

PERSIAN GULF WAR CONFLICTS

Iraq, Iran & the Beginning of Sorrows

Three days after Tisha B'Av on August 2, 1990, then President George H. W. Bush began the deployment of troops and hardware with a coalition of 34 other nations called Operation Desert Shield, which bloomed into Operation Desert Storm that began with intense fire power on January 17, 1991 to confront Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, for his invasion and annexation of neighboring Kuwait. This short but decisive First Gulf War ended on February 28, 1991, on Purim.

Twelve years later, his son President George W. Bush, with a public television announcement from the White House, launched the “shock and awe” bombing campaign against Iraq on March 19, 2003 at Purim—specifically on Shushan Purim, when this holiday is celebrated in Jerusalem. This protracted Iraq War would end eight years later, on December 18, 2011, three days before the first Hanukkah candle was lit that year.

Triumph over neighboring Iran by Western powers has also long been predicted in Daniel 8:1-8. In fact, this Gulf War conflict with Persia, modern day Iran, is one of the catalysts that set-in motion a torrent of end-time conflicts, which follow in quick succession, signaling the end-times have begun. This war may begin at or during a Festival season, such as Hanukkah or Purim/Shushan Purim, as a continuation of the two previous Gulf conflicts, although God’s timing can vary from these Festival patterns and this clash could erupt at any moment.

Daniel was taken into vision “in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal” (8:2), which location is near the Iran and Iraq border region close to the Persian Gulf. Daniel “looked up, and there before me was a Ram with two horns” (two countries—Iraq and Iran) “standing beside the canal, and the horns were long,” indicating these two prominent Islamic nations in the Gulf region. “One of the horns [Iran] was longer [bigger/stronger] than the other and grew up later... suddenly a Goat” (Western powers) “with a prominent horn between his eyes” (America) “came from the west, crossing the whole earth” a great distance and with speed “without touching the ground. He came toward the two-horned [Iraq and Iran] Ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. I saw him attack the [Islamic] Ram furiously, striking the Ram and shattering his two horns”—Iraq and Iran. “The Ram was powerless to stand against him; the Goat” from the West “knocked him [Islamic Ram] to the ground and trampled on him, and no one could rescue the Ram from his power. The [Western] Goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn [America] was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:3-8) dispersed in all directions of the globe.

The common view is the Ram and Goat confrontation of Daniel 8 occurred around 331 BC, and therefore has nothing at all to do with our modern world. However, Daniel was

told in no uncertain terms not once but twice, “the vision” of war concerns “*the appointed time of the end*” (Daniel 8:17, 19). These Persian Gulf regional clashes, Iraq’s defeat followed by Iran’s demise, is part of a wider Middle East war that will include Israel and her surrounding enemies, which will usher in the last days and the fulfillment of God’s end-time Calendar.

Gabriel explains the vision of war to the prophet Daniel later in the chapter.⁵³ He is told the conflicts involve *Media*—modern-day Iraq and *Persia*—modern-day Iran, which two horns sit atop the Islamic “Ram”. Iraq is defeated first, followed by Iran. Daniel said, “One of the horns was longer than the other [Iran is larger geographically, and stronger than Iraq] but grew up later” (8:3); meaning, the Iranian confrontation would follow the Iraqi overthrow, whether weeks, months or years later. However, it’s also possible the U.S. may, if need be, once again confront Iraq, along with Iran.

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The prophet Jeremiah also predicted the downfall of Persia in the latter days, known in the Scriptures as Elam—the ancient region in modern-day southwest Iran on the Persian Gulf: “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,” (Jeremiah 49:34-37; NKJV).

Centuries ago, Bible translators connected the confronting “Goat” to “Greece”—today, a small nation under financial distress and with limited military capacity. However, the Hebrew word interpreted as Greece is “Yawan” (“*Javan*”). Javan was one of the sons of Japheth,⁵⁴ and at the writing of Daniel, Javan implied not only Greece, but *peoples from the west*. Daniel’s vision points to events at the “time of the end,” in our modern age. The Javan Western powers (Greece and Western European nations) are said to have a prominent horn—the first and most powerful—pointing to America’s role in the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) military alliance. Prophecy specifies the Western Goat will defeat the two-horned (Iraq/Iran) Islamic Ram. However, America the prominent horn will quickly be “broken off,” indicating her loss of world dominance; and, no doubt Greece and other NATO countries will also fall prey to setbacks and even defeat. Because of America’s reversal and the resulting vacuum of global power, four major bases of governing authority will emerge—the New World Order. From one of these horns of power (Western European Union) the “little horn”—literally the smallest

⁵³ Daniel 8:15-17

⁵⁴ Genesis 10:2

nation in the world (0.2 square miles) will gain worldwide supremacy. The “stern-faced king, a master of intrigue”⁵⁵ who blasphemes the Holy One of Israel and persecutes the holy ones, will emerge from the vestiges of darkness to rule with great authority.

Civilization originated in the Middle East, and the end of civilization as we know it will begin there. Global tensions have been escalating over the last two decades. Soon, the U.S. led NATO alliance will be forced to attack and overthrow Iran, further enraging Islam and her allies—the Chinese-Russian-Iranian coalition. Israel will also clash with her surrounding enemies, including forces from Syria with Damascus in the crosshairs. As will be covered later in this book, prophecy indicates the Russian Bear will attack⁵⁶ with overwhelming force, devastating at least three countries in Western Europe. When nuclear armaments are unleashed, mayhem and global holocaust will spiral out of control. America will falter and collapse, and this once powerful nation will lose her prodigious superpower status.

In Daniel’s fourth and final vision which spans three chapters (chapters 10-12), Heaven’s messenger offers additional details about the Persian Gulf battle with Iran, which signals end-time events have begun.⁵⁷ The participants and events parallel Daniel 8: Persia (Iran), Greece (*Javan*—Western powers), a confrontation (Gulf War), a mighty king (Donald J. Trump) and empire (America) which will be “broken,” and her once formidable military and economic strength will be parceled out to the “four winds”—geographical areas that span the globe.

Persia, whose name was changed to “Iran” in 1935, was long ruled by autocrats. However, four decades ago a political revolution led to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, culminating on February 11, 1979 with a major realignment of the government. The *Islamic Republic* was established on April 1, 1979, and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic was approved by national referendum in December 1979. Iran now had *elected* leadership, a monumental transition from Persia’s 2,500-year history of monarchs, empires and caliphates. This sea change set the stage for the predictions of Daniel 11 to become reality.

Daniel wrote that in the “latter days” (10:14) there will emerge in Persia “three kings” (or, rulers—11:2). However, the “fourth” will stir up Islam against the “realm of Grecia”—the Western nations. This fourth leader of the Islamic Republic did become one of the most influential Presidents in modern-day Iran—the wealthy Hojatolislam Ali Alvar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Daniel predicted both his riches and his reign: “Three more kings [rulers] will appear in Persia [Iran], and then a fourth [Rafsanjani], who will be *far richer* than all the others [previous leaders]. When he has gained power by his *wealth*, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece [*Javan*—Western powers].”

⁵⁵ Daniel 8:23

⁵⁶ Daniel 7:5

⁵⁷ Daniel 11:2-4

The Presidents of the Islamic Republic:

- 1st ... Abolhassan Bani-Sadr. Ruled 1980 - 1981
2nd ... Mahammad Ali Raja'i Ruled 1981 – 1981 (short-lived)
3rd ... Sayed Ali Khamenei Ruled 1981 – 1989 (became Supreme Leader)
4th ... Hojatolislam Ali Alvar Hashemi Rafsanjani Ruled 1989 – 1997
5th ... Mohammad Khatami Ruled ... 1997 – 2005
6th ... Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Ruled ... 2005 – 2013
7th ... Hassan Rouhani Ruled ... 2013 - Present

As predicted, Rafsanjani was the richest mullah in Iran, being featured on the cover of Forbes Magazine in 2003 with the article titled “*Millionaire Mullahs: A nuclear threat to the rest of the world, Iran is robbing its own people of prosperity. But the men at the top are getting extremely rich.*” After his eight years as President, he did not fade into obscurity. His influence remained intact as one of the most prominent figures in Iranian politics, leading two top clerical bodies—the Assembly of Experts and the Expediency Discernment Council. In December 2001, Rafsanjani openly threatened Jews when he said a single atomic bomb has the power to completely destroy Israel, while an Israeli counterstrike can only cause partial damage to the Islamic world.⁵⁸



Rafsanjani played a primary role in the establishment of the 1979 Islamic Republic of Iran—a repressive, totalitarian theocracy, which has gained strength, regional dominance and influence each decade since the revolution. Most importantly, Rafsanjani was the progenitor of Iran’s nuclear energy and weapons program, which has stoked Iran’s brazenness and emboldened state sponsored terrorism over the last 40 years. He served on the “Committee for Special Operations” that oversaw foreign assassinations, the Khobar Towers attack, the murder of 19 U.S.-service men and women, and the bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. By his wealth, status, position and promptings, he built Iran’s economy and religious Shiite passion, which awakened Islam’s radical rage against the West. And, just as prophecy predicted, his stirring in Iranian politics has led Iran to the doorstep of war. He was considered a front-runner to replace supreme leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei but died suddenly of a heart attack on January 8, 2017 (on the Jewish/Biblical fast of Asara B’Tevet, on the 10th day of the 10th Month; the fast noted in Zechariah 8:19). He was buried on January 10th, exactly ten days before the inauguration of U.S. President Donald J. Trump.

After Daniel’s landmark prediction of Rafsanjani’s rise to power, the prophet transitioned to the next notable (and, also wealthy) leader of the end-times (11:3-4): “Then a mighty king will arise [Donald J. Trump], who will *rule with great power* and *do as he pleases* [a leader who will chart his own course and do as he pleases, against many norms]. After he has arisen [taken office], his empire [America] will be broken up

⁵⁸ World Tribune, December 18, 2001

[superpower destroyed with tragedies such as war, destruction, nature, economic collapse and social disorder] and parceled out toward the *four winds of heaven*.” Therefore, Trump will be the last American President to serve while the U.S. is a superpower, with the sudden demise of America foretold during his Presidency.

The prophecy ends with this dire warning, "It [American empire] will not go to his [Trump's] descendants [thus, the normal election process may end; possibly the last President to be put in office by American voters], nor will it have the power he exercised, because his [American] empire will be uprooted and given to others [the United Nations—One World Order]."

Returning to the Daniel 8 prophecy, during the lengthy 2003-2011 conflict with Iraq, America—the prominent horn—defeated the modern Medes (Babylon) just as the 2,000-year-old prophecy predicted; however, with the withdrawal of U.S. troops in December 2011, sectarian violence ramped up in Iraq and Iranian Shiite influence grew while America's authority faded in the region.

Following the Iraqi war, the prophecies warn that Iran would then rise to provoke the West. This provocation could easily emerge due to a Persian Gulf confrontation between the Revolutionary Guards and the U.S. Navy; turmoil in Iraq or Syria, a lashing out over President Trump's reversal of the nuclear agreement; Iran's return in pursuit of nuclear technology or the bomb; an American-lead economical strangle-hold on Iran; or, possibly a religious conflict over the Temple Mount. Whatever catalyst, the West will confront the Iranians in anger for their actions—the larger of the two horns. And, as stated, a Shiite dominated Iraq could also jump back into the fray for a third conflict with the West (Daniel 8:1-4).

Since President Trump ended the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA) America has been ratcheting up pressure on Iran. Israel also feels threatened by Iran's nuclear ambitions and terrorism. There will be a trigger event; and, in response, NATO with America at the helm is destined to deal with the unruly mullahs. As the war with Iran flares up, skirmishes against Israel will escalate from her surrounding Islamic enemies, and the Middle East will become a burning flame that will quickly spread globally.

Iran's decisive defeat is foretold; but, in turn, the prophecies also warn of America's collapse as the world's global superpower. The means and extent of her devastation is not spelled out in prophecy, but the U.S. economy, government, military and political leaders will no doubt be abruptly crushed by horrific holocaust from nuclear foreign powers while natural disasters escalate. And, America's citizens will suffer greatly from these unforeseen turns of events, along with Israel and all the peoples of the world.

Hanukkah's Connection to Israel's (and the West's) Enemies

The historical connection to Israel's most potent ancient and modern-day enemies—the Persians to the east and the Syrians on Israel's northern border—can be found in two historic victories that turned into annual celebrations in Jewish culture and experience. In the centuries before the birth of Yeshua, the people of Israel and Jerusalem had been

held under years of tribute to various conquering kings. One of these ruling monarchs was Antiochus, one of the Seleucid Kings who reigned in Syria. Resistance finally arose against Antiochus. Under the leadership of the Maccabees, the people of Jerusalem overthrew Antiochus and his pagan practices in 166 BC. The Syrians and their Greek religion were driven out, and the altar was rebuilt. The Temple was cleansed, restored, and rededicated. It was decreed there should be eight days of celebration, with rejoicing and gladness, to mark the re-dedication of the altar, to remember the victory, and to recount the miracle of the supply of oil that lasted through this period.

Hanukkah begins each year at the end of 24th day of the ninth Hebrew month of Kislev, as the 25th day arrives (November/December timeframe). As in the past, Israel continues to be surrounded by Muslim countries—Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and distant foes such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and others. The prophet Haggai spoke prophetically of events in his day *and* trials of the last days—that God was about to “bless” Israel with eternal blessings by overthrowing the nations and military might of Israel's enemies who surrounded them, including Damascus (Isaiah 17); thereby, extoling the Israelis with miraculous victories and enlargement of their territory, as God promised long ago. There will be a major military showdown with Israel's enemies as the end-times begin. The enlargement of Israel's territory is a continuation of events that began 120 full years ago at the First Zionist Congress that commenced on August 29, 1897, which was followed by the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, 100 full years ago. Forty days later the Turks surrendered Palestine to the British during World War I, on the 24th day of Kislev (December 9, 1917). These historical events set in motion the restoration of Davidic sovereignty over the Holy Land that came to fruition through events in late November 1947, when the United Nations General Assembly passed a partition calling for the establishment of a Jewish State, culminating with the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. Now the signs are accumulating as we surpass Hanukkah 2018. The First Zionist Congress arrived at its full *120 years* in August 2018; the Balfour Declaration is reaching the full *100-year* mark on November 2, 2018; and, the full *70 years* will be complete on November 29, 2018 that began with the November 1947 U.N. Partition. And, because of Haggai's prophecy, we might expect the West vs. Iran confrontation will continue to escalate as we roll into 2019/2020 period, and with-it an upswing in news between Israel and her surrounding enemies, which conflicts will soon mushroom into global war with unimaginable loss of human life.

In 520 BC Haggai wrote, "Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple... 'From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month [the eve of Hanukkah], give careful thought to the day... Give careful thought... "'From this day on I will bless you.'" The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the [ninth] month [eve of Hanukkah]: "I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones [governments] and shatter the power of the foreign [Gentile] kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers [military equipment and soldiers]; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his [Gentile] brother," (Haggai 2:15, 18-22). This indicates major global conflict between Gentile nations, but Israel will certainly share in the turmoil as well, while looking ahead to the Hebrew prophecies meeting fulfillment and with them God's eternal blessings.

And, Heaven's response to the global turmoil and Satan's deceptions to quickly follow? In Zechariah 4—the chapter of candlesticks, lamps, light and oil—we also find the theme of Hanukkah light. We read, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts,*" (Zechariah 4:6). In this chapter God revealed two olive trees and two lampstands—"the two who are anointed to serve the LORD of all the earth," (Zechariah 4:14). The book of Revelation draws from this prophecy, "*And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.*" They are "*the two olive trees*" and "*the two lampstands,*" and "*they stand before the LORD of the earth,*" (11:4)—known elsewhere in the Scriptures as Moses and Elijah.

Eight years ago, Israel experienced the driest November in decades, and there were formal prayer vigils for rain at the Western Wall. The arsonist fire was started on December 2, 2010, the second day of Hanukkah, on Mt. Carmel, which was the deadliest fire in Israeli history claiming 44 lives. The fire was followed by a wave of arsons throughout Israel and the West Bank. This represents a *prophetic foreboding of fiery and destructive events that will soon sweep through Israel, Jerusalem and the world at large.* Nevertheless, God will provide in miraculous ways. Mt. Carmel is mentioned some 25 times in the Bible, signifying its importance. On Mt. Carmel Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18) after a long three and one-half (3½) years of drought. The 2010 drought and the fiery destruction at Hanukkah eight years ago signify greater tragedies Israel and the world will face; and with it, the return of Elijah. "I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to His temple; the Messenger of the Covenant [Messiah], whom you desire, will come... "I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful Day of the LORD," (Malachi 3:1; 4:5).

Purim's Connection to Israel's (and the West's) Enemies

According to the Book of Esther, Haman, royal vizier to the Persian King Ahasuerus, planned to kill all the Jews in the empire, but his plans were foiled by Mordecai and his adopted daughter Queen Esther. This deliverance then became a day of feasting and rejoicing (Esther 9:1, 17). Purim's historical significance, which originated during Israel's captivity in Persia in Esther's day (480 BC) when Jews won victory over their Persian foes, also represents the various conflicts Israel continues to have with modern-day Persia.

"The cheerful heart has a continual feast," says Proverbs 15:15. Judaism teaches there are *two constants* that faithful Jews have longed for down through the centuries. First, "feasting continually," as illustrated in the Purim celebration; and second, the "continual," or "*tamid* offerings" offered twice daily at Jerusalem. Israel's archrival Iran will be defeated, as will Syria and Israel's other surrounding enemies during the modern-day uprising foretold in Psalm 83. Jerusalem will also be shaken by disaster and "daily" worship at Jerusalem's Western Wall and the Temple Mount will be taken away. The beloved city's landscape will be forever altered. Muslims will rebel, while Jews continue in hope for the day when the cities hidden fortunes will be restored, the beloved city can be rebuilt, and ancient worship restored, beginning anew with a rebuilt Temple on a renovated Holy Mount after centuries of delay and expectation.

Purim/Shushan Purim is preceded by *Taanit Esther*—the Fast of Esther. The Torah prescribes that whenever a Jewish army goes to war, the soldiers should spend the previous day fasting. This is in stark contrast to a secular army which spends the day preparing weapons and armaments. The Purim chorus is sung: “*Utzu etzah, vetufar; dabru davar, velo yakum; ki Immanuel,*” derived from the book of Isaiah. God warns Israel’s allied enemies, which are in partnership to wipe this people from the face of the earth: “*Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us,*” (Isaiah 8:10).

When the Middle East erupts with the Persian Gulf conflict between the U.S. led European coalition and Iran, and when Israel wars against her Islamic enemies and Jerusalem is mightily shaken by calamity, then we can know with certainty the appointed end-time crisis is at hand. Once the Middle East explodes and Islam and Russia confront Israel and the West, massive casualties of World War III will multiply suddenly according to the weapons used. Mankind will fear the end of civilization as we know it; but Jesus warned, “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but *the end is still to come*. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. All these are *the beginning* of birth pains,” (Matthew 24:6-8). Once ajar, the door of prophecy can never be shut. Mayhem will reign, and Jerusalem and the world will never be the same.

Neither Purim, as recorded in the book of Esther, or Hanukkah—also known as the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-24) and Festival of Lights, were part of the original appointed seasons Yahweh gave to the Israelites. However, God inspired their rehearsal celebrations for His divine purposes and foreboding of final events. In addition to the seven Festival and Holy Day events of Leviticus 23, both Hanukkah and Purim were instituted to commemorate God’s miraculous power, mercy and ultimate protection over Israel’s enemies, despite war. Both remind Jews of victory over tyranny, and God’s provision for His people—past, present and future, during the appointed time of the end, when bright hope will spring forth from the greatest of tragedies. We have already experienced the connection of prophetic war events to Purim and Hanukkah as stated at the start of this chapter; likewise, do not be surprised if we once again see a correlation of aggressive military actions and/or war at or near these Festival periods.