

What No One Ever Told You About the History of Iran with Bill Federer

(March 6, 2026)

FRANK:

Twenty years ago this June, June of 2006, I went to Tehran with about 20 other guys. We were on a Noah's Ark expedition because the Bible says that Noah's Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, not Mount Ararat.

And we had some reason to believe Noah's Ark could have been on a mountain in Iran, which was an area known as Ararat. So we went to Tehran. I don't have time to tell you all the details here, but we happened to land in Tehran on the 17th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's death.

So all the streets had banners of Ayatollah Khomeini, no matter where we went. And we, told our guide, the bus driver there, we wanted to see the embassy. The embassy that was, that was raided by the Iranians in 1979, shortly after the Ayatollah took over.

For those who are old enough, you might remember that the Iranians took a number of American hostages and held them for 444 days until the afternoon Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president, January 20, 1981.

Anyway, we're in Tehran. The people are very friendly. We enjoyed our time there. It actually is a pretty city, although a bit run down. Some other time I'll tell you some of the other things that happened there.

There was a point where I didn't know I was going to get out of there alive. Not because I was worried I was going to be accosted by the government, but because the driving was so crazy that we were literally driving on the sidewalk in Tehran and we were not stopping for lights.

We were plowing right through lights because my Iranian driver was trying to get me to the airport on time. In any event, long story short, here we are 20 years later, and now America and



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Israel are in an operation to take out the nuclear capabilities and also to take down the regime of the Ayatollah.

In this podcast, this radio program today, we're going to try and look into some questions. How did the Ayatollah take power over Iran in 1979, which up to that point was a constitutional monarchy? What president gave him the green light to take over?

What lies did this Ayatollah tell America in order to take power? Who did he execute immediately when he took power? And what kind of laws and restrictions did he put in place? Also, how does Shia Islam differ in government from Sunni Islam?

Because the Ayatollah was a Shia. And what has Iran's posture been to the United States and its allies since 1979? Also, what is different about Iran and Iraq that might make a difference in getting a new government in Iran?

Because they have different backgrounds, Iran and Iraq. And what does the Bible say about the land we now know as Iran? Because the Bible refers to that area as Elam, Meda, or Persia. In this program, we're going to try and cover those questions.

We probably won't get to all of them. This will probably be a two-show program. And it's basically what no one ever told you about Iran. And there is nobody better to do that than the great Bill Federer, ladies and gentlemen. He is with us today all the way from an underground bunker somewhere in the free state of Florida. You know, there's nobody better at history than Bill. So, Bill, it's great having you on. How are you?

BILL:

Frank, great to be with you.

FRANK:

I reached out to you a couple days ago because I said, okay, since this invasion is taking place, we probably ought to know some history. And I read one of your American Minutes that you sent me.

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By the way, ladies and gentlemen, for those of you that want a history lesson almost every day, a short one, you need to sign up for Bill Federer's American Minute. Go to AmericanMinute.com. And it was a fascinating history, an overview of Iran that most Americans don't know about.

We're going to get to some of those questions I mentioned earlier, Bill, but why don't you go back to say biblical times and just kind of give us a four or five minute overview of the, the more ancient history of Iran or Persia, and then we'll get to the more modern stuff a little bit later.

BILL:

Yeah, well, Noah's grandson through Shem was Elam. And he settled down in the Persian Gulf. So it's called the kingdom of Elam. And we're talking around 3000 BC. This is called the Bronze Age. And then around 1900 BC, Abraham fought a battle with the king of Elam, Chedolaiomor, if you can pronounce that. And it's from Genesis, chapter 14. And then we have the children of Israel go to Egypt, come back, the twelve tribes, but the seven—

Excuse me, in 722 BC the ten northern tribes are taken captive by Assyria. And then 597, Judah is taken captive by Babylon. And then in 550 BC both Babylon and Assyria were conquered by Persia. And Cyrus is the emperor. And it's the biggest empire on planet Earth. A hundred and twenty-eight provinces, but it's the global power then.

In 538 BC, Cyrus lets the Jews go back and rebuild their temple. Prophet Daniel was in the court of Cyrus and he was into prophecies. And he saw Jeremiah saying that 70 years the Jews will go back. And of course he sets himself to fast and pray.

And he is the head of the counselors. They're called Magi, which means wise men, which means advisor. It's where we get the word magic. But fast forward, it was the Magi from Persia that looked for the prophecies of the Messiah being born.

And they showed up at King Herod's court like we call them the three wise men. Three because they had gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The number's not listed, but they came from Persia.

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But back to Cyrus. He's got this global empire. And his descendant is Xerxes, and he's invading into Greece.

You had, first Darius invades 490 BC. He was driven back at the battle of Marathon. And of course the messenger ran from Marathon all the way to Athens and said we won. And then he dropped dead. You know, the 26 odd miles. But the son Xerxes invades Greece. And if you saw the movie, you know, the Spartans and Leonidas, and—

FRANK:

300! Yeah.

BILL:

300. Right. And so this is 480 BC. And the Persians win at Thermopylae in Athens, but they lose at Salamis and Plate. And Xerxes returns to Persia. He's bummed out. So he spends time with his harem, has his big party. Vashti doesn't come out and he doesn't see her anymore.

And then he chooses Esther. But then you have the Haman, but Persia is still the biggest until Alexander the Great. And he has these big, long failing spears, and he conquers into Persia and wins.

He's conquering around the year 333 BC. Easy year to remember. You know, Alexander's sort of a type or, you know, of the antichrist. The real one's coming. But he was certainly wanting to conquer. And he was—

Anyway, so now, the Greeks control Persia. Alexander dies, his kingdom's divided into four. And a general named Seleucius takes Persia, Ptolemy takes Egypt, and you have the other ones that take, you know, Greece and Macedon. And so now Persia is called the Seleucid Empire.

And the one Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, wants to wipe out the Jews. And this is the Maccabees revolt, and the Jews do guerrilla warfare. It's 167 BC. The Jews win. And they go into the temple that's been trashed, and they have enough oil for one day and they light it. It lasts for eight. And so they celebrate Hanukkah, feast of dedication. Jesus even celebrated the feast of dedication. He was in Jerusalem for it. So now we have the—

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Persia has lost control of Judea after the Maccabees revolt. And so for a 100 year period, Judea is its own nation again. And so from 167 BC to 63 BC-- But what happens is you have the Pharisees and Sadducees enter into a war.

Pharisees go back to Ezra, they're students of the law. Sadducees wanted to kiss up to the Greeks and there were more or less secular Jews and they fought it out. But that's when Rome comes in with Pompey and takes over.

FRANK:

All right, we'll pick it up right there after the break with the great Bill Federer. We're giving you an overview of the history of what is known as Iran, or Persia, or Elam in the Bible. And then we're going to get to the modern-day. So don't go anywhere. You're listening to 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' with me, Frank Turek. Back right after the break.

What is the history of Iran? My guest today is the great Bill Federer, who knows more about history than any 100 historians I know. We're giving you an overview of the history of that great land of Iran. In the Bible it's known as Persia. Sometimes Elam, sometimes Media. But just before the break we were talking about the fact that the Jews won against the Persians in 167 BC.

Antiochus Epiphanes was overcome by the Maccabees. And for about a hundred year period they were, the Jews actually controlled the land of Judea until the Romans took over. And that's where we're going to pick it up right here.

But before I do, I want to point out that Bill, if you go back and listen to the first segment, threw Esther in there. You might not have noticed that he was talking about Esther, the book of Esther from the Bible. That had to, that happened in Persia, modern-day Iran. But right now we're going to pick it up right here. When the Romans take over Judea. Bill, take it away.

BILL:

Right, so 63 BC, the General Pompey, he's up around the Black Sea. He gets word there's a civil war between the Pharisees and Sadducees. And the Pharisees help Pompey defeat the Sadducees who control the Temple Mount.

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And they're political Jews. They don't believe in miracles or prophecies or resurrection. And Pompey goes into the temple, and sees it, and turns around, tells his men, don't touch this place. Right? Because they're used to looting places. But from that point on, 63 BC, Judea is a Roman province, and Pompey gets into a war with Persia, and this begins a 700 year war between Rome and Persia, the two big superpowers.

This is like the Cold War, right? The US and the USSR. This is the Byzantine, the Roman west and the Persian East. Now, Jesus has his ministry. He's crucified, dies, rises from the dead, Holy Spirit's poured out, the church grows.

And so finally you have a Christian Roman Empire, 313 AD with Constantine, but they're still at war with Persia. And they beat each other up so much that in the 600s, they like massacre each other and like destroy almost every single church.

The Persians destroy every single church in the Holy Land except one in Bethlehem because they had a picture of the Magi on the wall. Right? And they left a power vacuum. And so into that power vacuum came Islam. And so Muhammad as I said in other broadcasts, was born in 570 AD you know his father dies before he's born, his mother dies when he's six.

His grandfather, guardian dies when he's eight and he's orphaned, taken in by an uncle, Abu Talib, he's a merchant, takes him on camel rides and he goes to different cities, hears about different religions. He goes to the Persian cities, and he hears about the Zoroastrian religion that they had where they believed that paradise was filled full of virgins and would fulfill all the guy's desires.

Essential paradise. And Muhammad likes that. And then Muhammad goes with his uncle to Jewish cities, and he hears about them bowing toward Jerusalem. So Muhammad and his followers bowing toward Jerusalem. And then he goes to pagan cities like Mecca. And they had a square building with a Kaaba with 360 different pagan gods.

The most popular was Hubal, the moon God. And they had this rock they thought had fallen from, from the moon. It was a glass impact rock where a rock, you know, meteor hit the hot desert sand and these pagan kissed it. And Muhammad incorporated that into its belief system.

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And then even Encyclopedia it says the Gospel was made known to Muhammad through apocryphal and heretical sources.

So Muhammad thought the Trinity was the father, Mary and Jesus. He feels like there's something, he's illiterate, he could never read and write the word. Quran means recitation, it's an oral thing. Muhammad goes into Mecca 610 AD, and few are excited about his new faith and so he gets confrontational.

They chase him out of town. 622 AD he goes north to Medina. The Jews control the city. They let him in as the first ever Muslim immigrant. He goes into the minority neighborhoods, organizes a following, gets involved in politics and pressures the Jews into a treaty.

When Muhammad's followers in Mecca get confrontational, he does this victimhood thing. We're the victim so it's okay to attack them. And so Muhammad allows his followers to attack the caravans. And he fights in 66 battles and raids, killing 3,000 people.

And he gets verses from Mazala that he gets a fifth of the booty. He goes back into the city of Medina, gets offended at the Jews, confiscates their property, chops off their heads. So within five years of Muhammad coming into the Jewish city as an immigrant, there's not a Jew left.

So a couple weeks ago, Mamdani said, oh my faith began with Muhammad being an immigrant into Medina. He didn't finish the sentence because within five years of him coming in there, there wasn't a Jew left in the city of Medina. They were chased out, killed, or enslaved.

And so then his followers do the same thing in Arabia. And then his followers conquer Egypt, which used to be Christian, evangelized by Mark, Coptic Christian until Amir IBN Alas conquers it. Then the Muslims conquer Syria, which used to be Christian, evangelized by the Apostle Paul.

The name Christian was first used in Syria. And then 638, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem. And the Greek Orthodox bishop swings a deal. Instead of there being two choices, convert or die, there's a third choice. You can be a dhimmi, a second class citizen and you ransom your life paying taxes to your Muslim conquerors for the rest of your life.

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And then the Muslims conquer North Africa. There used to be 250 Catholic dioceses along North Africa. St. Augustine of Hippo was from Carthage. All conquered in 10 years because the Christians had gotten into this monasticism where if you're really spiritual, you'll withdraw, and live in a cave, and be a hermit.

It was their version of separation of church and state. Right? All the Christians withdrew. And then in the year 711, 80,000 Muslims crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, conquer Spain in 10 years because Spain was not Spain. It was a bunch of kingdoms that didn't get along. And he'd pick off one, pick off another. And then they're finally stopped outside of Paris at the Battle of Tours in 732 AD, just 100 years after the death of Muhammad in 632 AD.

It's a 100 year military campaign. But then they conquer into Persia. And so Persia is Zoroastrian, but it's still licking its wounds from fighting the Byzantine Empire, which is now, pretty much fallen, at least until you get toward the area of Turkey.

And so, the Khalid Ibn Al Walid, he was nicknamed the Drawn Sword of Allah because he was undefeated in over a hundred battles. And then the general Sayeed, and they invade into Persia. And the Persian king is Yazdegaard.

He's the last Persian king, and he offers them a deal. He says "if it would be agreeable to peace on the condition the tigers would be the boundary between you and us, whatever's on the eastern side is ours. Whatever's on the west is yours.

And if this does not satisfy your land hunger, nothing would." And the commander Sayeed responds that Muslims were not hungry for land. They were fighting to convert Persians to Islam. A few years later, the Persian poet Ferdowsi, he wrote the shamanized, the longest poem.

60,000 rhyming couplets took him 25 years to write. It's the longest poem in the world by a single author. Anyway, it gives the history of Persia. But in this poem by Ferdowsi, there's a line of Yazdegaard saying, "Damn this fate.

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The uncivilized Arabs are come to make me Muslim." Now the 17 year old Muslim leader in 610 AD of Persia is Kwazim and he conquers Pakistan and kills thousands of the sins and Punjabs.

But then we see the moderation because Persia was civilized for centuries, and they had scholars like Al Farabi, and Avicenna, and Averroes. And they're studying medicine, math, science.

They're studying the Greek classics. And if you would have taken a snapshot of the world, you would have thought that Islam's about to experience the Renaissance. It's called the Islamic Golden Age. But it's all slapped down by a guy named Ghazali. He's a Mujahideen, renewer of the faith.

And he says stop reading Greek stuff because you'll get pulled away from the Islamic faith. And so unfortunately, the Islamic Golden Age is now dwindling. And then the Mongols come, Genghis Khan, and kills 30 million people from Korea, to Hungary, to Russia.

And one of the Mongol tribes is called the Ahuz Turks. The Turks. And they end up converting to Islam. So now you've got a mix of Islamic teaching with Mongolian killing, and so these Turks conquer into what is today Turkey.

But the Byzantine Christians begged the Catholic west for help. They sent help. It's called the Crusades for two centuries. The Crusades end. And then you have another Muslim leader, by the way, Marco Polo at this time, travels through Persia and now that it's a Muslim country it's in the 1200s.

And Marco Polo goes to the castle of the assassins. And sure enough there's this Muslim sect that would get high on hashish, and they would take their warriors to a party with a harem, and they would pass out, and then they would take them back to the battlefield, and they said, you just went to paradise. And if you die assassinating the Mongolian leader, you'll go back to that sex party.

And so they were nicknamed assassins. So the very word assassin is an Islamic word. So you know, you sneak into where your enemy thinks they're safe and you do this killing. So now the

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Turks are Muslim and one famous descendant of Genghis Khan, and it's also mixed with some Turkish blood is Tamerlane.

And he kills 17 million around the year 1383. And he's responsible for wiping out nearly every Christian church in Central Asia. Tamerlane is so brutal he conquers cities. One, Isophon, this big Persian city. And he builds a tower with 200,000 skulls.

He tells his men to come back with a skull in every hand. There's even a quote from Truman. Harry S. Truman in 1950 says our laws are founded on Moses, elaborated by Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The people we are in controversy with are inheritors of the program of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, who were the greatest murderers in the history of the world.

So now we have a descendant of Tamerlane is Babur, and he founds the Mughal Muslim Dynasty of India. And so now that has its own separate history. And then Persia—

Now at this time, you have a Persian leader that switches to Shia. And this gets interesting. So the year is 1502 and have to explain the difference between Shia and Sunni. And so, we're taking a little side path here. Mohammed—

FRANK:

The Iranians today are Shia whereas much of the rest of the Muslim world is Sunni.

BILL:

Right.

FRANK:

So that's why we're going down this road.

BILL:

Right. So Muhammad had a daughter, Fatima, and she's married to Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law. And so the followers of Ali are Shiat Ali, the party of Ali. And Shiat gets shortened to Shia or Shiite.

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And then the Sunnis are descendants of Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad's father-in-laws that had the six year old daughter that Muhammad married. And so he fought in every battle and knew the way. And the word for the way is Sunni. And so 85% of Muslims are Sunni, 15% Shia, and most of the Shia are in Iran.

FRANK:

And that's where we're going to pick it up after the break. You're listening to 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' with me Frank Turek. My guest, the great Bill Federer. A lot more about Iran, Persia right after the break.

AD:

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FRANK:

What no one ever told you about Iran or Persia. We're going through a short history of that great land and we're going to get to the modern era shortly here. But before we do, I want to tell you a couple of things that are coming up. On the 11th of March, Lord willing, I'll be at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia.

If you're anywhere near there, it's open to the public. If not, you can see it streaming on our YouTube channel. We'll be talking about Change My Mind, the college tour we're in the middle of. This will be our sixth of over a dozen of these over this semester. We're doubling our efforts in honor of Charlie Kirk, going to all of these different college campuses around the country.

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I want to mention on the 21st and 22nd of March, I'll be at Element Church near St. Louis, Missouri. Details on the website. Then that week, it's going to be a bit of an emotional week. We're going to go to Colorado Mesa University on the 24th. And then on the 26th we're going to Utah Valley University where Charlie was murdered.

I don't know how I'm going to react to being there, but we have to plant a flag in that campus. We can't let Satan win. So we're going there. I might have a special guest with me that I will introduce to you later. That will also be live streamed. It'll probably be maybe 8:30 Eastern.

Eight or 8:30 Eastern, we're not sure yet. Then we'll be at the University of Mississippi, Ole Miss on the 31st and a lot more coming up in April, so check all that out. Also want to mention the online CIA course is going to start, I want to say in April.

You want to sign up for that by going to CrossExamined.org. Click on online courses. You'll see it there. And then the in-person CIA is going to be this summer. Details are on the website as well. You can sign up or at least apply at Crossexamined.org as well. Let me go back to my guest, the great Bill Federer.

Bill, just before the break, we were talking about the history of Persia or Iran. Pick it up where you left off and we'll get right into the modern era.

BILL:

Yeah. So difference between Sunni and Shia. So Muhammad's son-in-law Ali is where you get the Shia Ali or the Shiites.

Muhammad had lots of wives. The six year old that he married, he had a dream two nights in a row of him marrying the six year old. They consummated at nine. But the six year old daughter is Aisha and her father is Abu Bakr. And he fought with Muhammad in all of his different battles, and he knew the way.

And so the word for the way is Sunni. And so when Muhammad dies, you have Abu Bakr is the first Caliph. And then you have Caliph Umar, and then Caliph Uthman, who compiles a crown and then you have Caliph Ali. But he didn't kill the murder of Caliph Uthman.

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So Uthman's relative kills Ali. It's like a blood feud fighting for the first century there. But anyway, so Ali has a son named Husan, or Hussein, and he is at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

And the Sunnis kill him. And this starts a blood feud between the Sunnis and the Shia. And it has gone on for 1400 years pretty much. And so the Shia will have an annual festival called Ashura where the men get together, and take knives, and hit their head until it bleeds down their face.

And there's pictures of, you know, and they want to stir up the hatred. It's sort of like a reverse pep rally or stir up the hatred for the Sunnis so they're able to keep this hate alive for all these centuries. So in the leader of the Persian Empire, decides to convert to Shia Islam.

And so the year is 1502. The Muslim leader is Ismail the First, and it's called the Safavid Dynasty. So this is the big change, 1502. Persia is now a Shia Islam, the Safavid Dynasty, 1502.

And then Turkey, the Turks, they're Sunni. And there's even a quote from John Wesley. He wrote in a book called 'Doctrine of Original Sin', 1757. And John Wesley said Mohammedans will butcher each other by the thousands.

Why? Turks and Persians differ in the manner of dressing their head. The Ottoman Turk vehemently maintains a Muslim should wear a round turban where the Persian wears a picked version. So for this wonderful reason, they beat out each other's brains from generation to generation.

That's John Wesley that said that. It gets complicated when France and Spain are fighting and the king of France decides he's going to make a treaty with Spain's biggest enemy, the Turks. So as of 1536, France is now teamed up with the Turks.

And this causes Spain not to be able to protect Hungary. And the Muslims conquer it and protect the Mediterranean. The Muslims conquer it. And so for three centuries, France is betraying the rest of Europe. But in response, the king of Spain, Charles V, decides to make a treaty with the Persian Shah, Ismail I, and his son Tasmasp.

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And so you have these European powers. France is aligned with the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Spain and later England is allied with the Persian Empire. So, then another Safavid emperor that comes after this is Abbas the Great.

He has an interesting career because two English merchants, come down. They were trading with Moscow, but then they went south. They're the Shirley brothers, Anthony and Robert Shirley, and they travel and show up in the Persian court, and they make an Anglo Persian alliance, which later opened the door for the British East India Company to trade with Persia, especially for silk through the Persian Gulf.

And Robert Shirley married a Christianized Circassian woman from Abbas the Great's court. She took the name of Lady Therese Sampsonia, and she went back to England, and she's considered the first Persian to visit England.

And England becomes fascinated with Persia, so much so that William Shakespeare mentions the Shah in his play Twelfth Night. And Abbas sends a diplomatic group over to Europe, and they're traveling through Moscow, Norway, Germany, Rome.

They meet the Pope, Pope Clement VIII, and they reach Spain. And a Persian who accompanied them, Anthony Shirley, was Ulch Beg. And while in Spain, he converts to Catholicism, and he takes the name Don Juan of Persia, and he writes a book about his life.

So Don Juan of Persia. Meanwhile, Abbas the Great, he wants Spain's help to fight the Turks. And so he's willing to make some concessions. And he tells the king of Spain that he will allow Christianity to spread in Persia if Spain will help the Persians fight the Turks.

But the king of Spain at this time, Philip, says, okay, on two conditions. One is you stop trading with the British East India Company, and you make all the Armenian Christians that are in your kingdom convert to Catholicism. And there's like 400,000 Armenians.

And so that sort of throws water on that Spanish Persian alliance. Anyway, Abbas captures Bahrain, which used to be Portugal, and then he ends up taking over the Suez, excuse me, the Port of Hormuz, which is in the news today.

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The Strait of Hormuz is in the news today. It used to be controlled by the Portuguese, and then it's now, with the help of the British ships-- Persia now controls it, 622. And then Abbas is fighting the Mughal Muslim Empire in India, which is also Sunni.

And so Persia's got the Indian on the east, and then the Turks on the west. Abbas is pretty tough. He thought his sons were conspiring against him, so he had them blinded and imprisoned.

That's sort of tough to do that to your own sons. Abbas, when some of these Georgian Christians were appealing to the Turks for help, he goes in there and deports two-thirds of their population, kills their queen. And so Abbas is brutal in that respect.

He kills most of his sons, and then he gets a grandson to take charge, Abbas II. And he ends up fighting the Mughals. And one of the Mughals that he fights is Shah Jahan. Now, you know, Shah Jahan because he built the Taj Mahal.

And so, now we have Abbas II is fighting Russia, the czar of Russia. And so, then the Dutch East India Company comes in on the scene, and Shah Abbas lets him drink out of his own cup, you know.

And so, we have a lot of the European players wanting to make alignments with Persia and the Mughals with the British East India Company and then with the Turks, and a little backdrop at the same time.

FRANK:

What year are you at right now, Bill?

BILL:

1666

FRANK:

All right.

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BILL:

And this is the year of the Great Fire in London, where a quarter of the city burns, and then they have the plague of London. And that's when, you know, William Penn is seeing the Quakers taking care of the sick.

And this is when Isaac Newton has to leave the city and go out into the country. He sees the apple fall and discovers the law of gravity. But you have the British, and the Dutch, and a little bit of the Russian situation going on in Persia.

The Turks capture Vienna. I mean, they attack Vienna and they're driven back by the Poles. And it's September 11th, 1683. So the Polish king, Jan Sobieski, saves Vienna from the Turkish Muslims.

His famous line was *Vinimus vidimus deus vit vicit*. We came, we saw, God conquered. Sort of a little take on Julius Caesar's. I came, I saw, and conquered. But he added God in there. The Safavid Dynasty cripples. I wrote a whole book on it. It's called 'The Treacherous World of the 16th Century.' And you got, you know, different wives poisoning husbands and strangling other wives.

FRANK:

There's nothing new under the sun, Bill. This has been going on forever.

BILL:

Yeah, it's like Shakespeare, only in Persia. You know, Hamlet, and Othello. And Peter the Great is fighting wars against the Safavid Dynasty. Another one, and I'll sort of slow down on these shahs of Persia.

But one is Nadar, N A D A R. And he starts the Afsharid dynasty in Persia. And he's called the Napoleon of Persia because he conquers the Ottoman Turks, he fights the Russians, he fights the Mughals in India, and he forces Christians to convert. And his nickname is the Eye Extractor for his unusual punishment even on his own sons. Right? And so, whenever he—

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He would have people's eyes taken out. So that's Nadar. Even Ezra Stiles is the president of Yale at this time. And when Nadar conquered Delhi, India, and he killed tens of thousands, and it weakened the Mughal Empire so that the British could take over, Ezra Stiles of Yale says Kulikan dethroned his friends and plundered India of 200 million sterling. But now the British East India Company begins to flex its muscles and take over there. And I'll pick up when we come back.

FRANK:

Yeah, we've got a lot more with Bill Federer. There's so much more he could say, actually. But we're going to get to the modern era right after the break, so don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. I'm Frank Turek. My guest is the great Bill Federer, and we're talking about the history of Persia, Iran, Meda, Media, Elam. There's different names for it in the Bible. And we've spent three segments talking about a lot of the history of this area.

We're going to kind of fast forward right now into the 20th century, and then we're going to pick this up in the midweek podcast coming out on Tuesday, because there's so much to cover. But Bill, you've been talking a lot about shahs, which in that language basically means a king.

How did Iran become a constitutional monarchy? And who was the shah that Ayatollah Khomeini replaced in 1979? And then we'll get into how that happened.

BILL:

Right, so you had the Qajar Dynasty in Persia for 150 years. And now we're up to the discovery of oil. So, Winston Churchill changes the British Navy from coal to oil, but there's no oil in Britain.

Maybe one well in Sherwood Forest. And so in 1908, Britain forms the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. You know it better as BP, British Petroleum. Right? BP is the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 1908.

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And then, prior to World War I, Germany industrializes, but there's really no oil in Germany. So they make a deal with the Turks, the Berlin Baghdad Railroad, Abdul Hamid II, making a treaty with Kaiser Wilhelm II. And so now we're coming up to World War I.

Half of World War I took place in the Middle East over oil. Germany loses its ally, the Turks lose. The map of Europe is redrawn, and the German loses all their territory. Well, guess what? The Ottoman Empire is no more. And so the old Ottoman Empire is divided up.

You have Lawrence of Arabia, was a lieutenant in the British military. And he was sent on an assignment to see if the Arab Muslims in Saudi Arabia, who were the desert wanderers, if they could help the British defeat the Turkish Muslims.

And Lawrence of Arabia takes it upon himself to lie to the Arab Muslims, telling them that they will get all the land in the Middle East if they help the British defeat the Turks. And the British don't know anything about this unauthorized promise. And so, Winston Churchill, when, you know—

And the war is ending, they give the Balfour Declaration, and they give the British Mandate to the Jews. And it's from the Mediterranean, all the way over to the, you know, Euphrates and Iraq.

And then it's Syria, all the way down to Egypt, and it's huge. And then they find out about Lawrence of Arabia's unauthorized promise. And so Winston Churchill, on a napkin, takes two-thirds of the land that was given to the Jews and creates an Arab homeland, right?

Sort of their version of a Palestinian state. And he names it Transjordan, or on the other side of the Jordan River. And there's this line that goes out into the desert, and then it jerks, and it makes a line in another direction. And everybody asks, why is this line in the middle of the desert like that?

And the saying is that Churchill, drank brandy with his lunch and he hiccupped. And so it's called Churchill's Hiccup. That's what it's called. Anyway, and so then you have Fazel is another son of the Sharifa Mecca, who worked with Lawrence of Arabia.

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And Churchill creates another country for him called Iraq. And then France took Syria and Lebanon as protectorates, sort of like after the Spanish American War, we took, you know, Puerto Rico as a protectorate. And so—

But the Arabs thought they were going to get Syria because of Lawrence Arabia's promise. And so, that's when, you know, Churchill creates the Jordan. So this is the situation. There's no more Ottoman Empire. And the leader of Turkey is Ataturk.

And he says, we're done with the sultan. We're done with this fundamental Islam. The world is moving west. We want to wear Western clothes.

We want to let women get educated. He gave them last names because they were all saying so and so, son of so and so, son of so and so from this village. And he gave them last names. And so when you, when you read Ataturk, he was quite an amazing leader, in wanting to separate from the fundamental Islam.

FRANK:

This is early. Right after World War I.

BILL:

1924. Yeah.

FRANK:

Okay, so what's going on in Iran at this point? They've already got a constitutional republic going in Iran as of, I think, 1908, somewhere in there. And they have a shah, right?

BILL:

Right. So what happens is they're still having the Qajar Dynasty up until 1925. And so, and that's when Reza Shah, R E Z A, he seizes power from the Qajar Dynasty. And he sort of mirror images Ataturk.

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And so, Reza Shah says we're going to do the same thing. We're going to be western. We're going to dress in western clothes. We're going to let women get educated. We're going to let women wear fashions. We're going to, you know, separate ourselves from the Shia fundamental Islam.

And it's all looking great. You got the king of Afghanistan wants to secularize his country. You have Farouk in Egypt, and he is a whole nother situation. But you have the Muslim world views the West as the future until 1928.

The Muslim Brotherhood has started. And the Muslim Brotherhood, six members, six employees of the British run Suez Canal Company formed this Muslim Brotherhood, and their attitude is, let's assassinate these leaders that are leaning toward the West.

Let's do this hashashim type of thing. Let's sneak into these countries, and when these leaders are unsuspecting, we'll assassinate them. They tried assassinating Ataturk, but didn't. They did assassinate Abdullah. He was a moderate Muslim. He was on the Temple Mount, right? The Al Aqsa Mosque there in Jerusalem. And they kill him.

FRANK:

And he was the leader of who at the time?

BILL:

Of Jordan, but he was friendly with the Jews. And so, now you have these Western leaders that want to be more West, but they don't want to be assassinated.

And so, whenever the West would show strength, they would be encouraged to be more Western, but when the West would show weakness, they would sort of move more in the direction of the fundamental ones. So now we're back to Iran, and you have Reza Shah. He is secular.

He's the one that wanted to highlight the Iranian nationality. And so, for whatever reason, he decided to start using the word Iran rather than Persia. And Ataturk did the same thing in Turkey.

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He's like, Turkey was a great nation before the religion of the Arabs came in. And Mohammedism is nothing more than Arab politics. It may have suited tribes in the desert. It's no good for a modern progressive state. So Ataturk was saying, let's identify as Turks, not as Muslims.

And the Shah was doing the same thing in Iran, Persia, saying, you know, let's separate ourselves from this fundamentalist past.

FRANK:

So this, the Shah you're talking about at this point is the father of the Shah.

BILL:

Correct.

FRANK:

Who ultimately leaves Iran in 1979, and the Ayatollah Khomeini takes over. So he's modernizing. He's getting away from fundamentalist Islam. But there are-- There's this Muslim Brotherhood, and there are the fundamentalists who want to take him out. So I would assume that both the Shahs, the father and the son, have to have a secret police to protect themselves from these assassins. Is that correct?

BILL:

Yeah. And it-- There's a little twist. World War II starts, and Shaw Reza did not drive out Germans from Iran. So Britain and the Soviet Union team up to do a coup and overthrow the Shah, Reza Shah.

And they put his son in as a puppet, but he doesn't have much power. But the prime minister is Mossadeq, and Mossadeq has all the power. And he's playing ball with them. But then after World War, you have the Cold War and Mossadeq begins to become friendly with the Soviets. And he's backed by the Tudeh Communist Party and he's becoming anti-Western.

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And he seizes all the oil in Iran, he nationalizes it, and Britain is left hanging with no oil. There's no more BP oil. The largest oil refinery in the world was in Iran, and now Mossadeq takes control of it. So Britain's having an oil shortage.

They appealed to Eisenhower for help. Eisenhower approves of Operation Ajax, where you have Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, sends Kermit Roosevelt Jr., the grandson of Teddy Roosevelt, over to Tehran, and he organizes a coup to overthrow Mossadeq, and then give all the power to Reza Pahlavi, the son, who didn't have any power, but now he's concentrated in power and he's supported by America.

And so Reza Pahlavi loves America. He meets with Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford. He is pro America. He has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Dressing in business suits, women wearing fashions. They have disco. I mean—

FRANK:

Yeah, women have the right to vote. They're building Cadillacs in Iran.

BILL:

Yeah, the Cadillac Seville was made in Iran. And so it's all moving in this direction. But then the same way that the socialists will get college students to organize protests, and they really don't know what they're doing, but they're easily manipulated.

Well, once the Shah is in power, the communists are getting these liberal college students to protest the Shah. And yes, he did have police, but he had to watch out for assassination attempts all the time. Because again, in the Islamic culture, you have assassins.

FRANK:

Hold the thought, Bill. Because this is where it's really getting good. And we're going to pick this up Tuesday in the midweek podcast. If you're listening to this on radio, you're not going to hear it. You've got to go to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast this Tuesday to hear the rest of this. We're going to get into the Ayatollah, Jimmy Carter, what happened. Why do we have an Ayatollah?

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What about the new Ayatollah who was just killed? What's going to happen after this? What does the Bible say about it? That's all in the next show. Don't miss it. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. See you then. Thanks, Bill.

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