

Newsbytes

The First Watch

No. 764

March 23, 2016

Since 2001

Newzbytes is a ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

www.ccappleton.org

“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Graphic of the Week:



Right?

On to the Newzbytes.....

Obama's Poisoned Gift To Israel Before He Leaves Office

BY SARAH N. STERN/ISRAEL TODAY

Like so many presidents who preceded him, the siren call of being the president who finally struck peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians has proven to be just too tempting for President Barack Obama to resist.

I am afraid that like closing Guantanamo Bay, getting troops out of Iraq, imposing Obama care and concluding a risible nuclear deal with Iran, Israeli-Palestinian peace is just another item that Obama would like to mark off his checklist before he leaves office.

On Monday, the Wall Street Journal reported that the White House was working on plans to revive long stalled

peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians before Obama leaves office. The disturbing part of this is that Obama's tactic, similar to the tactic he adopted in concluding the nuclear deal with Iran, is not to have the parties sit down and deal with each other, but rather to go directly to the United Nations Security Council and have his way enshrined in international law.

As we all know, the United Nations is not a friendly forum for the state of Israel. It is dominated by the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, formerly called the Organization for Islamic Conference, which is the largest group within the United Nations comprising 57 member states. Furthermore, this group frequently allies with the nonaligned members states, such as Cuba, Yugoslavia, Venezuela, and Iran. These nations often ally themselves with the former Soviet block states, as well, and make for an impressive, and usually insurmountable, bloc.

Each fall, when the United Nation General Assembly begins, A slew of resolutions condemning the State of Israel is offered up, with very few resolutions condemning the rest of the world ever proposed. This past November, the General Assembly adopted six nonbinding resolutions against Israel, and zero -- that's right, zero -- against Syria, North Korea, Venezuela, Sudan, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Iran or the Islamic State group. This came at a time when the Syrian regime was massacring its own people in the most horrific way imaginable, and the Islamic State group was busy conquering huge swaths of North Africa and the Middle East, as they raped, plundered and decapitated.

One of last fall's resolutions actually went so far as to say that Israel was to return the Golan Heights to Syria. Syria? What is left of that devastated nation? Which part of the Syrian chaos is Israel supposed to return the Golan Heights to? The corrupt and bloody regime of President Bashar Assad? The beleaguered rebels? The Islamic State?

Israel is the only nation of the 193 United Nations member states that has a designated committee that targets it -- the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people.
image: http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/images/ads/TFP_freedvd.jpg

Now let us turn our attention to the UN Security Council. The body's permanent members are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China, and it also includes 10 rotating members from such lovely countries as Angola, whose president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, has been in power for 35 years, and who is subject to increasing criticism for corruption, government repression and human rights abuses, including the arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists and anti-government activists, or Senegal, with a similar record of governmental repression and human rights abuses, or Venezuela, that beacon of morality and human rights.

Most of these nations despise the United States and ironically, even under the Obama administration, feel that Israel is inextricably linked to the United States, and are therefore prone to singling out the Jewish state for abuse. Israel, as everyone knows, is not a part of any regional global grouping because the Middle East and North African bloc rejected them, and most nations vote as a bloc.

Israel is like the neighborhood kid whom no one wants on their team.

Even U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power said in February that "as you all know, the U.N. Charter guarantees 'the equal rights of nations large and small,' and yet we have seen member states seek to use the U.N. Security Council, the General Assembly, and even the most arcane U.N. committees in ways that cross the line from legitimate criticisms of Israel's policies to attempts to delegitimize the State of Israel itself. The only country in the world with a standing agenda item at the Human Rights Council is not North Korea, a totalitarian state that is currently holding an estimated 100,000 people in gulags; not Syria, which has gassed its people -- lots of them. It is Israel."

We have seen, consistently throughout the term of the current American administration just how spitefully Obama has thrown Israel under the bus. One example was when a shipment of hellfire missiles, which Israel needed during the 2014 war in Gaza, was spitefully held up, or the Iran deal, which has already given Iran over \$100 billion to send to Hezbollah, Hamas, Assad's brutal forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps,

among other nefarious regional players.

Now, Obama seeks to bequeath one poisoned parting gift to Israel before he leaves office: An internationally enshrined Palestinian state.

The Syrian war just taught Putin to worry about Iran

By Ralph Peters March 15, 2016

Russian President Vladimir Putin surprised the world by announcing on Monday that most of his troops would leave Syria. Military analysts were flummoxed.

I, for one, had expected all of the forces backing the regime of Bashar al-Assad to catch their collective breath, then resume the offensive.

What happened?

In retrospect, it looks obvious: Putin finally met the Middle East. And unlike President Obama, the Russian czar faced reality.

Allowing that Putin could re-engage in the future, and that his forces accomplished their primary goal of propping up the regime and giving it breathing space, the announcement still came as a cold-water shock to all — except the Iranians.

Initial Western reactions have stressed the recalcitrance of Assad, who has refused to consider stepping aside. Instead, Assad's latest pronouncements have been defiant bordering on megalomania. Putin had every reason to be fed up.

Russian cargo planes and fighter jets leave the Hmeymim air base as Russia pulls out its air force from Syria:

Putin didn't go into Syria because Assad was a pal. He sent in his air power and his commandos to expand Russia's regional influence as American power ebbed. He thought he saw a not-to-be-missed strategic opportunity.

And he certainly expected Assad to be grateful for his salvation at Russian hands.

But gratitude isn't in the Middle East's repertoire. As Americans discovered painfully, the region's thanks resemble the bite of a cobra.

There's even a cost factor: Russia's economy's shrinking, and Putin's been forced to slow his cherished military renewal. Even the dumb bombs dropped on civilians in Syria carry a price.

Still, Putin's abrupt departure has to have more behind it than a spurious desire to further peace talks, the need to save money or personal pique at Assad.

The long bet is that his generals, diplomats and intelligence hands on the ground were shocked by the degree to which Iran already and irrevocably dominates Syria. And Iraq. And Lebanon.

With a shudder, Putin recognized that his air campaign would ultimately benefit an emerging Persian/Iranian empire, rather than expanding Moscow's influence. Similarly, our air campaign and special operations against ISIS, although necessary, will inevitably strengthen Tehran's regional dominance (we gave away Iraq, but we still do the maintenance).

We're trapped, but Putin wasn't. So he got out.

Those of us who've warned of a burgeoning Iranian empire haven't found much traction in Washington, where the current president clings to his appalling nuclear deal. And the Middle East still seems far away from the Potomac's prospering shores. But it's a very different deal for Putin.

Russia's newest czar thought he was playing the Iranians, using them as leverage against US influence, selling them arms at a premium and using them as cannon fodder on the ground in Syria — while his combat aircraft soared invulnerably overhead.

But to paraphrase Shakespeare, Putin drank and only then saw the spider in the cup.

Contrary to his expectations of finding a pliable ally in Iran, he found the Iranians in control, glad to borrow his air force, arrogant and disdainful in Damascus (and Baghdad) and well on the path to dominating a vast stretch of strategically vital territory. And Iran has no interest in playing junior partner to anyone — least of all a traditional Christian enemy.

Suddenly, Putin had a vision of a nuclear-armed, radical-Shia empire on Russia's southern flank. Those Iranian missiles that can reach Israel? They can reach major Russian cities, too.

Putin's initial bet on Shia Iran also backfired by turning the Islamic world's Sunni majority against him — not least Saudi Arabia, which can continue to hold down the price of oil and gas, punishing Russia's economy far more than it wounds American fracking efforts. And Sunni terrorists have taken a renewed interest in Russia.

After Putin's Syrian adventure, he may be re-prioritizing his enemies.

Of course, Putin also promised to withdraw from eastern Ukraine. Didn't happen. And his trumpeted withdrawal from Syria could be no more than a temporary gambit — his remarks footnoted that "some" Russian troops will remain at their Syrian naval base and air base.

But Putin, whose view of the world has been bounded by the Caucasus in the south and Europe to the West (with occasional nods to China in the east), may have discovered the frightful threat under his nose.

At the very least, he's learned that there are no strategic bargains in the Middle East. That puts him one up on us.

"We are at war" French leader says after Brussels attack

Associated Press, March 22, 2016 (thanks to Darcy):

BRUSSELS — Explosions, at least one likely caused by a suicide bomber, rocked the Brussels airport and subway system Tuesday, prompting a lockdown of the Belgian capital and heightened security across Europe. At least 28 people were reported dead.

A spokesman for the Brussels Metro said 15 people were killed and 55 injured in an explosion on a train, and Belgian media reported at least 13 dead in two explosions at the airport, with many others injured.

Belgium raised its terror alert to the highest level, diverting planes and trains and ordering people to stay where they were. Airports across Europe immediately tightened security.

"We are at war," French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said after a crisis meeting called by the French president. "We have been subjected for the last few months in Europe to acts of war."

European security officials have been bracing for a major attack for weeks, and warned that the Islamic State group was actively preparing to strike. The arrest Friday of a key suspect in the November attacks in Paris

heightened those fears, as investigators said many more people were involved than originally thought, and that some are still on the loose.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Tuesday's attacks, and Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel said there was no immediate evidence linking key Paris suspect Salah Abdeslam to them. After his arrest Friday, Abdeslam told authorities he had created a new network and was planning new attacks.

Authorities told people in Brussels to stay where they were. Airport security was also tightened in Paris, London and other European cities....

Erdogan's boomerang: Turkey is now at total war

By YOSSI MELMAN Sun, 20 Mar 2016, 09:24 AM

It was Erdogan who ended the peace talks with the Kurds, declared war on the PKK, and joined the coalition against ISIS. Now he finds himself in an all-out war across three fronts.

Israeli diplomatic and intelligence channels are attempting to verify if the attack in Istanbul intentionally targeted Israeli tourists, although it is more likely that the Israelis were caught up as bystanders along with other tourists. Turkey receives 35 million tourists a year from many countries.

State tourism has not been affected, despite the recent terror wave which has hit the country, with a number of deadly attacks perpetrated by both Kurds and ISIS. This is in fact a war which has been going on for around six months, and has so far killed nearly 3,000 people.

President Recep Erdogan began this war by choice, and he did it for political purposes.

A year ago, Erdogan's AKP party failed to win over 50% in the national elections, as it had been accustomed in the recent past. In order to form a government, he required a coalition agreement with the Nationalist Party - an extreme right-wing party, who believed that Erdogan was not forceful enough in the struggle with the Kurds.

Until those elections, the Turkish government had been conducting peace talks with the Kurdish minority, including its militant wing - the PKK movement led by Abdullah Öcalan, who is sitting in prison, who was a key figure in the talks aimed at strengthening the ceasefire and discussing the expansion of Kurdish autonomy.

Erdogan ended the peace talks and actually declared war on the PKK. In practice, by doing so he declared war on most of the country's Kurdish minority. Six months ago it seemed that his gamble was paying off. He took votes from the Nationalist Party, whose power was reduced from 80 deputies to 40, and the AKP won an absolute majority. But the price is being paid in a rise in terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, whose impact is greater and more painful.

Effectively, Turkey is at total war across three borders: the war on the home front against the PKK, a war against the Kurdish minority in Syria, and a war against PKK training camps in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Turkish military is hitting targets from the air in Iraq, as well as sending special forces into the field.

In Syria, Turkey does not dare send its planes over the border, for fear of having them downed by Russian jets and air defense batteries. Erdogan is instead making do with an artillery bombardment in a desperate attempt to prevent the Kurds in Syria, who with the help of the US and Russian air power, have been able to capture territory from ISIS and establish an independent province along the Turkish border.

To facilitate the struggle against the Kurds, Erdogan changed his policy towards ISIS. Turning from clandestine support or turning a blind eye to their presence in Syria, which caused the US and the West to censure him, he decided to join the international coalition against ISIS, opening a front against them.

It is difficult to know what Erdogan was thinking when he decided to move against the Kurds at home and

abroad, and join the war against ISIS. Perhaps he thought that they would not respond, or that it was a calculated move on his part. Either way, both the Kurds and ISIS have responded to Erdogan's gambles with deadly terrorist attacks.

Priests Reenact Biblical Temple Service to Celebrate New Month

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz March 21, 2016

ALL PHOTOS BY JOSHUA WANDER

“Also in the day of your gladness, and in your appointed seasons, and in your new moons, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; and they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.” Num 10:10



A special ceremony was held in the Cardo in Jerusalem on Thursday, March 10th. It was the beginning of the month of Adar, or, to be precise, the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Bet. In temple Times, the new month was considered a minor holiday and the ceremony, a reenactment of the Temple service, gloriously illustrated that.

On the day of the new month, special sacrifices were brought to the Temple: two oxen, a ram, seven lambs, wine libations, flour, and oil

(Numbers 28:11-15). This is identical to the sacrifices offered on Passover and Shavuot, indicating the holy aspect of the new month. Special trumpet blasts were also added in celebration.

To commemorate the special nature of the day, the Temple Institute, in conjunction with the Sanhedrin and other Temple organizations, held a reenactment of the service as it would have been performed in the Temple. The ceremony was intended to be educational for the spectators and a dry-run for the priests who participated.



The priests, students of the Temple Institute's Nezer HaKodesh Academy for Kohanim, wore authentic garments made to Biblical specifications, and performed the Kohanic blessing. Musicians played instruments suited for use in the Temple provided by the Temple Institute, accompanied by a choir.

Though no animals were actually slaughtered, the organs and special fats were displayed and explained. There was also a demonstration of how blood is sprinkled on the altar. A mincha offering of semolina was burned on the altar, a precise scale model, approximately one meter tall and two-and-a-half meters square.

In addition to the demonstration of the sacrifices, three members of the Sanhedrin accepted the testimony of two witnesses for the Torah commandment of declaring the new month.



Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, the founder and head of the Temple Institute, also gave a lesson about the Biblical commandment of the Machatzit HaShekel (Exodus 30:11-16), the half shekel-weight of silver, given to the Temple every year by Jewish men in this month. Rabbi Ariel explained that the half-shekel was used to purchase the daily sacrifices offered for all of Israel.

Events like this help prepare for the actual Temple. Not only does it raise public awareness, it also helps instruct Kohanim, Jews of the priestly class.

Joshua Wander, a resident of the Mount of Olives who has attended several of the Temple Institute's events, noted that it also helps fix lapses in practical knowledge.



“When we did the reenactment of the Pesach offering, we discovered that it is difficult to roast a whole animal without burning the outside and leaving the inside raw,” Wander said. “We found out that you have to wrap it up and seal it, which had to be done carefully since it is forbidden to break any of the bones.”

Read more at

<http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/64009/photos-priests-reenact-biblical-temple-service-celebrate-new-month-jewish-world/#BUqj1BLxXpC288eg.99>

Looking for the Blessed Hope

By Tom Hoffman

When I was a new born-again Christian, I learned a principle of Scripture in a Bible Study I attended. The principle stems from our ability to hold the Word of God “captive” in our hearts.

One of the Bible Study leaders pronounced, “If you hold Scripture captive, it will never leave you ... it becomes a prisoner in your heart and soul. And when you need a particular Scripture during the course of life, God will give it to you because you have held it captive.”

That lesson has stuck with me all these 30-plus years.

One Scripture I have intentionally held captive comes from the book of Titus:

“For the grace of God which gives salvation to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2:11-13)

Paul asks us a compelling question in his first letter to the Thessalonians ...

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?”

And then Paul, the ultimate scribe, answers his own question ...

“Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”

In the weight of today’s complexity, it’s more difficult to stay focused on those things that are truly important.

This is a mighty scheme of the devil: Distractibility.

You’ve fallen for it. I’ve fallen for it. The whole world seems to be falling for the distractions and temptations of the Evil One.

That is why, in these days of confusion, we must always return to the Word of God.

Here is one of Jesus’ most precious promises:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

One day, we will be sheltered by the most precious God. Sheltered for eternity. This is part of the blessed hope that we long for.

And not only do we know where we are going to live one day, Paul describes another eternal gift for those who believe:

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (3:20-21)

He will transform our lowly body that it might be conformed to His glorious body.

Just this morning I looked around our church congregation and was struck by the many afflictions. One dear sister is losing her sight. Another person is confined to her wheel chair. Another friend has difficulty sleeping at night.

One day, they will all receive new bodies.

And this is the Blessed Hope we will all experience one day soon.

The truth is that God’s Word will help us from becoming distracted by the darkness of the world around us. Remember, our citizenship is in heaven, not here on earth.

The Word of God contains our Blessed Hope. Our hope is not in this world, but the world which is yet to come.

Which brings me to one of my other favorite scriptures, of which I hold captive:

“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)