verse. It was hidden from them until God revealed it to Paul.

Conclusion - Why study this?

The purpose of studying prophecy is the same as the purpose of studying any part of the word of God - to tune our prayers and to tune our thinking. In this case we as a body need to be sober about the times. We need to look at things with a bit more knowledge and understanding. We need to be prepared for the time of the end whether it comes soon or much later.

The Lord wants to raise up a people that are ready when disaster strikes. When I say ready I don't mean physical preparations but spiritual. There will come a time when everybody, absolutely everybody will be shaken because of what is happening. Many will fall away because events will not go as planned and surprises will abound. Believers that are tied to this world will be devastated and many will be angry with God.

Only a relatively few that are grounded in the trust of the Lord and who have a bit of understanding, will not be taken by surprise nor be devastated. These are the people that the Lord will be looking to use as lights in the darkness. May you become one of these.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time;

it speaks of the end

and will not prove false.

Though it linger, wait for it;

it will certainly come and will not delay.

"See, he is puffed up;

his desires are not upright—

but the righteous will live by his faith. Habakkuk 2:3-4 NIV

And.

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. Psalm 125:1 NIV

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