

Newsbytes

The First Watch

March 4, 2020

No. 959

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

Nearly 1 Million Syrian Civilians Fleeing Bloodshed Between Turkey, Syria

CBN News

JERUSALEM, Israel – Nearly 1 million Syrian civilians are fleeing for their lives, caught in the middle of a bloody conflict between the Syrian forces of Bashar Assad – backed by Russia and pro-Iranian militias – and rebel jihadist groups backed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the northeastern Syrian province of Idlib.

This is the single largest wave of displaced people since Syria’s civil war began 9 years ago.

Like many other civilians, Abu Mahmoud has nowhere to flee except the Turkish border where president Erdogan has given orders not to let any refugees cross.

“Some of us live in the mosque, some of us live in our cars. We sleep in our car to secure it. There are no places to even put a tent. If you want to put up a tent at someone’s, they want rent on the land. And if we had the money we wouldn’t be in this state,” he told AP.

The United Nations is sounding the alarm on what many are calling the biggest humanitarian disaster. “We remain very alarmed about the safety and protection of over 3,000,000 civilians in Idlib and its surrounding areas in the north-western part of Syria, as reports of airstrikes and shelling continue to take a heavy toll on the civilian population,” said Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General.

The fighting has caused a severe humanitarian crisis. Three million civilians have very little food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education.

“We are burning through our supplies much faster than anticipated. We just do not know how long this will continue, how many more people will need help and for how long, a level of emergency that is impossible to comprehend,” Mercy Corps country director Kieren Barnes told AP.

Parents find ways to cope with their children. Abdullah Mohammad taught his 3-year old daughter Salwa to laugh when they hear airstrike explosions. He told the Wall Street Journal, “Of course it’s not something that’s funny at all. It’s horrible. Maybe the bomb will fall on top of us. But at least we’ll die while laughing.”

Other children have frozen to death in the winter cold, including a seven-month-old baby boy and a

one-year-old girl, the BBC reports.

Meanwhile, Turkey and Syria are racing quickly towards a full-scale conflict.

The Battle Behind the Crisis

Idlib, which is currently held by rebel forces, is one of the last pieces of territory Assad seeks to conquer in his quest to take over the whole of Syria. OIR Spokesman Col. Myles B. Caggins III said Idlib "seems to be a magnet for terrorist groups" all of which are a "nuisance, a menace and a threat" to the hundreds of thousands of civilians in Syria, who are just "trying to make it through the winter." Syrians for Truth and Justice reports that Islamist rebel groups have taken at least 550 Christian homes and businesses belonging to Christians in Idlib since last 2018, and used them for their forces. Assad's military is advancing on Idlib with the promise that all forces opposing his regime will be slaughtered. Assad considers anyone who resists his leadership as a terrorist.

"The battle for liberating all Syrian soil, crushing terrorism, and achieving stability will also continue," Assad said according to Syrian state media.

Turkey, partnered with Islamist jihadist forces such as al Qaeda, is threatening to launch a full-scale operation in Idlib if Assad's forces do not retreat. Erdogan is trying to prevent a sudden influx of 900,000 Syrian refugees into his country. He says he cannot keep those refugees from flooding into Europe.

So far, Turkey has sent more than 10,000 troops with artillery, tanks, and armored vehicles into Idlib, Turkish media reports.

At least 15 Turkish soldiers have been killed in Syria this month amid a crushing offensive by Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces aimed at recapturing remaining opposition-held areas in the region. Tensions are especially high after two Turkish soldiers were killed on Thursday in an airstrike. Erdogan vowed Feb. 12 to take military action "everywhere in Syria" if another Turkish soldier was killed or injured.

Turkey Appeals to the US

Various sources report Turkey has provided some of these al Qaeda groups with US-supplied weapons. Turkey, a NATO member, has also asked the US to supply Patriot missile batteries to protect these retreating forces.

The US is aware of a request for Patriot systems but "no decision has been made," a US official said speaking on condition of anonymity.

Some argue that would put the US in the role of covering an operation that supports al Qaeda. Meanwhile, the UN is working to assist the nearly 1 million civilians trapped in between Turkey and Syria's firefight.

Ruins of Temple Discovered in Biblical City of Lachish, Once Conquered by Joshua and the Israelites

By Heather Clark on March 3

TEL LACHISH — The ruins of what has been characterized as a Canaanite temple, along with numerous artifacts — including a gold-plated bottle referencing the historic Egyptian leader Rameses and two bronze “smiting gods”— have been unearthed in Lachish, the biblical city where the Scripture chronicles in the Book of Joshua that “the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel.”

According to reports, the discovery was made by an archaeological team led by professors Yosef Garfinkel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Institute of Archaeology and Michael Hasel at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.

“This excavation has been breathtaking,” Garfinkel said in a statement. “Only once every 30 or 40 years do we get the chance to excavate a Canaanite temple in Israel. What we found sheds new light on ancient life in the region. It would be hard to overstate the importance of these findings.”

The archaeologists outline that layout of the “level VI northeast temple,” which they date to the 12th century B.C., is similar to other Canaanite structures that have been found in Northern Israel but is more square. However, it also differs in that there are side rooms that are “typical of later temples, including Solomon’s Temple.”

The temple, or ceremonial structure, appears to have had two columns at its entrance and two towers that led to a large hall, along with “standing stones” inside that might have represented their gods. A number of artifacts were also found in the vicinity, including jewelry, daggers, ax heads engraved with bird images, and Egyptian items, such as a gold-plated bottle that was inscribed with the name “Rameses II,” also known as Rameses the Great.

According to reports, Rameses II ruled for 67 years after taking the throne as a teen and claimed to be a god on earth. He had many structures built in his lifetime, and a large statue bearing his image was found in Giza in the 1990s. Another statue stands in front of the temple of Luxor.

Some believe that Rameses II was pharaoh at the time of the Hebrew Exodus from Egypt, but others place him a few centuries later. The Egyptians were among those who destroyed Lachish, which was razed on several occasions, including by Joshua and the Israelites, as noted in Joshua 10:32.

“And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein ...,” it reads.

In of the temple’s inner sanctum were found two bronze figurines believed to represent the Canaanite’s “smiting gods,” possibly Baal or Resheph. A pottery shard was also found in the area with the Hebrew letter “samek” written therein — the oldest known discovery bearing the letter.

Christian News Network reached out to Associates for Biblical Research for its take on the finds. It said that it views the temple and its artifacts as rather representing Israel’s departure from the Lord during the period of the judges — to serve the Canaanite gods — which would line up with the dating of the discovery. It noted that Israel would have already had possession of the land for several centuries by this time.

“The Bible states that Joshua and the Israelites conquered Lachish when they entered the Promised Land

(Joshua 10:32). According to biblical chronology, this occurred in the 15th century B.C.,” staff member Bryan Windle outlined.

“The recently discovered ‘temple’ at Lachish dates to the 12th century B.C., during the period of the judges,” he explained. “This would appear to affirm what is written in the book of Judges: ‘Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. ...They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. (Judge 2:11,13).”

California Bill Would Punish Stores With Separate Boys And Girls Departments

dailywire.com

A new bill introduced by a member of the California state assembly would force stores that separated toys, clothing and childcare items into boys’ and girls’ sections to pay a \$1,000 fine.

Democratic Assemblymember Evan Low, from Silicon Valley submitted AB 2826, which states: This bill would require a retail department store with 500 or more employees to maintain undivided areas of its sales floor where, if it sells childcare articles, children’s clothing, or toys, all childcare items, all clothing for children, or all toys, regardless of whether a particular item has traditionally been marketed for either girls or for boys, shall be displayed. Beginning on January 1, 2023, the bill would make a retail department store that fails to correct a violation of these provisions within 30 days of receiving written notice of the violation from the Attorney General liable for a civil penalty of \$1,000, as provided.

It adds:

(a) A retail department store shall maintain one, undivided area of its sales floor where, if it sells childcare articles, all childcare articles, regardless of whether a particular item has traditionally been marketed for either girls or for boys, shall be displayed.

(b) A retail department store shall maintain one, undivided area of its sales floor where, if it sells children’s clothing, all clothing for children, regardless of whether a particular item has traditionally been marketed for either girls or for boys, shall be displayed.

(c) A retail department store shall maintain one, undivided area of its sales floor where, if it sells toys, all toys, regardless of whether a particular item has traditionally been marketed for either girls or for boys, shall be displayed.

A press release from Low’s office read:

Clothing and toys sections of department stores that are separated along gender lines pigeonhole children. No child should feel stigmatized for wearing a dinosaur shirt or playing with a Barbie doll, and separating items that are traditionally marketed for either girls or boys makes it more difficult for the consumer to compare products. It also incorrectly implies that their use by one gender is inappropriate.

Low stated, “I was inspired to introduce this bill after 8-year-old Britten asked, ‘Why should a store tell me what a girl’s shirt or toy is?’” He added, “Her bill will help children express themselves freely and without bias. We need to let kids be kids.”

The press release continued, “Abercrombie & Fitch and John Lewis recently launched unisex apparel lines for kids. In 2015, Target made headlines when it removed gender-based signs in some departments, including home and toys.”

Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute-Center for Public Policy, countered: California is killing freedom, innovation, and common sense with its endless bans, fines, and mandates. Compassion for our LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors does not require us to embrace absurdities on gender. No child should be bullied or stigmatized, and neither should the State bully retailers into making it harder

for moms and dads to find boys and girls clothing and toys. It's time for voters to demand more accountability of their elected officials.

Israel slated to unleash coronavirus vaccine in 8–10 weeks

onenewsnow.com

A group of Israeli scientists announced their plans to be the first to produce a coronavirus vaccine – as the infectious disease's death toll tops 2,800, with more than 83,000 currently infected worldwide.

After spending four years to come up with a vaccine to cure Infectious Bronchitis Virus (IBV) – the ultra-contagious coronavirus found in birds – the Israel-based Galilee Research Institute (MIGAL) now says it is just eight to 10 weeks away from adapting its vaccine to help wipe out the human form of the disease (COVID-19).

Israel heads innovation

Israeli Minister of Science and Technology Ofir Akunis commended the team for its work.

“Congratulations to MIGAL on this exciting breakthrough,” Akunis proclaimed, according to CBN News. “I am confident that there will be further rapid progress, enabling us to provide a needed response to the grave global COVID-19 threat.”

In order for the vaccine to be accessible at its earliest date, Akunis is doing all he can to fast-track the approval process to make it market-ready as an oral pill in several weeks, and MIGAL CEO David Zigdon is on board.

“Given the urgent global need for a human coronavirus vaccine, we are doing everything we can to accelerate development,” Zigdon assured, as reported by CBN News. “Our goal is to produce the vaccine during the next 8–10 weeks and to achieve safety approval in 90 days. This will be an oral vaccine, making it particularly accessible to the general public. We are currently in intensive discussions with potential partners that can help accelerate the in-human trials phase and expedite the completion final product development and regulatory activities.”

Few distinctions can be detected between the two forms of the virus.

“The poultry coronavirus is nearly identical to the human coronavirus” CBN News noted. “Israel's vaccine for the poultry coronavirus has been proven effective against the disease in pre-clinical trials carried out by the Volcani Institute.”

Dr. Chen Katz – who heads MIGAL's Biotechnology Group – explained the science behind the vaccine.

“The scientific framework for the vaccine is based on a new protein expression vector, which forms and secretes a chimeric soluble protein that delivers the viral antigen into mucosal tissues by self-activated endocytosis – a cellular process in which substances are brought into a cell by surrounding the material with cell membrane, forming a vesicle containing the ingested material – causing the body to form antibodies against the virus,” Katz was quoted in a MIGAL report. “In pre-clinical (IN-VIVO) trials, MIGAL's researchers have demonstrated that the oral vaccination induces high levels of specific anti-IBV antibodies.”

Stemming the surge?

News of a foreseeable end of the coronavirus was met with a significant uptick in deaths and infection. “Thursday saw the largest spike in Coronaviruses in a single day, with nearly 15,000 new infections and 242 more deaths,” an update from CBN revealed. “As the disease continues its spread, health experts and

people around the world are hoping for some breakthrough cure, vaccine and protection.”
At the same time, another Israeli group came out with a cutting-edge innovation in masks used to curtail the spread of coronavirus.

“Argaman Technologies LTD claims its new revolutionary face masks are more than just shields, but weapons that can kill 99% of viruses like the coronavirus,” CBN divulged. “The company says these masks are more effective than the standard ‘N-95’ mask used by million for protection. In fact, these new antiviral masks are making their way to Hong Kong, where they will potentially save lives.”

Land of innovation

Being a leader in innovation in the medical field is nothing new to Israel, which is one of the most scientifically advanced nations on Earth.

Per capita, Israel reportedly has the highest ratio of scientific publications – greater than any other nation in the world by a decisive margin. In fact, Israel is ranked number one when it comes to having the greatest number of startup companies in proportion to its population, which is approximately 9 million. In addition, Israel has been among the countries boasting the highest rate of patents filled.

China Faces Financial Armageddon Countdown - World Economy At Risk

By Tyler Durden February 27



For the past two weeks, even as the market took delight in China's doctored and fabricated numbers showing the coronavirus spread was "slowing", we warned again and again that not only was this not the case (which recent data out of South Korea, Japan and now Italy has confirmed), but that for all its assertions to the contrary, China's workers simply refused to go back to work (even with FoxConn offering its workers extra bonuses just to return to the factory) and as a result the domestic economy had ground to a halt.

Let's start with Chinese businesses: while China's giant state-owned SOEs will likely have enough of a liquidity lifeblood to last them for 2-3 quarters, it is the country's small businesses that are facing a head on collision with an iceberg, because according to the Nikkei, over 85% of small businesses - which employ 80% of China's population - expect to run out of cash within three months, and a third expect the cash to be all gone within a month.

Should this happen, not only will China's economy collapse, but China's \$40 trillion financial system will disintegrate, as it is suddenly flooded with trillions in bad loans.

Take the case of Danny Lau who last week reopened his aluminum facade panel factory in China's southern city of Dongguan after an extended Lunar New Year break. To his shock, less than a third of its roughly 200 migrant workers showed up.

"They couldn't make their way back," the Hong Kong businessman said. Most of his workers hail from central-western China, including 11 from Hubei Province, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak that has killed more than 2,000 people. Many said they had been banned from leaving their villages as authorities race to contain the epidemic.

Lau's business had already been hurt by the 25% tariff on aluminum products the U.S. imposed in its tit-for-tat trade war with China. Now he worries the production constraints will give American customers another reason to cancel orders and switch to Southeast Asian suppliers. The virus is making a bad situation "worse," he said.

Lau is not alone: this same double blow is hitting small and midsize enterprises across China, prompting a growing chorus of calls for the government to step in and offer lifelines. The stakes could not be higher: These smaller employers account for 99.8% of registered companies in China and employ 79.4% of workers, according to the latest official statistics. They contribute more than 60% of gross domestic product and, for the government, more than 50% of tax revenue. In short: they are the beating heart of China's economy.

Companies like Lau's that have resumed some production are the lucky ones. Many factories and other businesses remain completely stalled due to the virus. Many owners have no other choice but pray that things return to normal before they careen off a financial cliff.

And here is the stark reality of China's T-minus 3 months countdown: 85% of 1,506 SMEs surveyed in early February said they expect to run out of cash within three months, according to a report by Tsinghua University and Peking University. And forget about profits for the foreseeable future: one-third of the respondents said the outbreak is likely to cut into their full-year revenue by more than 50%, according to the Nikkei.

"Most SMEs in China rely on operating revenue and they have fewer sources for funding" than large companies and state-owned enterprises, said Zhu Wuxiang, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management and a lead author of the report.