

Newsbytes

The First Watch

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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

O Jerusalem

December 07, 2017

J.L. Robb

A year after I was born, Israel was reborn. At age 1, I did not have a clue to the significance of May 14, 1948 nor did I know of the numerous Biblical predictions of Israel’s return to center stage.

As a kid, I went to Sunday School and sometimes, church; but it was 32 years later before I began to learn about these 2,700-year-old prophecies. That is sad. Until I read Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* and was introduced to Biblical prophecies concerning the Last Days, I was unsure if God really existed. The more I read, the more I was convinced that prophecy was the proof of the pudding.

Today, December 6, 2017, may prove to be the biggest day in Israel’s post-1948 history.

After Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama campaigned on and promised a move of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Israel’s eternal capital; there is finally a president who is actually planning to do what he said he would do.

Today, President Trump is reportedly announcing a move of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the capital of Israel, Jerusalem. If this does come to fruition, the United States will be the first country to recognize Jerusalem, the City of David, as the capital of Israel. I am not sure President Trump knows the significance of this move in prophecy.

So what did the ancient, Jewish prophets say about Israel and her return in the Last Days?

“In that day, I will restore David’s fallen shelter- I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins- and will rebuild it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the Lord, who will do these things.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills, and I will bring my people Israel back from exile.

“They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God. Amos 9:11-15 NIV

Amos, a shepherd, lived in Tekoa, a village in Judah, southeast of Bethlehem. Amos, though from Judah, prophesied God's messages to the 10 tribes of Israel in the north, telling the leaders to get back to God or else. He wrote from about 760-750 B.C. and predicted the restoration of Israel after her exile, in the Last Days.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God." Zechariah 8:7-8 NIV

Zechariah wrote his prophecies about 520 B.C. and probably saw the rise of the Greek Empire. Zechariah's book is one of the last in the Old Testament and in many ways, parallels Revelation. There are similarities between Zechariah's visions and the four horsemen of Revelation, the measuring of Jerusalem and the flying scroll.

The prophet Isaiah had a lot to say about the restoration of Israel to her ancient lands, and he wrote from about 700-680 B.C. Like Zechariah, Isaiah was from Judah.

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth- everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Isaiah 43:5-7 NIV

Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. Isaiah 66:8 NIV

Israel's rebirth happened in a single day, May 14, 1948.

Jeremiah wrote from about 585-500 B.C. and was a priest in the town of Anathoth. Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" because of all the doom and gloom he predicted would befall Israel and the world.

"However, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when it will no longer be said, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but it will be said, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their ancestors." Jeremiah: 16:14-15 NIV

"I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.

"So then, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land." Jeremiah 23:3-8 NIV

“I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” Jeremiah 29:14 NIV

‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess,’ says the Lord.” Jeremiah 30:3 NIV

I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. Jeremiah 32:37 NIV

The prophet Ezekiel wrote his book from 593-571 B.C. and came from a priestly family who served in the Jewish Temple. He was captured and taken into captivity in 597 B.C. by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Ezekiel contains more dates than any other Biblical record. Ezekiel received a vision of the millennial temple that was to be established by the Messiah upon his return in the Last Days.

“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.’

“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.’ Ezekiel 11:16-17 NIV

“‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.’” Ezekiel 28:25-26 NIV

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. Ezekiel 34:12-14 NIV

... and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. Ezekiel 37:21-22 NIV

With all these prophecies about Israel’s return to her land in the Last Days, it had to happen. It is also evident that the return includes a return to Jerusalem.

The TV news is aghast at what the move of our embassy to Jerusalem might mean for Israeli peace with the Palestinians. I hear the wringing of hands among European leaders, that recognizing Jerusalem will anger the Palestinians who consider Jerusalem as their capital.

Don't you have to be a country or nation to have a capital? Palestine is a territory and has never-ever been a nation or country. Jerusalem has never been their capital. The Muslims are experts at calling a rose a lily and know that if they say it enough, the lemmings will believe.

King David was the greatest king Israel ever had, because they missed out on Jesus by their rejection. Jerusalem was called the City of David.

Will the Palestinian Arabs get angry? Does a bear pee in the woods? The Arabs and the Persians (Iranians) have been mad at the world and each other for thousands of years. No matter what President Trump does today, they will still be angry. Indeed, there will be a war.

Prophecy of the Last Days is playing out right in front of the eyes of the world. I think it is exciting and am glad I am here to see it.

On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. Zechariah 12:3 NIV

President Trump has recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the embassy will move to Jerusalem.

War with Iran's proxies looming, Israel's US envoy warns

Ron Dermer cautions that Tehran's growing influence is likely to lead to military conflict, optimistic about regional peace deal

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In a wide-ranging interview with US news site Politico, Dermer reiterated Israel's assertion that it will not tolerate the presence of Iranian proxies in Syria.

"If Iran is not rolled back in Syria, then the chances of military confrontation are growing. I don't want to tell you by the year or by the month. I'd say even by the week," he warned.

Tehran was responsible for stoking the tensions in Syria, he said. "Because the more they push, we have to enforce our red lines, and you always have the prospects of an escalation, even when parties don't want an escalation, because we will not allow Iran to establish that presence and establish another terror front against Israel in Syria," he added.

Asked exactly how likely war was, Dermer replied, "I wouldn't put a percentage on that, but I think it is higher than people think." He also asserted that the likelihood of conflict in Lebanon, where the powerful Iranian proxy Hezbollah is based, is higher now than it was two years ago.

"Absolutely. There's no question. And it's much higher in Syria," he said. "I mean Assad basically is a vassal of the Iranian regime. And the forces that are on the ground, Shia militias and Hezbollah."

However, he said, Israel had no issue with Russia maintaining a long-term presence in Syria.

Israel has long warned that Iran is trying to establish a permanent presence in Syria as part of its

efforts to control a land corridor from Iran through to the Mediterranean Sea, as it attempts to expand its influence across the Middle East.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said often that Israel will not allow Iran to establish a permanent presence in Syria, and was reported late last month to have sent a warning to that effect via a third party to Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Israel has for years been widely believed to have carried out airstrikes on advanced weapons systems in Syria — including Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles and Iranian-made missiles — as well as Hezbollah positions, but it rarely confirms such operations on an individual basis.

On Friday night, Israeli jets reportedly hit an Iranian military base being constructed in Syria, some 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Israel's northern border, reportedly killing as many as 12 Iranian military personnel. Satellite images published on Monday showed the destruction at that site, the al-Qiswah base south of Damascus. There were reports of another air strike late on Monday.

'Moderate to high' chances for regional peace

In his interview, Dermer also discussed the close relationship between Israel and the Trump administration, and said he was optimistic about the chances for a regional peace deal, though he remained skeptical the Palestinians would agree.

"I would put those chances as moderate to high that we could be in that process," he said. "Again, whether the Palestinians 71 years after the UN resolution, the Partition Resolution, will cross a Rubicon that they haven't crossed in the first 70, I'm a little more skeptical about it. But it might be that the chances of them crossing the Rubicon will go up if they see that the region is prepared to reconcile with Israel."

The ambassador refused to be drawn out as to whether Israel knew that former national security adviser Michael Flynn had spoken to the Russians about undoing the "anti-Israel resolution at the UN," but said that at the time — December 2016, before Trump entered office — Israel spoke to everyone it could, including members of Trump's latent administration, in an effort to counter one of president Barack Obama's final moves.

"If the president's team reached out and who they reached out to and all the details I don't know, but from our point of view it was the more the better because they were actually not only helping Israel in that case, they were helping themselves," he said.

Dermer stressed that notwithstanding Trump's strong popularity among Israelis, the Obama administration also did much to help the Jewish state.

"There were many things that we are grateful that President Obama did. We did sign — and this I was involved with a lot deeply — a memorandum of understanding on long-term military assistance. That was actually signed during the Obama administration," he said. "The intelligence sharing and security cooperation and many other things that happened during the Obama administration."

In the interview Dermer also spoke extensively about the Iranian nuclear deal, and explained that Israel does not want it to be overturned yet.

Rather, he hopes that Trump and European nations will be able to amend the controversial pact in a

way that ensures Iran does not have a clear path to nuclear weapons in a few years' time. "Israel still thinks there is a path to get a fix for the deal," he said. "And the fix could be better than the US walking away alone."

Next Article: Well for now at least... but it's worth a shot at the media, which still and all displays their not-so-veiled contempt for Israel:

Newsflash: Jerusalem Not on Fire!

by Bassam Tawil December 10, 2017 at 5:00 am
<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/11523/jerusalem-not-on-fire>

"More journalists than protesters..." — Björn Stritzel, German journalist.

Protests against Israel and the US are not uncommon on the streets of Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem. But for the "war correspondents," there is nothing more exciting than standing behind burning tires and stone throwers and reporting from the heart of the "clashes." Such scenes make the journalists look as if they are in the middle of a battlefield and are risking their lives to bring the story home to their viewers. They might even receive an award for their "courageous" reporting from danger zones!

Jerusalem is tense, and has long been so, because the Palestinians have not yet managed to come to terms with Israel's right to exist. That is the real story. The Palestinians rage and rage for only one reason: because Israel exists. Put that in a story and publish it.

The Palestinians declared a three-day-long "rage" spree over US President Donald Trump's announcement recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Thus far, however, it seems that the real anger is showing up in the international media, not on the Palestinian street.

Question: How many foreign journalists does it take to cover the Palestinian reaction to Trump's announcement? Answer: As many as the Israel-Palestinian-conflict-obsessed-West can manage to send.

The massive presence of the international media in Jerusalem and the West Bank has taken even the Palestinians by surprise. Since Trump's announcement on December 6, dozens of additional journalists and camera crews have converged on Israel to cover "the big story."

The American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem, once a favorite haunt of international reporters, is once again packed with journalists from around the world.

Some of these reporters, including those working for American networks, have been flown in from their working posts in London, Paris, Cairo and New York to cover what many of them are already calling the "New Palestinian Intifada." But is it really a new intifada, or is it simply wishful thinking on the part of the swarm of Palestinian and foreign reporters?

In the past few days, we have seen wild exaggeration in the media as to what is really happening in and around the Old City of Jerusalem. What is evident, however, is that the number of journalists and photographers covering the protests in the city has thus far exceeded the number of Palestinian

protesters.

Let us start with Friday, December 8, the final day of the announced Palestinian "rage." The Palestinian Authority, Hamas and other Palestinian groups told us to expect mass rallies and protests after Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound. So did the reporters.

By early morning, at least six television production trucks were stationed in the small parking lot outside the Damascus Gate, the main entrance to the Old City of Jerusalem. The trucks belonged to various television stations were presumably brought there to film live broadcasts of the anticipated mass protests. Another 70-80 journalists and photographers were waiting, some impatiently, for the Muslim worshippers to finish their prayers and start their protests against President Trump's announcement.

What we got in the end was a small and peaceful protest of some 40 Palestinians, who chanted slogans against Israel, the US and Arab leaders -- including Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, who was dubbed a "traitor" and "Israeli spy."

Björn Stritzel, an honest and brave German journalist, tweeted from the scene: "More journalists than protesters after Friday prayers."

The media frenzy was echoed by several other reporters. "Three days of 'rage' have passed since Trump's Jerusalem declaration and Armageddon hasn't arrived," remarked journalist Oren Kessler.

"One is loath to make predictions of continued calm in the region, but thus far the doomsday prophecies have not materialized."

French journalist Piotr Smolar, who also waited for the "big" protest, wrote: "Dozens and dozens of journalists at Damascus gate, where nothing has happened until now."

Joe Dyke, a reporter with Agence France Press (AFP), tweeted this photo showing more journalists than protesters at Damascus Gate. He wrote: "Small Palestinian protest at Damascus Gate in Jerusalem broken up by the Israeli police. They seemed to object to a picture of Trump as a toilet."

Dyke later reported that he had "just walked through Jerusalem's Old City and the situation is very calm. More police on streets but no issues as yet. Tourists milling about."

The following day, Saturday December 9, we witnessed a repetition of the same scenario in Jerusalem. The city was relatively quiet, but the presence of journalists and photographers loomed large. At noon, a small group of Palestinians (25-30) staged a protest on the main business thoroughfare of east Jerusalem, Salah Eddin Street, while chanting slogans against Israel and the US.

Here is how the journalist Seth Frantzman of The Jerusalem Post, who was at the scene, described the situation: "There are more people with cameras here than anyone clashing (with police) at the moment."

Frantzman later had this to say about the "clash": "There are as many media and onlookers taking photos here as there are youth and police waiting for the clashes."

There are nearly 300,000 Arabs living in Jerusalem, and the truth is that the vast majority did not take part in any of the small protests, which were staged deliberately as a show for the dozens of journalists

who converged on the city. In fact, there were more protesters on the streets of Berlin, Cairo, Valencia (Spain) and Istanbul than in Jerusalem itself. With the exception of the two incidents at Damascus Gate and Salah Eddin Street, the remaining 28 Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem were mostly quiet, with nothing dramatic happening.

The bored journalists were forced to don their helmets and bullet-proof vests and head to the West Bank, in the hope of capturing scenes of the "New Intifada." What they found in the West Bank, however, was not unusual: minor "clashes" between stone throwers and Israeli soldiers occur almost every day.

Protests against Israel and the US are not uncommon on the streets of Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem. But for the "war correspondents," there is nothing more exciting than standing behind burning tires and stone throwers and reporting from the heart of the "clashes." Such scenes make the journalists look as if they are in the middle of a battlefield and are risking their lives to bring the story home to their viewers. They might even receive an award for their "courageous" reporting from danger zones!

That is what happens when you are afraid to go to Yemen, Libya, Syria or Iraq to cover the real bloodshed.

Let us be frank. The large number of journalists dispatched to Israel expected -- even hoped -- that Trump's announcement would trigger a new Palestinian intifada.

This way, the media could blame Trump for "igniting violence," instigating instability and "derailing" the peace process. It is all about media-based Trump-hatred. Of course, it is also about media-based Israel-hatred, searching for any excuse to blame the Jews for the "suffering" of the Palestinians. The journalists, however, will not let those pesky facts get in their way; they continue to report as if Jerusalem is engulfed in flames. The reality on the ground, though, is far from that.

No peace process is about to be "derailed," for the simple reason that there was not one on the first place -- and there has not been one for years. Why? Mostly thanks to Palestinian rejectionism, indoctrination and incitement. The protests and violence we are witnessing in parts of Jerusalem and the West Bank constitute daily life here. It is not as if the Palestinians have not been carrying out terror attacks against Israel all these years. And it is not as if the Palestinians used to love Israel -- or even recognized its right to exist -- until Trump made his announcement last week.

Newsflash for the journalists: There's nothing new on the Palestinian street. Palestinian threats of violence and walking out of any "peace process" is old, old news. Jerusalem is not on fire. Jerusalem is tense, and has long been so, because the Palestinians have not yet managed to come to terms with Israel's right to exist. That is the real story. The Palestinians rage and rage and rage for only one reason: because Israel exists. Put that in a story and publish it.

Bassam Tawil is a Muslim based in the Middle East.