

# 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

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## **Drumbeats Of Ezekiel 38 - Iran Dragging Middle East Into Dangerous Standoff**

By Yaakov Lappin/JNS.org June 19, 2019

In recent weeks, Iran and its proxies have begun operating under a new directive best described as a policy of controlled escalation. Still, the potential for miscalculation and region-wide conflict has grown considerably.

Responding to the chokehold of U.S. sanctions put in place by the Trump administration, Tehran, together with its non-state militias and terrorist entities, initiated a series of aggressive acts throughout the Middle East.

These include the targeting of oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman with mines by a naval Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) squad, and last month, the targeting of oil tankers docked at a United Arab Emirates' port in the Strait of Hormuz.

Such attacks are a clear threat, aimed at showing off Iran's ability to disrupt international oil-shipping traffic. In addition, IRGC forces fired a missile at a U.S. intelligence drone. Meanwhile, Iranian proxy militias in Iraq and Syria were likely behind the firing of rockets recently at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad and at Israel's Golan Heights.

In addition, the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen launched cruise-missile and explosive drone attacks against sensitive targets in Saudi Arabia, hitting airports and oil facilities.

Behind all of the actions is a single message. If U.S. sanctions continue to damage the Iranian economy, the Islamic Republic is prepared to wreak havoc in response. Iran is demonstrating its ability to threaten oil exports by Washington's Arab allies. It is effectively holding the global oil market hostage, in addition to implicitly threatening to step up attacks on Israel.

According to a Hebrew-language report published on Sunday by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Iran has used terror factions in Gaza to send threatening messages in response to its standoff with America.

Examples include speeches delivered by Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar and Palestinian Islamic Jihad secretary-general Ziad Al-Nakhleh. Both released threatening statements outlining what the next conflict

with Israel would look like and boasted about growing rocket arsenals at their disposals. Both terrorist leaders praised Iranian support for their respective organizations.

Sinwar and Al-Nakhleh delivered their speeches in a manner designed to line up with Iran's Quds Day, held on the last Friday of Ramadan, in which the regime in Tehran organizes rallies to call for Israel's destruction.

MEMRI interpreted the speeches by Sinwar and Al-Nakhleh as "a threatening message from Iran, via its proxies, against the U.S. and its allies, after the failure of indirect talks between Iran and the U.S. over the Iranian nuclear program." The statements echoed similar statements that came out of Iran itself on Quds Day, in what looks to be a coordinated influence campaign.

#### Planning to increase uranium enrichment

The Iranians are not rushing into war and are aware of America's superior military might. The Iranians have also tasted Israel's advanced capabilities in the form of large numbers of precision airstrikes in Syria that have destroyed many of their assets.

Instead, Iran wishes to frighten the international community, divide it and intimidate Europe into finding ways for protection from American sanctions.

The European Union has already tried (and failed) to set up a special financial mechanism to allow companies to bypass the sanctions; however, the threat of U.S. penalties has been overwhelming, and this effort failed.

European countries still have time to defend Iran from American sanctions, but they must act immediately, the spokesman for Iran's nuclear agency, Behrouz Kamalvandi, warned on Monday. His statement is an indication of Iran's short-term end game. Iran has given Europe until July 7 to do this.

After that, more severe Iranian violations of the nuclear agreement should be expected.

A longer-term objective for Iran seems to rest on waiting to see whether U.S. President Trump is re-elected in 2020 before taking any truly irreversible decisions.

In the meantime, the Iranians are preparing the option of leaving the nuclear agreement and restarting its nuclear program.

On Monday, Iran warned that it could begin enriching uranium to 20 percent, significantly higher than the 3 percent it is allowed under the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal. Tehran also increased the rate of uranium enrichment and stopped shipping excess uranium abroad, as it is obligated to do.

Between the lines, Iran's warning seems stark. If a strained economy causes instability at home, the Islamic Republic could prefer plunging the region into war in order to save itself, and in doing so rally Iranians around the flag.

The calculation behind such a move is that the Iranian regime would likely survive a U.S. air campaign, despite the massive damage it would incur. But it might not survive an uprising at home.

This, then, is Iran's response to the massive economic pressure it is under. After America cancelled waivers to countries that import Iranian oil, Tehran took the decision to embark on a policy of controlled escalation.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and the IRGC seem to be controlling Iran's posture, rather than the reformist camp and President Hassan Rouhani. The reformist camp's proposal to rescue the Iranian economy from sanctions and isolation by signing a nuclear deal with the international community in 2015 has been discredited in the eyes of Khamenei and the IRGC.

As tensions in the Persian Gulf rise, they also project outwards, to other areas of the Middle East. Iran controls powerful, heavily armed proxies, and it could activate any number of them as part of a new escalation.

Israel, for its part, has made it clear that it will not tolerate a situation in which Iran restarts its nuclear program.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said should that happen, the international community will have to immediately activate snapback sanctions, and "in any case, Israel will not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons."

## **Locust Swarm “of Biblical Proportions” Hits Italy**

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz June 16, 2019

“They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt.” Exodus 10:15 (The Israel Bible™)

A swarm of locusts enveloped Sardinia off the coast of Italy last week. Local farmers reported it was the worst infestation they had seen since the end of World War II. The Italian agricultural association Coldiretti released a statement on Tuesday saying “We are walking on locust carpet.”

“We had droughts in 2017 and a lot of rain in 2018, the ideal climate for locusts to emerge from fallow land and then move to cultivated fields to eat,” said Michele Arbau, from Coldiretti Sardinia.

“There is nothing we can do about it this year,” he told Reuters,

“I have never seen anything like it in 53 years of life,” breeder Luigi Puggioni told the Italian newspaper La Nuova, who described the swarm as “biblical.”

Vegetation has been severely hit and the industry fears it may be too late to save this year’s crop. For the Biblically inclined, swarms of locusts evoke images of pre-Exodus Egypt.

They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 10:15)

According to Jewish tradition, the ten-plagues will reappear before the Messiah. Rabbi Yosef Berger, the rabbi of King David’s Tomb on Mount Zion, explained this aspect of the Messianic process to Breaking Israel News, quoting the Prophet Micah.

I will show him wondrous deeds As in the days when You sallied forth from the land of Egypt. Micah 7:15  
“All of the miracles will reappear, all of the plagues, the entire story, in all its pain and all its glory,” Rabbi Berger said. “Our job in this generation is to speak about it, to pray for it, even while it is unfolding in front of our eyes.”

A similar plague of locusts covered the Great Mosque in Mecca in December, leading many to wonder if

the wheels of redemption were beginning to turn.

## **The Biblical Necessity of the Millennium**

By Jonathan Brentner June 20, 2019

In my last post, I looked at what Scripture teaches about our exciting role in Jesus' glorious kingdom during the millennium, which takes place between the Second Coming of Christ and the eternal state. For those of us in Christ, this thousand-year period of time (the millennium) will be a thrilling time of renewal as we reign with Jesus for a thousand years, sharing in His inheritance.

After reading my previous article, some might ask, "Is the millennium really necessary for us to experience the wondrous restoration you wrote about? Won't these things also be true in the eternal state? Is the millennium necessary?"

Life in the eternal state will be spectacular. Randy Alcorn, in his book *Heaven*, does a great job of expanding our imagination regarding what life might be like on the new earth and in the New Jerusalem after Jesus has forever vanquished sin and death.

However, the Bible also tells us of Jesus' rule upon the earth during a time when people will rebel against Him and death will be present. Because these things remain during this time, it cannot be the eternal state. It must be the intermediate kingdom we call the millennium, which takes place after the second coming but before the eternal state.

Besides this, there are three other considerations that necessitate the millennial rule of Jesus:

### **The Promise of the Father to His Son**

In Psalm 2:7-8, we read this promise of the Father to the Son, ". . . The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.'" The context in Psalm 2 clarifies that this is a physical rule over the kingdoms of the world in which Jesus rules with a "rod of iron" (2:9).

The presence of rebellion, judgment, and death (Psalm 2:9-12) during this intermediary kingdom sets it apart from the eternal state when such things will no longer exist. Since the conditions of this kingdom do not match our current experience and cannot be the eternal state, it must be the millennium.

Daniel 7:13-14 provides us with a picture of the Father giving "one like the son of man" (a term Jesus often used of Himself) "dominion" over all the peoples and nations of the earth. His rule will be eternal, but the first thousand years will be the millennium, the time the Father gives the Son the nations of the world as He promised in Psalm 2.

The apostle Paul tells us more about this intermediary kingdom in 1 Corinthians 15:24-26:

"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

Once Jesus fulfills His purpose for the kingdom signified by destroying death, He will give His kingdom back to the Father, and the eternal state will begin with the earth and heavens and the New Jerusalem, the glorious city (Rev. 21-22).

### **The Scriptural Prophecies Regarding Israel**

Many Bible-believing pastors today deny the reality of the millennium because they erroneously assert

either that God has rejected Israel or that He no longer deals separately with Israel since Jesus fulfilled all of the Old Testament. This brings me to the second reason for the biblical necessity of the millennium. The Millennium is necessary because it offers the only opportunity for the fulfillment of the many scriptural prophecies regarding the restoration of Israel. Many Old Testament prophets wrote about a regathering and restoration of Israel in the last days (Jer. 30:3, 33:23-26; Ezek. 36:22-38; Zeph. 3:16-20; Amos 14:14-15; Joel 3:1). All these passages speak to a future restoring of a kingdom for Israel that has not yet happened.

Many today laugh at the question of the disciples in Acts 1:6, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Such scoffing overlooks Jesus' reply in which He did not contradict their assumption, only the timing of the kingdom for Israel. Furthermore, if the disciples were terribly confused about the kingdom at this point, it would reflect rather negatively on Jesus' teaching ability since He had spent the forty days after His resurrection teaching them about the kingdom (Acts 1:3).

Those who claim that God has rejected Israel stand in direct contradiction to the teaching of Scripture. In Romans 11, the apostle Paul proclaims that "God has not rejected his people" (v. 2), and later in the chapter predicts the future conversion of "all Israel."

Speaking of Paul's assurances in Romans 11, Eric Sauer wrote this in his book *The Triumph of the Crucified*: "In words which simply cannot be misunderstood, Paul here confesses his belief in a full conversion of Israel, and explains how from it the greatest and most blessed effects will flow to mankind." Can you see the potential for serious problems that arise when one says that Paul's clear words regarding Israel's continuing place do not signify what they appear to mean? Over time, this approach to Scripture has had devastating consequences for the words of the apostle regarding many other things.

### The Words of Scripture

One cannot deny the reality of a future millennium before the eternal state and at the same time interpret the words of Scripture in the way that authors intended.

Let's take the words of the prophet Zechariah, for example. He prophesied that a time after Jesus' crucifixion, a great number of the Israelites would repent and recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Using words that clearly apply to those of Jewish descent and no one else, the prophet pictures a time of much weeping as they see the one "they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

If one dismisses a future for Israel and thereby denies the reality of the millennium, that person cannot take the words of the prophet Zechariah as he intended them or, for that matter, what his words meant to his original audience. The denier of the millennium must retrofit an understanding to the text that was foreign to the prophet's understanding at the time he wrote concerning the future repentance of Israel.

All these things also apply to Zechariah 14 where the prophet describes the Lord as "king over all the earth" (v. 9) and one who reigns in Jerusalem during a time when rebellion remains possible on the earth (vv. 16-19). For reasons already discussed, this cannot be eternity.

In Revelation 20:1-10, John describes a thousand-year rule of Jesus before the eternal state. Just as we saw in many other passages, it's a time when sin is still present since Satan orchestrates a massive rebellion at the close of this time. If John's words regarding this time are mere allegory, of what do they refer? Satan is not bound now, and he will be totally destroyed before the eternal state. Even in a symbolical sense, there is not fulfillment to John's words apart from the millennium before the eternal state. The words of the prophets and Jesus, as well as the apostles speak of a coming time of great tribulation on the earth followed by the Lord's return and His rule over Israel. Those who deny a future restoration of Israel and the reality of the millennium cannot take any of the prophetic words regarding the future literally, in the way that those speaking intended them. They must retrofit the words with an understanding foreign to the prophets when they wrote.

As those redeemed by our Savior, we look forward to a wondrous time of restoration beginning with the Lord's return for us and continuing on throughout eternity. While the time of the eternal state after the millennium will also be glorious for us, our wondrous anticipation of this time finds its basis in a literal interpretation of God's Word, which also teaches the thousand-year rule of Jesus.

Taking the words of Scripture as the writers intended them necessitates the thousand-year reign of Jesus that we call the millennium. During this time of renewal, we will see God's purposes come to full fruition as He also prepares us for our roles during the eternal state, or heaven, where we will enjoy all the wonders of the new earth and New Jerusalem.

Because sin will no longer exist in eternity and 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 indicates a change as Jesus hands over His kingdom to the Father, I believe our roles of reigning with Jesus will differ during this time. I believe the eternal state will provide us with additional opportunities to pursue our most cherished pursuits, the desires that the Lord has already placed on our hearts.

The millennium is a necessary prelude to the eternal state because, without it, much of scriptural prophecy remains unfulfilled and God reneges on His covenants and promises regarding Israel.

Jonathan Brentner

## **UN Displays Arch of Palmyra Combining New World Order, Idolatry and Quantum Physics**

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz June 23, 2019

For he built again the high places which Chizkiyahu his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal. II Kings 21:3

*The Palmyra arch being unveiled in Florence, Italy.*



A recent display in Switzerland brought together elements of a New World Order, Idolatry, and experiments in Quantum physics.

Ten days ago, a 20 foot-tall replica of Roman Victory Arch of Palmyra was unveiled for a 12 day display in Bern, Switzerland commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Swiss Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The date seems random however June 21 is the summer solstice, a major day in the calendar for the form of idolatry which

focuses on sun-worship.

Its current location in Bern brings it to within 100 miles of The European Organization for Nuclear Research, known by the acronym CERN, which operates the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. CERN performs the most cutting edge experiments in quantum physics, some of which are quite controversial. In 2009, Sergio Bertolucci, Director for Research and Scientific Computing at CERN, briefed reporters about some of the possible implications of an experiment labeled AWAKE. He speculated that the experiment could possibly open portals into the "unknown".

"Out of this door might come something, or we might send something through it," Bertolucci was quoted as saying.

Other experiments raised concerns that black holes might suddenly appear with unknown consequences. Despite being an institute dedicated to scientific research, visitors to CERN are greeted at the gate by a large statue of the Indian goddess Shiva. A gift of the Indian government, the statue is described by the institute as a metaphor comparing the cosmic dance of the Nataraj and the modern study of the 'cosmic dance' of subatomic particles. The official explanation fails to mention that in the Indian pantheon, Shiva is known as the destroyer.

It should be remembered that Palmyra, the home of the original arch for two millennia, was a major center for idolatry, specifically the worship of Ba'al, also known as Moloch. Mentioned more than 90 times in the Bible, most notably when Elijah defeated the priests of Ba'al in a contest to bring down fire from heaven to burn a sacrifice, Ba'al became the archetypical form of idol worship. Pantheistic, his adherents worshipped Mother Nature while denying the existence of a creator. Followers of Ba'al engaged in bisexual orgies and sacrificed human infants, burning them alive. Anthropologists conjecture that the child sacrifice was to cull the population after the inevitable outcome of wanton sexuality.

Palmyra was dedicated in 32 CE to the worship of Bel. Lower levels of the ground underneath the Temple of Palmyra indicate human occupation that goes back to the third millennium BCE. Converted into a Christian church during the Byzantine Era, parts of the structure were modified into a mosque by Muslims in 1132. It remained in use as a mosque until the 1920s.

In addition to being rooted in idolatry, the recreated arch is emerging as a symbol for world government, reappearing in several venues hosting world government summits. It was erected to inaugurate the World Government Summit in Dubai in February 2017, an event that brings together leaders in business, technology, and politics from around the world. The arch was then erected in Italy in May 2017 for the G7 Summit, a meeting of the leaders of the seven largest economies in the world representing more than 64 percent of the net global wealth. Rejecting idolatry should be a universal concern. Judaism does not desire for non-Jews to convert to Judaism but the third Noahide law is a prohibition against idolatry.

The first modern reappearance of the Arch of Palmyra was in London's Trafalgar Square in 2016, when it was erected for UNESCO World Heritage Week. The unveiling coincided with the beginning of a 13-day period known in the occult as "the Blood Sacrifice to the Beast," the most important holiday for those who worship the god Ba'al, celebrated with child sacrifice and bisexual orgies. The arch was unveiled on April 19th, the holiday of Beltane, the culmination of the 13-day period.

Also known as May Day, Beltane is an Anglicized reference to the god "Ba'al." An annual Beltane Fire Festival is held in Edinburgh and in other parts around the globe as part of ancient Gaelic culture. In an unfortunate misunderstanding of the festival's roots, they are frequently billed as family events, with children being given special discounts.

The IDA and UNESCO have paired up in other projects presenting symbols of idolatry. In November 2017, a statue of the pagan goddess Athena was reconstructed by the IDA and presented at an exhibit "The Spirit in the Stone," at the United Nations' headquarters in New York City. The exhibit described Athena as "synonymous with reason, refuge and the rule of law, all of the same values on which that historic institution was built," but the spear lying at the statue's feet belied her more common association as the goddess of war. Some scholars believe the Greek goddess was based on the Mesopotamian goddess al-Lat.

The original arch was destroyed by the Islamic State (ISIS) in October 2015, but one year later, the Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA) used 3-D printing technology to reproduce a 20-foot full-scale replica. Before the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, Palmyra was a popular tourist attraction, drawing 105,000 visitors a year.