

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

If this is the only article you get to this week, it's worth it....MD

Approaching Our Blessed Hope

June 30, 2019 By Daymond Duck

The Blessed Hope of Christians is steadily approaching (Titus 2:13), and could be much closer than many people think.

Below are three major reasons why this might be true.

First, on March 6, 2018, it was reported that China is testing a program that requires every citizen to have a National ID number and a Social Credit Score.

Every citizen will be tracked, and their Social Credit Score will go up or down based on what groups they belong to, what they buy, what they read, the websites they browse, what others say about them, etc.

A high Social Credit Score means a person is a good citizen.

A low Social Credit Score means the person is not a good citizen.

People with high Social Credit Scores will be rewarded by letting them have better jobs, live in better houses, send their children to better schools, etc. People with low Social Credit Scores will be given low-paying jobs, poorer housing, their children will be sent to poorer schools, etc.

How much a person earns, what they can buy and sell, etc., will be based on their loyalty to the government.

China implemented the Social Credit Score system, and millions of Chinese citizens have already been blacklisted from flying, riding trains, living in certain areas, etc.

On June 18, 2019, Facebook revealed its plans to implement a new cryptocurrency called the Libra in 2020 (Facebook originally planned to call it “Globalcoin”). The Libra (Globalcoin or Facebook coin) appears to be a major step toward the creation of a one-world trackable economic system.

The Libra’s value will be attached to several major national currencies to try to keep it stable.

To give the Libra credibility and acceptance, Facebook has brought in 27 (and is seeking 100) investor partners that use the Internet such as Visa, Mastercard, PayPal, eBay, Bookings.com, stripe, etc., to back this venture.

Think about it: a global information system (the Internet), a global social-media system (Facebook), and global financial institutions (Visa, Mastercard, etc.) are being integrated into a one-world tracking system. Almost everything that is known about a person (that person's location, contacts, finances, buying and selling records, face scans, where all of the world's wealth and goods are, all electronic communications records, texts, e-mails, etc.) will be in one database and available to one central authority.

Facebook can develop a Social Credit Score system like the one used in China.

As if this isn't ominous enough, some experts are predicting that all jobs will be eliminated by robots in the future (but people will still need income).

At that point, people will be paid with a currency (such as Libra); the amount they receive can be increased or decreased based upon their Social Credit Score (such as a Facebook Social Credit Score); every transaction will be conducted electronically (so they can be tracked); and compliance with certain criteria will be put into law (such as the proposed Equality Act: accept LGBTQ, speak well of Islam, don't mention or worship Jesus, etc., or you will be prosecuted for offending people).

It seems less than coincidental that this is happening when Israel turns 71 years old and the UN wants a world government by 2030.

Second, in Feb. 2018 the Jewish Sanhedrin minted a coin (or medallion) to honor king Cyrus for his contribution to the building of the Second Temple and to honor Pres. Trump for recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Proceeds from the sale of the coin are used to train priests to serve at the Temple and, if needed, to help pay for the rebuilding of the next Temple.

On June 18, 2019, it was reported that the Jewish Sanhedrin has plans for minting another coin. This coin is to honor King David in preparation for the coming Davidic Dynasty (remember that Jesus is a Descendant of King David, and He is coming back to establish an earthly kingdom). It is also a reminder that, in addition to rebuilding the Temple, the Jews must re-establish the Davidic Dynasty. The name of King David, a crown, and a verse of Scripture written in three languages (Hebrew, Arabic and English) are on the coin.

The verse reads, "So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekalim of silver" (II Sam. 24:24). The three languages are a reminder to Jewish, Arabic and English-speaking people that the Bible says Israel bought the Temple Mount.

According to the Sanhedrin, there is a debate about whether the Temple will be rebuilt before the Messiah appears or when He appears.

But either way, the Sanhedrin believes that the Jews should start rebuilding the Temple as soon as possible. Anyway, the Sanhedrin believes the Temple must be rebuilt and a descendent of King David must come to reign in Israel.

Third, this week, the U.S. came within a few minutes of an attack on Iran.

A U.S. attack on Iran could (I said could) have led to other wars such as an attack on Israel, the destruction of Damascus, the Battle of Gog and Magog, etc. Some prophecy teachers believe these are Tribulation-Period events, but I believe they are pre-Trib events.

Thankfully, these things may have been delayed, but they haven't been cancelled (God's Word must be

fulfilled, but that is only going to happen on His schedule).

Anyway, if an attack upon Iran had started these end-of-the-age events this week, they would have come upon the world like a snare. Most people would have been caught eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, going about their daily business as if nothing very significant is going on, etc., in the Middle East.

For whatever it is worth, in late April 2019, Israel had delivered information to Pres. Trump about Iranian plans to attack U.S. bases and ships in the Middle East. U.S. Sec. of State Mike Pompeo warned Iran that the death of U.S. troops would be met with an attack on Iranian troops on Iranian soil. When Iran shot down an unmanned drone, Pres. Trump asked the U.S. military to recommend a proportional response. One military recommendation was to attack several sites in Iran.

After he approved the attack, Pres. Trump learned that approximately 150 Iranian troops might be killed. He decided that killing 150 Iranian troops for destroying an unmanned drone was an excessive response, not a proportional response.

He was told that if he killed Iranian troops, Iran might use it as an excuse to kill U.S. troops, and that could start a war that would get a lot of people killed.

He called off the original attack, ordered severe sanctions on Iran's leaders, and a virus attack on the computers at Iran's command and control center for its rocket and missile systems (FYI: Iran said the virus attack didn't work).

Put another way: Pres. Trump retaliated against Iran for shooting down the U.S. drone, but he selected a plan that will not kill Iranian troops because he didn't want to give Iran an excuse to launch an attack that will kill U.S. troops.

Russia: Israel behind Syria strikes, threatens regional stability

Russian Foreign Ministry says 6 Israeli fighter jets carried out Monday's predawn raid, reportedly against Iranian weapons caches

By Judah Ari Gross 2 July 2019

Russia on Tuesday said Israel was behind a series of airstrikes on targets in Syria on Monday morning, adding that those attacks threatened to destabilize the region.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said six Israeli fighter jets operating inside Lebanese airspace conducted the predawn raid, which reportedly targeted Iranian and pro-Iranian positions in the country, specifically those tied to the transfer of weapons to Hezbollah and other Shiite terror groups in the region.

Israel has refused to comment on the attack, which came less than a week after a trilateral summit with Russia and the United States concerning Tehran's activities and military presence in the region. Get The Times of Israel's Daily Edition by email and never miss our top stories

The airstrikes reportedly targeted at least a dozen sites in Syria, outside the cities of Damascus and Homs, in the largest attack of its kind since last May, when Israel squared off against Syria and Iran in a massive nighttime battle in response to a rocket attack by Iranian troops on Israeli military positions on the Golan Heights.

Sixteen people were reportedly killed during Monday's strikes, including six civilians, though Syrian media said it was not clear if they were killed by the incoming Israeli missiles, attempts by the Syrian military to intercept them or some kind of secondary blast. The other 10 fatalities were members of pro-Iranian groups, most of them non-Syrians.

"We are concerned about this alarming development of the situation," Zakharova said in a press briefing.

"Force actions that grossly violate the sovereignty of Syria, not only do not contribute to the normalization of the situation in this country, but also carry a threat of regional destabilization," she said, in response to a question about the strikes.

On Monday evening, a private Israeli intelligence firm, ImageSat International, identified one of the sites in Syria targeted in an alleged Israeli airstrike earlier in the day as a hangar likely storing advanced weaponry or other military equipment. The firm released a photograph of the hangar, located at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC) in Jamraya, outside Damascus.

A photograph of the same site from June 4 showed a 12-meter (39-foot) by 30-meter (98-foot) hangar in Jamraya, which lies approximately 10 kilometers (seven miles) northwest of Damascus. The image from Monday showed the structure completely destroyed.

According to ImageSat, the building was "probably used for storage of advanced weapon systems or another sensitive element."

The Hezbollah terror group and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp have been said to maintain a presence at the Jamraya facility.

The US has repeatedly imposed sanctions on the SSRC for its alleged role in chemical weapons production. France has also imposed sanctions on the agency.

Israeli airstrikes reportedly hit the facility in May 2013 and again in February 2018.

The monitor said that at some sites, large blasts were caused by exploding ammunition depots and noted many ambulances had headed to the sites.

The Israeli military has acknowledged carrying out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria in recent years, on targets linked to Iran, which is backing President Bashar Assad's regime in the Syrian civil war. But generally Israel does not comment on specific airstrikes, unless they are in response to attacks from Syria.

Yossi Cohen, the head of the Mossad intelligence service, said Monday that Israel "can't agree to Syria becoming a staging ground for Iranian forces or forces operated by it against us. We can't agree to Syria becoming a logistics base for transferring weapons to Hezbollah and Lebanon."

Cohen did not refer specifically to the strikes earlier that day, but acknowledged that Israel often conducted military activities in Syria.

"Israel has taken action in the past four years, overtly and covertly, about which only a small amount has been published, in order to block the entrenchment and the production lines of precision-guided munitions," he said.

The reported strikes came just hours after an Israeli satellite imagery analysis company said Syria's entire S-300 air defense system appeared to be operational, indicating a greater threat to Israel's ability to

conduct airstrikes against Iranian and pro-Iranian forces in the country.

Israel has threatened to destroy the S-300 system if it is used against its fighter jets, regardless of the potential blowback from Russia.

The system was not used in response to Monday's strikes, though Syria fired large numbers of older and less effective interceptor missiles. One of those flew over civilian flight paths and exploded in Turkey-occupied northern Cyprus, where it started a fire.

3,000 earthquakes since July 4, and more big ones likely coming

By Alex Wigglesworth Jul 06, 2019

Southern California could experience another sizable earthquake over the next week, seismologists said Saturday.

The U.S. Geological Survey has calculated a 27% probability the region will be hit by a magnitude 6 or greater quake in the coming days, according to Caltech seismologist Egill Hauksson.

"We're likely to see maybe one or two of those in the next week," he said at a news conference. The USGS estimates that the probability of a magnitude 7 or greater earthquake hitting within the next week has fallen to 3%, down from 6% on Friday.

"That probability is over the next week, but it is mostly packed into the hours and days after the main shock," Caltech seismologist Doug Given said.

In other words, the probability that we will experience another earthquake of magnitude 6 or higher is dropping by the minute, he said.

"Every minute that ticks by, it becomes less likely," he said.

The heightened seismic activity comes in the aftermath of a 7.1 magnitude quake that hit near the town of Ridgecrest, about 125 miles northeast of Los Angeles, on Friday night. That was preceded by a 6.4 magnitude earthquake in the same area the morning of the Fourth of July. Scientists are now calling that a foreshock.

Since the Fourth, Caltech seismologists have detected at least 3,000 smaller earthquakes.

Those include 340 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 3, 52 with a magnitude greater than 4, and six with a magnitude greater than 5, Hauksson said Saturday.

In total, this earthquake sequence is expected to generate about 34,000 aftershocks with a magnitude 1 or greater over the next six months, he said.

This week's earthquakes were the strongest to hit the area in 20 years. No deaths or major injuries have been reported, but homes and roadways were damaged, particularly in the Ridgecrest area.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has requested a presidential emergency declaration for the affected regions. With the fear of more aftershocks, Jimmy and Jackie Roberts are taking no chances of staying in their

home.

The couple was assembling a 20-foot-by-10-foot canopy at their home on Desert Candles Street. They last used the blue canopy at their wedding 10 years ago and plan to put a tent and air conditioner under it.

“We’re staying in it for the next three days,” she said. “We have to keep our three dogs and four birds safe.”

She said the couple and many neighbors slept in their cars last night on the street. “We were all out there,” she said. “We were afraid.” Her biggest fear, she said, is another quake will hit and people will run out of water in the 90-degree temperatures. She also expects more neighbors to sleep in tents or cars until dangers clear. “My other neighbor is buying a camper today,” she added.

Ridgecrest Mayor Peggy Breeden said she encourages residents to take safety precautions over the next few days until the seismic activity subsides. She said the town shouldn’t suffer any long-term consequences from the last several days. She doesn’t believe residents will flee to other cities.

“We’re used to this,” she said after a news conference. “We live in the earthquake capital of the world, so I’m told. Our people are strong.”

Bank of America CEO: 'We want a cashless society'

Javier E. David

Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan embraced the digital money movement on Wednesday, saying his firm has “more to gain than anybody” from the booming trend of non-cash transactions.

“We want a cashless society,” Moynihan, who heads up the second largest U.S. bank, told attendees at Fortune’s Brainstorm Finance conference.

He pointed out that more than half of all money transactions are already processed electronically, with the rise of cryptocurrencies, and payment systems like PayPal, Zelle, and digital wallets.

A 2018 San Francisco Federal Reserve report found that “cash continues to be the most frequently used payment instrument, representing 30 percent of all transactions and 55 percent of transactions under \$10.”

Still, the combination of cryptocurrencies, cashless payments, and electronic wallets like Google Pay and Apple Pay are slowly eroding the need for hard currency. In particular, consumers have adopted mobile banking more widely, and use debit cards with increasing regularity.

Businesses, and even entire countries like Sweden, have also jumped on the movement, disrupting the hard currency that’s underpinned the modern economy.

Noncash transactions are forecast to grow by a compounded annualized growth rate of 12.7% through 2021, according to a 2018 study produced by BNP Paribas and Capgemini. Those vast volumes put financial intermediaries in a prime position to benefit from processing those transactions.

The banking sector has “already digitized,” Moynihan said on Wednesday. “The business has moved digitally and it will continue to move that way. It’s just figuring out how to add the value.”

Jerusalem Municipality Removes Dome of the Rock From Temple Mount Drawing

Nir Hasson and Olivier Fitoussi Jun 14, 2019

In an event attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the city's mayor, the image displayed depicted many sites in Jerusalem's Old City without the famous gilded dome

The Jerusalem municipality removed the Dome of the Rock from a drawing of the Temple Mount displayed at a an event attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Leon on Thursday.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque, the gates of the Temple Mount and the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer are prominently placed in the image, however the dome is conspicuously absent. Despite the dome being one of the most recognizable elements of the Jerusalem skyline, the designers depicted only the building's base.

The image was the central element of the decoration for a tribute to Israeli singer Yehoram Gaon, which took place in Safra Square. The drawing depicted many sites in Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount, including the Temple Mount gates and the steeple of the Church of the Redeemer.

There have been several incidents over the past few years where images of Jerusalem were edited to exclude the Dome of the Rock. In 2015, the Ynet news site reported that children in an Israeli kindergarten received a Passover Haggadah that included an image of Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock cropped out.

Last year the U.S. Ambassador David Friedman was photographed holding up a large image of the Temple Mount that had been edited to replace the Dome of the Rock with a simulation of the Third Temple. The incident sparked outrage, leading the American embassy to issue an apology, saying the ambassador was not aware of the change made to the picture.

Iran's New Global Terrorist Network

by Con Coughlin July 9, 2019

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/14517/iran-new-terrorist-network>

As Iran intensifies its efforts to establish a global terror network, new evidence has emerged that highlights the regime's attempts to establish a terrorist infrastructure in Africa.

Western security officials claim the Iranian initiative in Africa has been launched in response to the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the controversial nuclear deal signed between Tehran and the world's leading powers in 2015.

The objective of the African-based terror network, Western security officials say, is to establish a group of so-called " sleeper cells " that can be activated to attack Western targets if tensions between Iran and the West result in a serious escalation in hostilities. US, British, French and other Western bases in the region are the most likely targets for future terrorist attacks, and a number of Western governments are understood to have responded by ordering their military and diplomatic missions in the region to upgrade security arrangements.

The discovery of the African network follows recent revelations of Iran's attempts to expand its terror

network in Europe, as well as other parts of the globe including Latin America and the Middle East. Intelligence officials say the new terror network has been established on the orders of Qassem Suleimani, the head of the Quds Force, the elite section of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that has responsibility for overseas operations.

The Iranian cells are said to be active in a number of African countries including Sudan, Chad, Ghana, Niger, Gambia and the Central African Republic.

As one senior Western security source recently told me, "Iran is setting up a new terrorist infrastructure in Africa with the aim of attacking Western targets. It is all part of Tehran's attempts to expand its terrorist operations across the globe."

Intelligence officials say Iran has been working on the new terror network for the past three years since signing the nuclear deal on freezing its uranium enrichment activities with the US and other major world powers in 2015.

The operation is being organised by Unit 400, a highly specialised section of the Quds Force which is run by Hamed Abdollahi, a veteran Revolutionary Guard officer who, in 2012, was designated by the US as supporting terrorist activity. Overall command of the African cell is said to be run by Ali Parhoon, another senior Iranian officer in Unit 400.

Details of the terror cell's existence were uncovered following a series of arrests in Chad in April. Investigators found that Iran was behind the recruitment and training of men between the ages of 25-35 with the aim of committing terror attacks against Western targets on the continent.

There are estimated to be around 300 militants who have been recruited by the Revolutionary Guard and have undergone rigorous training at Iranian-run training camps in Syria and Iraq. The last batch of recruits were trained at an Iranian base in the southern Iraqi city of Najaf.

Iran's attempts to establish a new terror operation in Africa follow recent revelations that British security officials caught terrorists linked to Iran stockpiling tonnes of explosives on the outskirts of London. The British authorities believe this cell was also set up in 2015 after Iran signed the nuclear deal.

Last month, The Jerusalem Post, quoting from an intelligence report from the German state of Hesse, claimed that Iran was one of the main state actors involved in espionage in Germany. It said Iran was involved in the illicit procurement of technology for weapons of mass destruction.

The revelation that Iran is setting up a new terror network in Africa comes at a time of rising tensions between Washington and Tehran, and Iran's decision to resume work on enriching uranium, a key material in the production of nuclear weapons. Tehran also has been accused of stoking tensions in the Gulf after Revolutionary Guard commanders confirmed that they were responsible for shooting down a US military drone operating close to the Strait of Hormuz. In addition, Iran has been blamed for carrying out attacks on a number of oil tankers operating in the Gulf that were damaged by mines.