

Newsbytes

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“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

IRAN'S FLAG ON ISRAEL'S BORDER: 'WE ARE COMING'

BY SETH J. FRANTZMAN jpost.com

Living with the Iranian threat is not a new phenomenon, but it is an increasingly complex one because of the Syrian civil war. Iran is reaching a peak of influence and power in the region.

Lebanon seems to be having a flag sale. Iranian flags, Hezbollah, the UN, Spain, Palestinian flags. They are all flying provocatively along the border with the northern Israeli community of Metulla. Just meters from the fence that separates the countries, not far from the site of a 1985 terror attack, Hezbollah has festooned the roads with signs of its presence. It's purposely done so Israeli residents can see the flags and the billboards next to them. In Metulla there is a memorial for the 12 Israeli soldiers killed in the 1985 suicide bombing, while just across the border a huge billboard celebrates the same killing.

I spent Tuesday touring the Lebanese and Syrian borders with Israel to see the tense situation in the north of the country. The flags across the border seemed representative of the situation that prevails today. Next to the Hezbollah flags is a small post that has a UN logo. Near it the Amal Shia Lebanese movement has erected a large banner reading “to he of pure hands and a generous soul, thank you speaker of parliament Nabih Berri.” On the banner is the Iranian flag. Here is a visible presence of Iran just a stone's throw from Israel. It's not the only Iranian symbol here. On a hill overlooking new houses being constructed in Metulla is another huge poster with a photo of the Dome of the Rock. The face of Ayatollah Khomeini glowers down over the dome and Hezbollah has written “we are coming” in Hebrew and Arabic. They've put a giant Palestinian flag next to the poster.

The message is clear, as it is disconcerting. Here is Iran glowering down on Israel from the north. As we toured the border area with Lt. Col. (Res.) Sarit Zehavi, the head of Alma, an organization that gives briefings on Israel's security Challenges on the Northern Border, what should be a tense situation seemed quiet. This area has known war for many years. There is an old British police fort here from the 1930s when terror also struck at Jewish communities. Zehavi stresses that the situation along the Lebanese border has not affected tourism or housing prices, and the new construction is evidence of that.

Living with the Iranian threat is not a new phenomenon, but it is an increasingly complex one because of the Syrian civil war. Iran is reaching a peak of influence and power in the region. Its tentacles stretch across Syria and Iraq and Hezbollah is emboldened. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah boasts of bringing thousands of foreign fighters to help him attack Israel. He sees Shi'ites from Afghanistan and

Pakistan and Yemen joining the assault. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei tweeted on Monday that "today the fight against Zionist regime is wajib (obligatory) and necessary for Muslims. Why do some evade this duty?" He also claimed "Palestine is the number one issue of the Islamic world." From his 300,000 followers on his English language page, he only got several hundred likes on his statements.

So, is the relative quiet in northern Israel an illusion? Are the Iranian flags just meant to intimidate and sow fear, or are they a much deeper problem to be taken seriously? The feeling one gets as a visitor is that of a kind of mirage. There is Hezbollah, a vicious dangerous terror group with more than 100,000 missiles, a few hundred meters away, but familiarity breeds a bit of contempt. The first time you see the flags it's surprising. The second time, interesting. The third time, boring. The flags are just the visible expression of what goes on quietly in villages near the border, and of what Hezbollah's Iranian masters sitting 2,000 kilometers away are thinking. They'd like to boast of conquering Jerusalem or show of some murderous and symbolic attack against Israel. But traversing the border, in the shadow of the flags, is the Israeli army, its Humvees and other vehicles, watching for threats.

ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER TO SYRIA: 'DON'T TEST US'

BY ANNA AHRONHEIM JULY 2, 2017 jpost.com



Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman had stern words for Syria after spillover from the Syrian Civil war landed in Israeli territory for the fifth time in one week.

IDF tanks are seen along the Golan Heights border with Syria. (photo credit:REUTERS)

Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman warned Israel's northern neighbors not to test the Jewish State's patience on Sunday after numerous errant mortars struck Israel over the past week due to heavy fighting across the border.

"We have no intention to enter into any conflict, but I advise our neighbors not to test us," Liberman told military journalists during a briefing at the military headquarters in Tel Aviv.

A number of projectiles have landed in Israeli territory due to the fighting which has intensified on the Syrian side of the border as Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime fights against the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other rebel groups. The offensive was launched by rebels in a bid to take control of the city of al-Baath, also known as new Quneitra, which is one of the few towns in the province that has remained under control of Syrian government forces.

While the mortar shells landing in Israeli territory are errant shells from the fighting, Liberman said that Israel would "not tolerate any spillover into our territory," stressing that the message sent by the IDF in the retaliatory strikes as been "clearly understood" by those across the border.

And while Liberman stated that he did not see any chance for escalation on the border, the smallest incident or a miscalculation by either side had the possibility to lead to conflict, he said, referring to

incidents which led to the outbreak of both Operation Protective Edge and the Second Lebanon War. Israel strikes Syrian targets in response to earlier cross-border fire June 24, 2017.

On Friday, a senior IDF official stated that the IDF "is acting proportionally to prevent any deterioration" and has retaliated against Assad regime positions following the projectiles striking the northern Golan Heights area.

According to Liberman, while the rebels "are not our friends," Israel is ready to accept any ceasefire in Syria that does not involve Iran, Hezbollah or Assad remaining in power.

"We cannot allow for a man like Assad, who kills his own citizens and who uses chemical weapons against them, to remain in power," Liberman said, stressing that "keeping Assad in power is not in our security interests. As long as he is in power, Iran and Hezbollah will be in Syria."

While Liberman stressed that there was no interest on Israel's part to enter into Syria's seven-year civil war, there are red lines that Jerusalem has set including the smuggling of sophisticated weaponry to Hezbollah and an Iranian presence on its borders.

"We will not tolerate any Iranian presence on the border and we will continue to act against that," he said, adding that Israel will "do what is necessary" following the reports that Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps has established underground arms production factories for Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In March, the Kuwaiti Al Jarida newspaper reported that Hezbollah has operated and managed the factories set up by the IRGC in response to alleged Israeli strikes against weapons convoys in Syria. According to the report, the factories can produce missiles with a range of over 500 kilometers as well as surface-to-air and anti-tank missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles able to carry explosives.

The report was confirmed by Military Intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Herzl Halevi on Thursday who said that Hezbollah was using Iranian know-how to set up a weapons industry and transfer arms to the south of the country.

"We take everything seriously. We are certainly aware of the reports and we will do what needs to be done. This is a significant phenomenon and we cannot ignore it. Precise weapons such as these missiles are a challenge. Compared to past wars, they will hit deep inside Israeli territory," Liberman said.

But Israel has "increased the gap with Hezbollah since the Second Lebanon War in 2006. We know what to do. Neither the missiles nor their factories will rust."

The Six Day War Plus 50 Years

By Don McGee raptureready.com July 1, 2017

Many people remember where they were and what they were doing when certain pivotal events in their personal lives happened. The same can be said about some of those generally broad but decisive events in history, and in the case of some people the two are sometimes combined.

For my parents and the people of their generation the date of 29 October 1929, Black Tuesday, was ever to be remembered though many people in rural America were very poor thus the stock market crash had little impact on their lives. Then there was 7 December 1941, indeed "...a date that will live in infamy." For those of my generation such dates include 22 November 1963 when President

Kennedy was assassinated, along with the day a military man arrived safely home from Viet Nam.

But there is another date. For some of us the day of 5 June 1967 will always be remembered because that was the first day of the Six Day War. On that day Israel, blockaded and in the face of imminent invasion by Egypt, Syria and Jordan along with other Arab nations, launched a preemptive and very successful attack upon their enemies. Though unknown at first, that day was an important mile marker for some of us.

On that Tuesday night 50 years ago some teenagers were standing in the parking lot of a small church in Turkey Creek, Louisiana just before the service was to begin, and we were overhearing the excited conversations among several preachers as they discussed the prophetic implications of what had just happened. The recurring theme of their discussion was the nearness of the rapture of the church. For whatever reason that topic, and the profound emphasis those men placed upon it, found a permanent place in the minds of at least some of us that night.

Any student of Bible prophecy, and of secular history for that matter, understands that the history of Israel is filled with war. Whether a person begins with the life of Abraham 4000 years ago or Benjamin Netanyahu, the current Israeli Prime Minister, the pages of history are red with blood; much Jewish blood.

No group of people in all of history has been the target of hatred, oppression and attempted genocide like the Jews. No one. Ethnic groups can talk about being victimized and they can make their pretentious demands, but not one of them has seen such massive, orchestrated and effective pogroms and attempted extermination like the Jews have seen. Conversely and ironically, it seems that not one of those groups has contributed to the advancement of humanity, to the betterment of life as the Jews have.

Think about where the world would be without the Jew. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin: polio vaccine. Galileo: the study of light. Selman Waksman: discovered streptomycin and coined the word "antibiotic". Briton Epstein: identified first cancer virus. Maria Meyer: discovered structure of atomic nuclei. Julius Mayer: laws of thermodynamics. And most importantly Jesus Christ: salvation. The list could go on, but what is so poignant is that in spite of the contributions of the Jew, the world hates him with unveiled passion.

And that is by design. Scripture says that Satan is the god of this world ("world" here means age; cycle of time), and the Jew and everything associated with him represents a threat to Satan's permanent position as god of this world. The greatest Jew to have ever lived, Jesus, will one day take this world and transform it into a beautiful and serene place after He binds Satan in the abyss for 1000 years. If Satan, the personification of all that is evil, can destroy the Jewish race he can stop Jesus from taking from him what he thinks is his. In a nutshell that is what this whole Jew/Arab, Jew/UN, etc. conflict is all about. Essentially, hatred for Jews is satanically inspired. And that is why the Arab world was poised to destroy Israel 50 years ago.

Nothing portrays the Six Day War like David Rubinger's iconic picture of three IDF paratroopers, Zion Karasenti, Yitzhak Yifat and Haim Oshri just 20 minutes after liberating the Western Wall from the Jordanians. To the right are those same paratroopers 40 years later in 2007.

But that war was about more than 3 IDF Troopers at the Wall. It was about the Jewish possession of something that has always been theirs, and which they had not possessed in almost 1900 years-the Temple Mount and its Western Wall. When Jordan occupied the Old City of Jerusalem in 1948 the area became exclusively Muslim. Christian presence was severely restricted, Jews were not even allowed in the area, 58 synagogues were destroyed and Jewish tombstones were used as flooring in

Muslim latrines. The Western Wall area became a Muslim slum. In 1967 it was liberated.

But things took a bad turn after the end of the Six Day War. Moshe Dayan, then Israel's Minister of Defense, immediately returned the Temple Mt. to Muslim control despite the evil they had perpetuated against the Jews. You see, Dayan was a secular Jew and saw the Temple Mt. as only an historic place to the Jews and not worth a continued war with the Muslims. Actually, this was a miserable attempt at appeasing the Muslims, and as is always the case with appeasement toward Muslims it only emboldened them in their hatred.

The war had an impact upon the U.S., also. The USS Liberty, a Naval intelligence gathering vessel operating in international waters just north of Egypt, was attacked by the Israeli Air Force and Navy. Thirty-four crew members were killed in the attack and the ship had heavy damage. Some believe the attack was intentional while others believe it was accidental and was just one of many unfortunate "friendly fire" incidents that happen in warfare. Israel, who would have had no real reason to attack an American vessel, apologized for the attack, compensated the families of those killed and injured and paid the U.S. Government for the damages to the vessel. This incident goes down as a very sad and very emotional chapter in the history of the Six Day War, and is understandably still a sore spot for some Americans.

Regarding the war, the Arab nations first met to discuss the annihilation of Israel at the Casablanca Hotel in Morocco in 1965. King Hassan II of Morocco actually did not trust his Arab colleagues and secretly recorded the meeting giving the recording to the Israelis. Though they talked a lot about Arab unity in the meeting they were not really unified much less prepared for war at that time. As early 1967 approached, however, their thinking changed. They thought the time for the destruction of Israel had come.

It was a reckless and exhilarating time in the days leading up to the war with Arab leaders becoming ecstatic about the prospect of wiping Israel off the map. They were being led on by Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser. He had dismissed UN peace keepers from the Sinai and had massed his troops on the border with Israel while blockading Israeli ships in the Straits of Tiran, an act of war in itself.

On 22 May 1967, while speaking to Egyptian pilots at Bir Gafgafa air base in the Sinai Desert, Nasser said, "The Jews are threatening war – we say to them 'welcome'!" On 30 May Nasser said, "The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel..." He further said they were going to "astound the world" and that "the critical hour has arrived." Nasser was the main instigator of the war and he thought Arab victory was a done deal. No man could have ever been more wrong.

Israel had warned Jordan to stay out of the fight, but smelling Jewish blood in the water King Hussein could not resist. The result was Jordan suffered a very effective Israeli counterattack as IDF troops liberated the old eastern part of Jerusalem along with Judea and Samaria, the so-called West Bank.

Syria, to Israel's north, had long been shelling the Israeli civilian population south of Lake Galilee from an area known as the Golan Heights. Though this cowardly activity continued until the start of the war, Israel was secretly working to deal with this situation, and others, when the inevitable war would come. Eli Cohen, an Israeli spy, had achieved a high position in the Syrian government. On his visits to the Golan he noted the Syrian bunker positions and sent maps and photographs to Israel. In an act of strategic genius, he had trees planted at each bunker ostensibly to provide shade for the weary Syrian soldiers. These became excellent targets for Israeli guns during the Six Day War. Cohen was discovered in 1965 and was publicly hanged in Damascus, but his work paid rich dividends in the war two years later.

Though at a tactical disadvantage Israel won the war. Amazingly, in just six days the IDF was in

position to capture Cairo, Damascus and Amman, the capitals of the belligerent Arab nations. But Israel had no such desire because their main objectives had been achieved; objectives that were, and are today, absolutely necessary for the defense of the Jewish nation. These, by the way, are the same areas former President Obama demanded that Israel give back to her avowed enemies. On 10 June 1967 Israel accepted a cease-fire agreement.

Those are just a few of the facts about the war, and Israel along with her supporters are discussing many of these things as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of this noble victory. We can marvel at all the strategic and tactical maneuvers of the IDF, and there were many of them that demonstrated Israeli cunning and valor. But, the most distinct characteristic is that God took a direct hand in the matter both militarily and prophetically.

Regarding the future there are three things we need to keep in mind. One: The enemies of Israel will continue demanding they return the strategic areas that they captured from the belligerent nations; areas that are theirs to begin with. Two: Another war is very soon to come; a war that will be very pivotal in Middle East politics. Three: God will once again provide them with a miraculous delivery.

However, what is being misunderstood in Israel and even among Christians who do not know prophetic scripture is that the nation is not where she is and is not what she is because of her military, her politicians or her diplomats. It is because God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham 4000 years ago, and He has since made promises to Abraham's descendants through Isaac. Every last one of them will be kept. Forget pseudo biblical scholarship and secular politics-believe God!

The brightest of Israel's days are before her. But before that time comes, and likely after the next couple of wars, a great day of suffering will come upon the nation and her people. During those dark days there will be no miraculous deliverance as in 1967 or 1973. Only at the very end, when annihilation is imminent will Jesus intervene. The surviving remnant will then recognize that Jesus is indeed their Messiah.

Obviously the Six Day War points to God's hand in the preservation of Israel. But what is not so obvious is that it was also an important means by which He influenced the eventual life's work of some people who were, at the time, young and absolutely clueless. At times He works in strange ways.

The Yellowstone Supervolcano Has Just Seen 878 Earthquakes in Two Weeks But don't Freak Out Just Yet.

Carly Cassella June 29 sciencealert.com

Yellowstone has had a turbulent June. In just two weeks, the supervolcano that lies underneath the national park was hit with 878 earthquakes.

The dense series of earthquakes, called an earthquake swarm, began on June 12. Within one week, the USGS had already recorded 464 earthquakes.

"This is the highest number of earthquakes at Yellowstone within a single week in the past five years," reported the USGS in a statement released last week.

The majority of the earthquakes were no greater than a magnitude of 1, but the largest reached a magnitude of 4.4, which is the biggest earthquake experienced in Yellowstone since March 2014.

But, thankfully, we don't need to freak out anytime soon. It is extremely unlikely that these swarms will set off the supervolcano. In fact, the USGS sets the probability of the supervolcano erupting in the coming year at 1 in 730,000, and has kept its volcano alert level at green.

"Swarms in Yellowstone are a common occurrence," Jamie Farrell, a research professor at the University of Utah, which is part of the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory (YVO), told Newsweek.

"On average, Yellowstone sees around 1,500-2,000 earthquakes per year. Of those, 40 to 50 percent occur as part of earthquake swarms."

And while the most recent swarm is larger than average, Farrell says there isn't any evidence that the activity is related to magma moving in the subsurface.

Geologists are constantly monitoring the Yellowstone supervolcano for unusual activity. If the volcano was about to blow, Farrell says they would start seeing increased seismicity, large changes in surface deformation, changes to the hydrothermal system and changes in gas output.

"Typically if we see just one of these things, it doesn't necessarily mean there is an eruption coming. If we start to see changes in all these things, then a red flag may be raised," said Farrell.

The Yellowstone supervolcano doesn't blow very often. In the past two million years, it has only experienced three major eruptions.

But even if it did erupt, Jacob Lowenstern, a scientist in charge of the YVO, says it would be fairly inconsequential.

"If Yellowstone erupts, it's most likely to be a lava flow, as occurred in nearly all the 80 eruptions since the last 'supereruption' 640,000 years ago," he told Newsweek's Hannah Osborne.

"A lava flow would be a big deal at Yellowstone, but would have very little regional or continental effect."

Regardless, Farrell and the rest of the team at the University of Utah assure us they are continuing to monitor the swarm. So there won't be any nasty surprises sneaking up out of Yellowstone anytime soon.

Quotable:

(thanks to Rob Yardley for the re-post online)

Question for Dave Hunt: How could God allow such cruelty to befall mankind, such as the ignorant millions in India suffering starvation, pain, disease, etc., brainwashed into a false religion?

Answer: I sense the pain of your heart. There are some key words in your important question; the first is, "allow." This is not the world as God wants it to be or made it to be; it is the world that man has made in his rebellion and that God has allowed.

Why would God "allow" sin, suffering, idolatry, etc., all of which will lead to eternal punishment in the Lake of

Fire? The biblical answer is clear: He has given man the power of choice. Without free will, we could neither love one another, nor God, nor respond to His love for us. Love is the highest expression of God's character and image in the man whom He created. Obviously, love must come from the heart, or it is not love. The ability to love would be meaningless without the ability not to love and even to hate: obedience is meaningless unless one has the option and ability to disobey.

Rejecting free will, the Calvinist says that this evil world is exactly as God predestined and brings to pass. But the very conscience God has given us will not allow such a wicked charge against God who "is love" (1 Jn:4:8,16), who is "good to all: and his tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps:145:9), and who desires "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tm 2:4). That many will suffer in the Lake of Fire for eternity is not what God desires for anyone!

Your next key word is "ignorant." On the contrary, God has given each person the witness of creation and conscience. No matter at what time in history or in what place and society anyone is raised (even in the pagan Far East, like India or China, where one-third of earth's population lives), the Bible says that "they are without excuse" (Rom:1:19,20). No one is totally "ignorant"-and to those who obey the light God has given them, more light and grace will be given. But those who reject the light of creation and conscience, which God has given to all, are given up by God to their own willful perversions.

Your third key word is "brainwashed." In fact, no one is a pawn of Satan without first having rejected the light God has given them in creation and conscience. Even then, Satan may need to do little, because "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas 1:14).

The world in Noah's day was so far from what God desired it to be that "it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart" to such an extent that He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth..." (Gn 6:6,7). Indeed, God destroyed everyone except one man and his family, Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (v 8).

Jesus said that in the last days just before His return, conditions on the earth would be as they were "in the days of Noe [and] in the days of Lot" (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-30). So we know that the world of sin and suffering you describe is not God's doing. Has He allowed it? Yes. But the only other alternative would have been to destroy mankind. We are glad that He did not, because many like Noah have found grace by accepting salvation in Christ Jesus-and there is a new universe coming, entirely without sin or suffering!