

# Radical Revolution: Taking Authority Over Demonic Spirits in the Middle East

Iran is at the top of the world news again, but most Christian leaders are almost completely unaware of the true spiritual significance of the events now taking place. This could quite possibly be a watershed moment when the future of the entire world takes a dramatic turn for the better—or for the worse. As Christian leaders, we must lead well in this kairos moment.

How we respond will determine whether global terrorism will increase or decrease for decades to come and whether the U.S. and Europe experience either more or less Iran-sponsored terrorism on our own shores. Not only that, but what happens with Iran in the near and intermediate future will play a large role in determining the trajectory of the global struggle between democracy and autocracy, which is the most critical battle the world faces both for today and the foreseeable future.

I am convinced to the core of my being that the church of Jesus Christ is the only positive transformational agent on the planet. The apostle Paul confidently asserted, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 3:10, NIV). “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).

Governments, militaries, civic organizations and all other human institutions have their place and role, but they can only do, whether good or bad, what the church allows them to

do, either by its action or inaction in the spiritual realm. This is why leaders in the body of Christ must rise to the challenge in this critical hour when Iran may be at its weakest and most vulnerable. Iran must be transformed from the world's preeminent state sponsor of terrorism to one of the most peace-loving Christian countries in the heart of the most troubled region of the world.

For that to happen, we must understand four things: the power of the demonic forces driving Iran, recent history (1953-1988) that has made room for those forces, President Donald Trump's actions that unexpectedly created the possibility of radical transformation in Iran and exactly what we need to lead people to do to see God's greatest dreams be fulfilled for the Greater Middle East.

### **Taking Authority Over Demonic Spirits**

Scripture names a handful of demons so we are alerted to their significant power. They include Leviathan (influences governments), Mammon (influences finances), the Prince of Greece (empowers godless philosophy over societies) and the Prince of Persia (the ruling spirit over Iran, which is "Persia").

Consider the past, present and future activity of this spirit over Iran:

The Prince of Persia has always used Iran to wreak destruction on the world through brutal Persian empires down through history.

The Prince of Persia now wants to destroy the world through an Iranian nuclear weapon.

The Prince of Persia is working up to that by inspiring Iran to sponsor global terrorism.

This is only happening because the church around the world has

not risen up to take authority over this ruling spirit. Christian inaction tacitly permits the Prince of Persia to continue to rule.

Many Christian leaders are unaware of the two branches of Islam that have been at war with each other in many ways since the death of Mohammed. Saudi Arabia, home of the two holy Islamic cities of Mecca and Medina, is the leader of the Sunni branch of Islam, which claims about 85% of all Muslims around the world. Iran is the leader of the Shia branch of Islam, which many Sunnis consider a cult. Most historians consider this 1,400-year-old rivalry the most violent dynamic in history. Why? It is empowered by the Prince of Persia, one of the strongest demons in the world.

Iran is unquestionably the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. Nathan Sales, the U.S. State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, said that Iran spends approximately \$1 billion per year on its proxy terrorist groups scattered throughout the Middle East. It's a well-documented fact that Tehran sponsors and supports terrorist groups on the eastern and western borders of Israel— Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon—as well as multiple terrorist groups in both Syria and Iraq. Iran is also fighting a proxy war with Saudi Arabia, their most hated enemy in the world, by supporting the Shia Houthis in Yemen who have fought a brutal civil war in that country, which shares the Arabian Peninsula with Saudi Arabia and borders it to the south.

Under the administrations of the past two U.S. presidents, Iran had grown increasingly bold and more aggressive. Iran's Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, felt so emboldened that when President Trump pointed the finger at Iran for the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 31, 2019, he stridently declared—with profanity—that Trump couldn't do a thing about it. Little did he realize that Trump was completely unlike his predecessors. Two days after Khamenei's brazen declaration, he learned how wrong he had been.

President Trump's decision to kill Qasem Soleimani on Jan. 3, 2020, has severely impacted Iran's ability to continue to sponsor terrorism at the level it has been doing for decades. Soleimani, a brilliant strategist and the second most powerful man in Iran, will be very hard to replace. He was the head of some of Iran's traditional military units such as the elite Quds Force and the head of the clandestine Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups around the world. Few men or women possess the ability to lead such a broad variety of regular and irregular troops with far-reaching range.

Now is the time to see Iran be pushed over the edge into another revolution by its people. Such a revolution will bring freedom and Christianity to the nation. Because of sanctions, Iran is already economically weak and is growing more desperate by the day. Iran has also become more vulnerable because it shot down Kyiv-bound Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 in January.

Christians must take action to pray, fast and engage in identificational repentance for such a revolution to come. Iran already has the fastest-growing Protestant church in the world, even under severe repression and persecution.

### **Changing Attitudes Among Iran's People**

Because of America's moral failure to take responsibility for its actions, two incidents have created great animosity between Iran and the U.S. As a result, many Iranians see the U.S. as arrogant and call the country the "great satan." These incidents were:

The CIA and MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, instigated and led the 1953 coup, which was the direct cause of the Islamic revolution.

An American naval officer was known to be overly aggressive and strayed into Iranian territorial waters, then shot down an Iranian passenger plane with 290 people on board over Iranian

airspace. The International Court of Justice found the U.S. guilty for shooting down the plane.

I couldn't believe I was sitting face-to-face with one of the most powerful ayatollahs in Iran. The temperature in his elaborately decorated office inside the main mosque in the holy city of Qom was uncomfortably hot in more ways than one. Angrily, he told me, over and over, how America is the "great satan" because the nation acts so wickedly on the world stage, ruthlessly dominating and oppressing countries with an iron fist. In contrast, he kept saying how holy Iran acted in the world and that Iran had never done anything evil in the world—that Iran was always peaceful, just and completely righteous in all its dealings with every country.

I asked for forgiveness on behalf of America. He went silent, stared at me for about a minute, then said, "I had no idea there was such a thing as a humble American!" Because of my humility and repentance, his attitude changed in the moment. We became instant friends.

Iran constantly emphasizes that it will negotiate with America in good faith only after we apologize. We have not been willing to do that.

Christian leaders need to take a stand to effect change in Iran and the world. We need to do these three things to see the situation turn around in Iran:

Lead our people into identificational repentance over America's sins against Iran.

Take authority over the Prince of Persia.

Pray for the masses revolting in the streets.

We are not powerless. By taking action in the spiritual realm, the church will effect change in the Middle East for years to come.

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