

Newsbytes

The First Watch

No. 804

Since 2001

January 11, 2017

Newzbytes is a ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

www.ccapleton.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

Christian Clergy Welcomes Islam in Church, Then Bows to It

by Giulio Meotti • January 4, 2017 at 5:30 am

Last July, for the first time during a Mass in Italy, a verse of the Koran was recited from the altar.

A priest in the south of Italy enraged parishioners by dressing the Virgin Mary in a Muslim burqa for his church's Christmas Nativity scene. These interfaith initiatives are based on the gradual elimination of the Western-Christian heritage in favor of Islam.

The Catholic clergy is probably disoriented by Pope Francis himself; he was the first to allow the reading of Islamic prayers and Koran readings from the Vatican.

The Pope embraced religious relativism when it comes with Islam. He repeated that Islamist violence is the work of "a small group of fundamentalists" who, according to him, have nothing to do with Islam.

Church of England Bishop Harries suggested that Prince Charles's coronation service should be opened with a Koran reading. In the US, more than 50 churches, including the Washington National Cathedral, hold Koran readings. Is there any reading of the Christian liturgy in mosques?

How is it that so few Christian leaders have raised their voices against this unprecedented attack on a Christian monument? Have they organized so many Koran readings in their own churches so that they now view it as normal to convert a church into a mosque?

Would it not be better for the Catholic Church to establish a real dialogue with the Islamic communities based on principles such as reciprocity (if you build mosques in Europe, we build churches in the Middle East), protection of Christian minorities in the Crescent and theological repudiation of jihad against "infidels"?

There is a disturbing and growing trend in Italy and Europe.

For the first time in more than 700 years, Islamic songs resonated in Florence's Cathedral, the Church Santa Maria del Fiore. Under the famous Dome of Brunelleschi, Islamic melodies accompanied Christian ones. The "interfaith initiative" was promoted a week after the barbaric massacre by Islamist terrorists in Paris at the magazine Charlie Hebdo, and included "Koran is Justice" and other such "hymns".

A priest in the south of Italy then enraged parishioners by dressing the Virgin Mary in a Muslim burqa for his church's Christmas nativity scene. The pastor of the parish of Saints Joachim and Anne in Potenza, Father Franco Corbo, said that he had the special crèche constructed "in the name of dialogue among

religions". These interfaith initiatives are based on the gradual elimination of the Western-Christian heritage in favor of Islam.

Hamas's Fatah and the No-State Solution

by Khaled Abu Toameh • January 3, 2017 at 5:00 am

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas declared that 2017 will be the "year of international recognition of the State of Palestine."

The melee in Gaza exposes as the lie that it is Abbas's repeated claim of a unified Fatah able to lead the Palestinians towards statehood. Incredibly, Abbas seeks global recognition of a Palestinian state at a time when the flames in his own backyard are set to engulf him and his questionable regime.

More bad news from the poll: if presidential elections were to be held today, Ismail Haniyeh, leader of the terrorist group Hamas, would beat Abbas by 49% to 45%.

Palestinians are now openly talking about two different Fatah factions. After Abbas's decision to strip the legislators of their parliamentary immunity, six Fatah PLC members participated in a Hamas-sponsored meeting of the PLC in the Gaza Strip. This was the first time since 2007 that such a move had been made.

Fatah leaders in the Gaza Strip, unlike their colleagues in the West Bank, are de facto recognizing the Hamas rule over the Gaza Strip. This is wonderful news for Hamas, whose leader, Ismail Haniyeh is likely to defeat Abbas in a presidential election.

The Fatah gunmen who marched in the Gaza Strip courtesy of Hamas are not supporters of Abbas. Instead, they represent the "other face" of Fatah -- the one that does not believe in any peace process with Israel and shares Hamas's ambition of destroying Israel.

Palestinians Thank UN for Giving Them Permission to Murder Jews

Monday, January 02, 2017 | Ryan Jones

It was a trigger, intentional or not, for renewed bloodshed.

The resolution essentially supports the Palestinian interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242, namely, that Jews have no right to live in any part of the so-called "West Bank," including the eastern half of Jerusalem.

Several of those who authored Resolution 242 back in 1967 have stated that they intentionally did not demand that Israel surrender all the territory it captured in the Six Day War.

But the Palestinians and Israel's other detractors don't see it that way. And Resolution 2334 has just given them a major boost.

Most worrying is that Palestinian groups see it as approval for their violent struggle (read: campaign of terror) against those Jews who dare defy the international community by settling in their biblical heartland.

This was demonstrated by none other than Fatah, the political movement of "moderate" Palestinian

Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Fatah boasts many violent logos and political cartoons. One depicts the entire Land of Israel colored as a Palestinian flag and being used to stab the word “settlement.” Following the passing of Resolution 2334, Fatah reissued that picture, adding the words “Thank You” above a list of the 14 nations that voted in favor (the US, which abstained in the vote, was left out).

“Fatah is saying more Israelis will pay with their lives as a result of the UN resolution,” explained Palestinian Media Watch, an Israeli NGO that monitors and analyzes local Arab media.

Perhaps that was Obama’s intention. Perhaps it wasn’t. But either way, it once again demonstrates that the “wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 3:19) cannot undo God’s plans. It can only lead to more suffering.

Pence hails House motion on Israel, ‘our most cherished ally’

VP-elect applauds resolution calling Security Council’s anti-settlements resolution a ‘one-sided’ obstacle to peace

BY TIMES OF ISRAEL

Vice president-elect Mike Pence on Thursday hailed a vote by the US House of Representatives declaring a United Nations Security Council resolution a “one-sided” obstacle to peace.

The House resolution was seen as a rejection of the Obama administration, which did not veto UNSC Resolution 2334 condemning Israeli settlements as illegal.

“Great to see strong bipartisan vote in Congress opposing recent UN resolution against our most cherished ally,” Pence tweeted early Friday morning. “America stands with Israel.”

House Resolution 11 declared the UN motion a “one-sided” effort that is an obstacle to peace, placing disproportionate blame on Israel for the continuation of the conflict and encouraging Palestinians not to engage in direct, bilateral negotiations.

Passed by a vote of 342-80, the measure puts the lower chamber of Congress firmly against President Barack Obama’s decision to withhold the US veto power from shielding Israel against the censure.

Mike Pence via Twitter:

Great to see strong bipartisan vote in Congress opposing recent UN resolution against our most cherished ally. America stands with Israel

Last month’s UN Resolution 2334 said the settlement enterprise “has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law” and calls for a complete end to all construction in areas Israel captured after the 1967 Six Day War, including East Jerusalem.

It also calls on all states “to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967” — language that Israel fears will lead to a surge in boycott and sanctions efforts, and that an Israeli official warned would provide “a tailwind for terror.”

Pence was echoing the sentiments of President-elect Donald Trump on the UNSC resolution. Immediately after the UNSC resolution was passed Trump tweeted his condemnation of the abstention, saying that Washington cannot continue to treat Israel “with such total disdain and disrespect.”

Trump also implied that under Obama, the US was no longer “a great friend” to the Jewish state.

“We cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect. They used to have a great friend in the US, but...” Trump wrote. “Not anymore. The beginning of the end was the horrible Iran deal, and now this (UN)! Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!”

“The United Nations has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. So sad!” he tweeted.

Israel responded furiously to the UN Security Council resolution, downgrading ties with the countries that voted in favor and calling in their ambassadors on Christmas Day for a dressing-down.

Trump, who publicly called for the US to veto the resolution ahead of the vote, has repeatedly criticized Obama’s policies on Middle East.

Eric Cortellessa contributed to this report.



Obama approved giving Iran 116 metric tons of uranium as a ‘thank you’ gift

theblaze.com

Barack Obama’s administration, with the help of the rest of the P5+1 signatories of the Iran deal, has gifted Iran with enough uranium to make 10 simple nuclear bombs, a nuclear arms expert said Monday.

The transfer of 116 metric tons of uranium will come from Russia as a “thank you” in exchange for Iran’s export of tons of reactor coolant, the Associated Press reported in an exclusive.

David Albright, whose Institute of Science and International Security often briefs U.S. lawmakers on Iran’s nuclear program, says the shipment could be enriched to enough weapons-grade uranium for more than 10 simple nuclear bombs, “depending on the efficiency of the enrichment process and the design of the nuclear weapon.”

The shipment is the first since the Iran deal was implemented in July 2015. However, it is by no means the only time Iran was gifted with uranium that could possibly be used to build a nuclear weapon once the terms of the Iran deal begin to expire in less than a decade. In 2015, Iran received another shipment as part of the negotiations leading up to the nuclear deal in exchange for enriched uranium it sent to Russia. They are prohibited from storing more than about 660 pounds of low-enriched uranium under the terms of the Iran deal. Conventional wisdom holds this is not enough to produce a weapon.

The AP reported Monday that Iran has not said what purpose they have in mind for the uranium they’ve just received:

Uranium can be enriched to levels ranging from reactor fuel or medical and research purposes to the core of an atomic bomb. Iran says it has no interest in such weapons and its activities are being closely monitored under the nuclear pact to make sure they remain peaceful...

...Tehran has not said what it would do with the uranium but could choose to store it or turn it into low-enriched uranium and then export it for use as reactor fuel.

Without confirming the reported agreement, U.S. officials argued that such shipments would neither endanger nor violate the Iran nuclear deal.

Two U.S. diplomats, speaking anonymously, revealed the exchange before a meeting in Vienna to discuss Iranian charges that the U.S. was reneging on sanctions relief mandates included in the Iran deal.

State Department spokesman John Kirby said there is no ban on imports of this kind to Iran, and reiterated that uranium “cannot be used ... for a weapon” in its original form, the AP reported.

In December, it was revealed that Iran received more than \$10 billion in cash and gold in sanctions relief that critics worried may be used to fund terror groups and activities. The Obama administration denied having a role in that exchange.

Antichrist Prophecy

By Chris Schang

One of the most fascinating topics in the Bible is the coming one world government leader known in the Bible as the Antichrist. The Antichrist is Satan’s opposite of the Lord Jesus Christ. While Jesus Christ is heralded as the Son of God, the Antichrist will be the Son of Satan and a counterfeit to Jesus Christ. The Bible says that the Antichrist will be a man who rises to great power in the world after the rapture of the church. The Antichrist will stand for everything that Jesus does not stand for. While Jesus Christ stands for purity, righteousness, holiness, and many other things of goodness in contrast the Antichrist will stand for wickedness, evil, lies, and everything evil and wicked.

The Bible gives us numerous prophetic titles for the Antichrist. The Antichrist is often referred to as the

man of sin, the lawless one, the son of perdition, the beast, the bloody and deceitful man, the wicked one, the adversary, and many other titles that all paint a dark and grim picture on Antichrist prophecy from the scriptures. The Bible offer quite a few prophecies about the future Antichrist, some of which we will list below. This list is not exhaustive, but will help you in understanding the role the Antichrist will play in the end times. Some Antichrist prophecies for the last days are as follows:

1. The antichrist will be a man – Daniel 7:24-25
2. He will rise among 10 kings – Daniel 7:8 – This 10 nation union will be a revived Holy Roman Empire – Daniel 2:44
3. He will uproot 3 kings from the original 10 kings to gain political power – Daniel 7:8
4. He will confirm a covenant for 7 years – Daniel 9:27
5. His 10 nation union will merge into a world government which he will dominate – Revelation 13:1-2
6. The world government over which he rules will be a red (communistic or socialistic) government – Revelation 17:14
7. He will be promoted and exalted by a miracle working religious partner (false prophet) – Revelation 13:11-12
8. He was, and is not, and yet is – Revelation 17:8
9. He will ascend to power on a platform of peace. By peace, he will destroy many – Daniel 8:25
10. The antichrist will be preceded by 7 kings or rulers. He will be the 8th king. He will also be “of” the 7 – Revelation 17:11
11. He will have a mouth speaking great things. Very boastful – Daniel 7:8
12. His look will be more stout than his fellows – Daniel 7:20
13. He will understand puzzling things – Daniel 8:23
14. He will have a fierce countenance – Daniel 8:23
15. He will cause craft to prosper – Daniel 8:25
16. He apparently assumes world dominating power 3 1/2 years after he confirms the covenant. He then will continue to reign for 42 months – Revelation 13:5
17. The Abomination of Desolation is the event that signals the beginning of this final 42 months – Daniel 9:27
18. He will claim to be God (or an incarnation of God) – 2 Thessalonians 2:4
19. He opposes God – 2 Thessalonians 2:4
20. He will speak marvelous things against the God of gods – Daniel 11:36
21. He will exalt himself above all that is called God – 2 Thessalonians 2:4
22. He will sit in the temple of God – 2 Thessalonians 2:4

23. He will plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain – Daniel 11:45
24. He will have power to make war with the saints and to overcome them – Revelation 13:7
25. He will take away the daily sacrifices from the temple – Daniel 11:31
26. He will continue this war with the saints for 3 1/2 years – Daniel 7:21, 25
27. This time of Great Tribulation is launched upon the Earth by the antichrist at the Abomination of Desolation. – Matthew 24:15,21.
28. He will rule a mighty and strong kingdom – Daniel 7:7
29. He was given power over all kindreds, tongues and nations – Revelation 13:7
30. His kingdom will devour the whole earth – Daniel 7:23
31. During this time, the antichrist will scatter the power of the holy people – Daniel 12:7
32. He will try to change times and laws; and they will be given into his power for 3 1/2 years – Daniel 7:25
33. He will give great honor to the God of forces, with gold, silver, jewels, etc – Daniel 11:38
34. He will prosper in everything that he does – Daniel 8:24
35. He will not regard the God of his fathers – Daniel 11:37
36. He will have great military power that will stand behind him, to enforce his laws – Daniel 11:31
37. He will not regard the desire of women – Daniel 11:37
38. All that dwell upon the Earth will worship him, except those who's names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life – Revelation 15:2
39. He will have an image made after him – Revelation 15:2
40. He will fight against Jesus Christ at Armageddon – Revelation 17:14
41. He will stand against the Prince of princes – Daniel 8:25
42. The mark of the beast will be the amount of his name – Revelation 14:11
43. The Lord will consume him with the spirit of his mouth (which is the Word of God) – 2 Thessalonians 2:8
44. The Lord will destroy him with the brightness of his coming (which is his glory) – 2 Thessalonians 2:8
45. He will be cast alive into the lake of fire – Revelation 19:20
46. He will be tormented day and night for ever and ever – Revelation 20:10

47. He will gain his power, authority, and throne from Satan – Revelation 13:1-2

48. He was given power and authority over tribe, tongue, and nation – Revelation 13:7

49. His right eye shall be made blind – Zechariah 11:17

50. He will have a mark so that all shall worship him, and those who don't can't buy or sell – Revelation 13:16-17

As we can see from the Antichrist prophecies, the man of sin is destined to be an evil man that will arise as Satan's vehicle to get the world to worship him. Satan will use the man who is to become the Antichrist as a means of getting the world to worship him during the Tribulation period. He will even have a sidekick that helps him accomplish his evil and wicked plans. This man is known in the Bible as the False Prophet. While the Bible doesn't tell us a whole lot about the False Prophet, it does tell us that the False Prophet will lead men in their worship of the Antichrist. The False Prophet will also introduce the diabolical "mark of the beast" whereby the people of the world will take a mark on their forehead or hand that pledges their allegiance to the Antichrist. If one is caught being forced to choose between this mark of the beast and being martyred for the sake of Jesus Christ, it is strongly recommended that one be martyred as the mark of the beast is a damnable rejection of God and there is only one place assigned for those who take the mark and that is HELL. Do not take the mark of the beast under any circumstance, if you do you have lost forever the chance to be saved.

The mark of the beast will somehow be related to the infamous number 666, as the Bible tells us that the number 666 is somehow the number of the beast. It is suggested that using Gematria people left behind during the tribulation period will be able to figure out who the Antichrist will be. Gematria is simply the use of numbers to represent letters in the Hebrew and Greek languages. It is suggested that the Antichrist's name will somehow add up to 666. This is the primary reason that many end times speculators have focused on prominent political leaders of our day in an attempt to try to figure out if any of their names add up to 666. In my humble opinion, this kind of speculating is pretty much a waste of time as the Antichrist will likely not be revealed until after the rapture of the church. Until then, speculating and naming possible Antichrist candidates is simply a good way to ruin the Christian witness we have in the world as there are numerous candidates and they all can't be right. The best thing for us to do is to know what the Bible says about the Antichrist prophecies and to be prepared to warn those who may be left behind.

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