

Newsbytes

The First Watch

February 5, 2020

No. 957

Since 2001

Newzbytes is a ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

www.ccapleton.org

“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Turkey Looking To Reestablish Muslim Caliphate With Jerusalem As Capital

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz/Breaking Israel News January 22, 2020

A new military incursion into Libya is part of a long-awaited dream by Turkish President Erdogan to return the Ottoman Caliphate, a global Islamic rule that subjugated Jews and Christians for six centuries.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on Monday that Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries have begun arriving in Libya. Approximately 2,400 troops are already in Tripoli while another 1,700 are currently undergoing training in Turkey. Activists informed the SOHR that Turkey intends to send a total of 6,000 troops to Libya.

Turkey is backing the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) in its fight against the eastern-based Libyan National Army led by General Khalifa Haftar and backed by Russia. The GNA is supported by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The GNA also receives air support from the United Arab Emirates.

Until now, the role of the Turkish military has been limited to 35 military personnel involved solely in training and advisory roles. The new Syrian troops are mercenaries, hired from rebel groups opposing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The Turkish government will pay each soldier a monthly stipend of \$2,000, far more than the \$50 they earned to fight back home in Syria. The Syrian troops are also fighting against the Kurds in Libya.

Turkish intervention is a manifestation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's aspiration to establish himself as the leader of a global Islamic nation. The SOHR reported that a commander of the Turkish-backed Syrian troops en route to Libya announced as their battle cry, "We will present our souls for the Ottoman Caliphate."

The Ottoman Caliphate, known in the West as the Ottoman or Turkish Empire, was founded in the 13th Century and eventually controlled much of Southeast Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. This control lasted for several hundred years and only truly ended after WWI when the empire was partitioned by the Allied Powers and the 101st and final Caliph, Sultan Abdulmecid II, was deposed and expelled.

It should be noted that after his expulsion from Turkey, Sultan Abdulmecid II was in close correspondence with the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini, the founder of Palestinian nationalism who later became a close friend of Adolf Hitler and an advocate of the Holocaust.

The Ottoman Empire was a Sunni Caliphate which exerted a hegemonic power of Muslim control over the non-Muslim populations, most notably a Christian/Catholic majority. In accordance with the Muslim dhimmi

system, Christians were guaranteed limited freedoms, such as the right to worship. They were forbidden to carry weapons or ride on horseback, their houses could not overlook those of Muslims, in addition to various other legal limitations. Many Christians and Jews converted in order to secure full status in society.

Before his election, Turkish political analysts feared that candidate Erdogan's rise to power was fueled by his aspirations and those of his supporters to return Turkey to its former glory at the head of the Muslim world. His term in office confirmed these fears. In the wake of a failed attempt at a coup by a faction in the army in 2016, Erdogan mobilized the military against the populace and jailed hundreds of dissidents.

But Erdogan's Caliphate aspirations extend beyond the borders of Turkey and target Israel and, most specifically, Jerusalem. At a summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul last year, Erdogan called on all of the 57 Muslim member nations to join together against Israel to avenge the deaths of Palestinians killed while charging the southern border with Gaza.

In 2015, Erdogan gave a speech commemorating 562 years since the Turks captured Constantinople (now known as Istanbul) from European Christians in which he called for the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem.

"Conquest is Mecca, conquest is Saladin, it's to hoist the Islamic flag over Jerusalem again; conquest is the heritage of Mehmed II and conquest means forcing Turkey back on its feet," Erdogan said in the speech in Istanbul.

Erdogan's support of the Palestinians was returned in kind. In a Muslim gathering on the Temple Mount earlier this month commemorating the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 CE, Nidhal "Abu Ibrahim" Siam, a Palestinian preacher, addressed a crowd of approximately 7,000.

As reported by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Siam told the crowd that three prophecies would soon be fulfilled: a rightly-guided caliphate will be established, that Jerusalem will be liberated and established as its capital and that Islam "will throw its neighbors to the ground" thereby achieving world domination.

The gathering was organized by Hizb ut-Tahrir, an international, pan-Islamist political organization dedicated to establishing a global caliphate. Founded in Jerusalem in 1953, the organization is banned in many countries.

Erdogan has also been suspected of aiding Hamas, allowing the terrorist organization to operate out of Turkey. The terrorist group is also reportedly in contact with the Turkish intelligence agency.

The key to the Turkish incursion into Libya and the hidden motivation is actually quite straightforward. Two months ago, Turkey signed a maritime borders deal that gave Turkey a claim to parts of the eastern Mediterranean.

In addition to its strategic military importance, the eastern Mediterranean has huge natural gas deposits. Turkey's entrance into the eastern Mediterranean puts it into close proximity with Israel and its offshore natural gas facilities.

Dr. Mordechai Kedar, a senior lecturer in the Department of Arabic at Bar-Ilan University, noted that Erdogan's interest in Libya is really quite simple.

"The whole thing is about natural gas," Dr. Kedar said. "The agreement between Turkey and Libya bypassed Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt. They related to the entire Mediterranean and the enormous natural gas deposits as if they belonged only to Libya and Turkey."

"This could bring Israel into direct conflict with Turkey but since Israel is supplying vital gas to Europe, this also brings Turkey into conflict with Europe."

"In order to make sure that the Libyan government stays and Turkey's gas interests in the Mediterranean stay secure, Turkey is ramping up the hostilities in Libya in favor of the GNA."

Dr. Kedar emphasized that Turkey's interest in Libyan hostilities is, in essence, but not exclusively, financially motivated.

"But religion is big business," he added. "Establishing a caliphate is certainly a big part of Erdogan's agenda but to do that, he needs money and power. Taking over the gas in the Mediterranean will give him that."

Mysterious burst of gravitational waves hit Earth, baffling astronomers

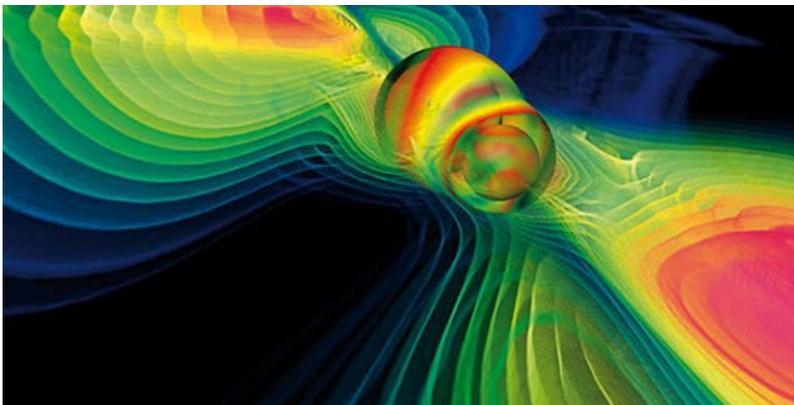
By Christopher Carbone | Fox News

A mysterious deep space event could have stretched and squeezed Earth last week.

Astronomers observed a split-second burst of gravitational waves on Jan. 14, but they can't figure out precisely where the burst came from.

These waves are disturbances in space-time that are generally caused by accelerated masses, such as black holes or neutron stars, colliding with each other.

However, astronomers are unsure because this particular burst didn't last very long. In addition, gravitational waves usually change in frequency over time, Andy Howell, a scientist at Los Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope Network, told Live Science.



A computer simulation showing gravitational waves during a black-hole collision. The discovery has major implications for science. (MPI for Gravitational Physics/W.Benger-Zib)

The burst still "seems a little too short for what we expect from the collapse of a massive star," he said. "On the other hand, we've never seen a star blowing up in gravitational waves before, so we don't really know what it would look like."

The scientist, who is also an adjunct faculty member in physics at the University of California Santa Barbara, suggested that the burst could be from two intermediate-mass black holes having merged.

Researchers are now pointing their telescopes to that same region to pinpoint the wave's source. "The universe always surprises us," Howell added. "There could be totally new astronomical events out there that produce gravitational waves that we haven't really thought about."

'Secret' River Discovered Connecting Jerusalem to Dead Sea

bptnews.org January 25, 2020

A previously unknown river in the Israeli wilderness was revealed to the world on Sunday night. Channel 11 Kan News, Israel's public broadcasting channel, reported on a six-mile-long river that wound its way through deep desert canyons near the Dead Sea. The region is particularly arid and very little natural water exists there. The river is within the concession area of the Dead Sea Works, an Israeli potash plant in Sodom on the coast of the Dead Sea within private land where casual hikers are restricted.

To make matters worse, the Kan broadcast warned the curious viewers that the area contains unmapped minefields.

The newly discovered river hosts a multitude of unique natural features, rare flora and fauna that exist in the desert environment. But the site is already in danger. The program on Kan News claimed that the work being done by the Dead Sea Works exceeds what is permitted by environmental laws and is based on flawed data. Future programs will investigate this claim.

Indeed, Biblical prophecy foretells of the appearance of a river similar to this "hidden river" flowing east from Jerusalem into the Dead Sea, filling it up with fish and the surrounding desert with life. [Read More](#)

Opinion: As we draw near to the end of the Church Age, God is revealing His prophetic word for all who have 'ears to hear and eyes to see' Matthew 13:16.

Ezekiel 47:3-9: "As the man went on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand amot and led me across the water; the water was ankle deep. Then he measured off another thousand and led me across the water; the water was knee deep. He measured off a further thousand and led me across the water; the water was up to the waist. Then he measured yet another thousand, it was a stream I could not cross; for the water had swollen into a stream that could not be crossed except by swim... Then said he unto me: 'These waters issue forth toward the eastern region and shall go down into the Arabah; and when they shall enter into the sea of the putrid waters the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every living creature wherewith it swarmeth whithersoever the rivers shall come shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish; for these waters are come thither that all things be healed and may live whithersoever the river cometh.'"

The millennial (thousand year reign of Christ on earth) river will flow from the eastern region and go down into Arabah. As the new river enters the Dead Sea it will become fresh. The Dead Sea is six times saltier than the ocean and it will become completely salt-free by a miracle of God. This lifeless body of water will then support life. Fishermen will crowd the shores.

Another way God will provide for His people is by the trees on the river banks that will bear fruit year round. The fruit will provide food and the leaves will provide healing.

Magnitude 7.7 earthquake strikes off the coast of Jamaica and is felt as far away as Miami

By Steve Almasy, Brandon Miller and Alla Eshchenko, January 29, 2020

(CNN)A magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck Tuesday about 80 miles from Jamaica, shaking people in the Caribbean and as far away as Miami.

A tsunami of 0.4 feet was recorded in the Cayman Islands at George Town, but no tsunami was observed at Port Royal, Jamaica, or Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

There were several aftershocks, including one the US Geological Survey said had a magnitude of 6.1. "Based on all available data, there is no significant tsunami threat from this (6.1) earthquake. However, there is a very small possibility of tsunami waves along coasts located nearest the epicenter," the National Weather Service's Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said.

The quakes come three weeks after a magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck Puerto Rico.

A tsunami threat alert was lifted Tuesday afternoon, a few hours after the quake.

Earlier, a tsunami of 0.4 feet was recorded in the Cayman Islands at George Town, but no tsunami was observed at Port Royal, Jamaica or Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

Alec Pultr, who lives in Ogier, Grand Cayman, said it wasn't the first earthquake he's experienced but it was the biggest "by far."

"We were simply working and things started to sway," he told CNN.

As the swaying and shaking became more violent, most people started to run; the ones who stayed behind got under their desks.

People in Miami, 440 miles from the epicenter, felt shaking.

Miguel Charon was on the 13th floor of a building on Brickell Avenue. He told CNN he felt the walls shake for 30 to 40 seconds. His initial thought was that it must have been caused by a machine of some sort. He said building officials issued an evacuation order and people left the building in a smooth and calm manner.

Jose Borrego, who also works in the Brickell area, said he was in a meeting.

"We felt slight movement of the building, then we got told to evacuate the building," he said. "Once we came outside (we) noticed that there are evacuations every building in the area."

The earthquake appears to have been a "strike-slip earthquake," in which tectonic plates slide against each other. This limits the threat of a devastating tsunami, which are more associated with "thrust earthquakes," where a portion of the earth is thrust upward and causes the water to push up and outward, creating the tsunami.

The quake hit 125 kilometers (77.6 miles) north-northwest of Lucea in Jamaica.

The earthquake also was felt as far away as Havana. Some people in the Cuban capital were evacuating taller buildings. Cuba's state media reported the earthquake was felt across the island in Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba, Holguín, Las Tunas, Cienfuegos, Pinar del Río, Havana and the Isle of Youth. There are no initial reports of damage or casualties.

'This Situation Is so Critical': A Chinese Pastor's Message to Christians From Ground Zero of the Coronavirus

JERUSALEM, Israel – The voice of a Chinese pastor living in the epicenter of the deadly coronavirus outbreak is being heard around the world and it's persuading many Christians to stand with him in prayer. An anonymous pastor in Wuhan, China penned a letter to the global Church describing what it's like to leave your home not knowing if you'll contract this virus, and if you will live for long if you do. He is one among millions of Chinese citizens on complete lockdown in an attempt to contain the disease.

While he says China is suffering, he believes something bigger is happening, saying it is time for Christians to proclaim the gospel in a country where their faith is under fire.

Read the full letter below:

A Letter from a Wuhan Pastor

Brothers and sisters, peace be upon you:

During these past days the Wuhan pneumonia (virus) has been at the center of my thoughts and life. (I am) always watching the latest news, and always thinking about how our family and the church should face this.

As for family, I have gathered masks and foodstuffs and have ventured out of doors as little as possible. When venturing out in public I have worn a mask, but as for the rest, I have placed it in the Lord's hands. As for the church, the safety of the congregation, a faithful witness, the possibility that members could contract the illness, have all become a great area of struggle. It is readily apparent that we are facing a test of our faith.

The situation is so critical, yet (we are) trusting in the Lord's promises, that his thoughts toward us are of peace, and not evil (Jeremiah. 29:11), and that he allows for a time of testing, not to destroy us, but to establish us. Therefore, Christians are not only to suffer with the people of this city, but we have a responsibility to pray for those in this city who are fearful, and to bring to them the peace of Christ.

First, we are to seek the peace of Christ to reign in their hearts (Hebrews 3:15). Christ has already given us his peace, but his peace is not to remove us from disaster and death, but rather to have peace in the midst of disaster and death, because Christ has already overcome these things (John 14:27, 16:33). Otherwise we have not believed in the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15), and, with the world, would be terrified of pestilence, and lose hope in the face of death.

Why do only Christians have this peace? Because of sin, humans deserve the trials and tribulations that come upon them, Jehovah says: the wicked have no peace (Isaiah 48:22). We were all sinners, but Christ, because of faith, took our penalty and gave us his peace. Therefore Paul says, who can bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (Romans 8:33). Christians may with the world face the same tribulations, but such tribulations are no longer punishment, but a new opportunity to grow nearer to the Almighty, to purify our souls, and an opportunity to proclaim the gospel.

In other words, when disaster strikes us, it is but a form of God's love. And, as Paul firmly believed, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger or sword? . . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to

come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Roman. 8:35-39).

Spoken for today, Wuhan's pestilence cannot separate us from the love of Christ; this love is in our Lord Jesus Christ. These words are so comforting for us, we have already become one body with Christ. We have a part in his sufferings, and we have a part in his glory, all of Christ's is ours, and our all is Christ's. Therefore, Christ is with us as we face the pestilence in this city; the pestilence cannot harm us. If we die in the pestilence, it is an opportunity to witness to Christ, and even more to enter into his glory.

Thus, my brothers and sisters, I encourage you to be strong in Christ's love. If we more deeply experience death in this pestilence, understanding the gospel, we may more deeply experience Christ's love, and grow ever nearer to God. Our Lord Jesus through faith experienced an incomparable suffering of death, yet God raised him from the dead, and sat him at his right hand. (Acts 2:32-36)

If in reading these truths you still have no peace, I encourage you to diligently read the above cited scripture and call on the Lord to give you insight until the peace of Christ reigns in your heart. You must know, that this is not just an observable disaster, but even more it is a spiritual struggle. You should first wage a battle for your heart, and secondarily battle for the soul of this city.

We earnestly hope that you would know that not a sparrow falls without the will of the Father (Matthew 10:29). With so many souls facing pestilence, can it be outside God's will? All that we are experiencing, is it not like Abraham facing Sodom, and Jonah facing Nineveh?

If God, because of a righteous man withheld judgment on Sodom, or because of 120,000 who didn't know their left hand from their right, withheld destruction, what of the city of Wuhan in which we live? We are clearly the righteous in this city, far more than a single righteous person there are thousands and thousands of us. Yet, may we like Lot be grieved over all those in this city (1 Peter 2:7), and like Abraham who earnestly prayed for Sodom (Genesis 18:23-33). You see, Jonah with difficulty proclaimed the gospel to Nineveh, and Nineveh repented and was saved. We are this city's Abraham and Jonah. We must pray for God's mercy upon this city, and bring peace upon this city through our prayers and testimony.

I believe this is the command of God calling those of us living in Wuhan. We are to seek peace for this city, seek peace for those who are afflicted with this illness, seek peace for the medical personnel struggling on the front lines, seek peace for every government official at every level, seek peace for all the people of Wuhan! And we can through online networks guide and comfort our friends and loved ones with the gospel, reminding them that our lives are not in our own hands, and to entrust their lives to God who is faithful and true.

The past few days I have received many inquiries from foreign pastors. They and the whole church are concerned for this city, even more for us; and confronting this epidemic, seek to serve the city with us. Thus, I especially ask them to turn their eyes upon Jesus. And do not be concerned with my welfare, nor be agitated or fearful, but pray in the name of Jesus. Good hearted people are through their actions serving this city, especially the medical personnel who are risking their own lives. If they can take on such worldly responsibilities, how can we not more readily take on spiritual responsibilities!

If you do not feel a responsibility to pray, ask the Lord for a loving soul, an earnestly prayerful heart; if you are not crying, ask the Lord for tears. Because we surely know that only through the hope of the Lord's mercy will this city be saved.

A Wuhan Pastor
January 23, 2020