

# 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

## Hold Fast

By Nathele Graham July 25



We are in a time of great turmoil. Everywhere we look, there are wars and plagues. It's always been somewhat of a joke about crooked politicians, but it's not a joke anymore. It's impossible to know truth by listening to the news media. It's important to study all sides of a news item to decide for yourself what's the truth. Even the foundations of our faith are being attacked, as we are forced to accept sin and lies as “normal.”

The only way to know truth is to study Scripture. Unfortunately, a very different Gospel is being preached from the pulpits today. Pastors are more afraid of offending liberal politicians than offending God. Jesus spoke to His disciples about following the Master. If we follow Christ, then we need to respect Him. If we say we are Christians but bow to other masters, then we need to rethink our faith.

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.... What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (**Matthew 10:25 & 27-28**).

If you respect and fear any master other than Jesus, then you have misplaced your loyalty.

There are many messages of deception found in the liberal news today, and from liberal pulpits. Deception was the first warning Jesus gave to His disciples when they asked for signs to look for, signaling the end of the age.

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you” (**Matthew 24:4**).

We are living at this final time of history, and if we don't hold fast to our faith in God Almighty, we will be deceived by Satan instead of standing firm on God's truth. We live in a time when fear is strong. We need to be sure we run all things through Scripture. Jesus told us these things would come to pass, so why do we fear Satanic devices rather than holding fast to our faith and Biblical truth?

There are many Scriptures that tell us to hold fast, and we need to pay attention. Paul wrote to the young pastor, Timothy, telling him that he needed to be true to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” **(2 Timothy 1:8-11)**.

Young pastors and older ones, take heed. If you are tempted to water down God's word in order to appease liberal lies or to protect your tax-exempt status, then you are doing a huge disservice to the One you call Lord. Preach the Gospel as it is taught in Scripture. Teach line upon line through the Bible in order to not miss any important teachings of God.

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” **(2 Timothy 1:13)**.

Paul, who once persecuted Christians, renounced his evil ways and became the strongest evangelist we've ever known. His letters are a guide to living for Christ. He never compromised his faith but spread the Gospel by speaking God's truth. He held fast to the end.

If we hold fast to the truth of God, we won't open ourselves to the wiles of the devil. If we don't study Scripture, we can easily be deceived.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” **(1 Thessalonians 5:21)**.

How do we “prove all things”? By prayerfully testing it by God's word.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)**.

If man's laws contradict God's truth, then hold fast to God's truth. If you use Scripture as your guide, you know that “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” **(Genesis 1:1)**, and you won't allow the lie of evolution to confuse you and draw you away from God's truth. By holding fast to God's truth, you will understand that there's no “gender choice,” only male and female, and you are one or the other; no amount of lying, hormone tampering, or surgery will make you what you aren't.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” **(Genesis 1:27)**.

You may be confused, but God isn't. You're special because you've been created in the image of God. Prove all things by Scripture, and hold fast to God's truth.

We are living in the end times. How do I know that? Scripture gives many prophecies that make it obvious that time as we know it is coming to an end. There are many things that make this life worthwhile, but I long for the Rapture. It will happen soon. Will it happen this year? Many Bible scholars think it may, but others believe it will happen a few years from now. Whether this year, next year, or a hundred years from now, don't waiver in your faith but trust in Jesus. Jesus Christ was God incarnate and loves you enough to have given His life for you. If you profess to be a Christian, hold fast to God's truth, and don't allow Satan's deception to confuse you into compromising your faith.

“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” **(Revelation 3:3)**.

This verse comes from a letter to the believers in Sardis. Jesus had dictated it to the Apostle John. It's one of seven letters that summarize the history of the ecclesia (the congregation of believers throughout history). This was in the letter to Sardis, and it contained warnings because they were slipping away from Truth. They weren't paying attention to prophecy and were living life apart from God.

“Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God” **(Revelation 3:2)**.

Not all the people in that congregation had turned from God's truth, and we need to heed Christ's warning to them. They were compromising their faith, and God wasn't pleased. There's more than a bit of Sardis in the world today, which is shameful.

The Jewish priesthood was just a foreshadowing of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ. It was the priests who made the sacrifices according to God's Law. There were qualifications for the priesthood regarding age and Tribal restrictions, but Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law, and He is our eternal High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, who was a priest long before the Law was given and is without restriction.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession” **(Hebrews 4:14)**.

Jesus is the Creator of everything, yet He is aware of you. He loved you enough to enter His creation, knowing full well that He would be rejected, beaten, and mocked. He knew He would be crucified, but He gave His life so that whosoever believes in Him will have eternal life through His righteousness. Do you believe?

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” **(Romans 10:9)**.

If you've made that profession of faith, then you need to understand what it means. Your life should change. The old lifestyle of sin needs to change as you hold fast to your new life in Christ.

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” **(Ephesians 4:22-24)**.

In this verse, the word “conversation” doesn't just mean the way you talk, but it means the way you live. Paul is saying to live for Christ, not for sin. Before confessing Christ for salvation, the world approved of you raging in anger, gossiping, following sexual promiscuity, and many other sinful actions. Your new life in Christ should reflect forgiveness instead of anger, not talking about people, and

understanding that God made people male and female, and a one man/one woman marriage is the only place for sexual relations.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” **(Hebrews 10:23)**.

Jesus paid a huge price to redeem you. You’ve confessed Him as your Saviour and expect Him to give you eternal life; now hold fast to Scriptural truth, and live for Him.

It can be easy to slip away from Scriptural living when we make friendships outside of the Christian faith. We have to be around lost people in order to witness to them and share the Gospel, but we need to assemble with Christian friends in order to keep each other grounded in Scripture.

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” **(Hebrews 10:24-25)**.

See what day approaching? The Rapture. The signs of the times are screaming that Christ will call us Home soon, but many Christians don’t care. Our children are sent to public schools, where a witch’s brew of lies is fed to them daily, and the Scriptural foundation of Biblical truth is broken. Most Moms and Dads are busy building their fortune with worldly treasures, and those treasures don’t include assembling together with fellow Christians or caring about their children’s salvation. It’s the world and its allure that matters to most people.

It isn’t too late to turn away from the world and turn back to Christ. It isn’t too late to hold fast to Scriptural truth. This world and all that’s in it will soon pass away, but Christians need to hold fast to eternal things that will never pass away.

Don’t turn away from Christ. Look to Scripture and see that the signs of the times are here. Understand that events of the Great Tribulation are falling into place today. Unless you hold fast to Jesus and His truth, you will fall for the lies of Satan. Don’t let any man deceive you, but hold fast to God’s truth.

## **Will Lebanon Fall into the Hands of Iran?**

**by Khaled Abu Toameh**

**July 26**

- There is growing concern among the Lebanese and other Arabs that Iran is planning to exploit the severe political, economic and financial crisis in Lebanon to complete its takeover of the country.
- Iran already has a political and military presence in Lebanon through its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah. The current crisis, however, is likely to facilitate Iran's mission of adding Lebanon to the list of countries it already occupies: Syria, Iraq and Yemen.
- "Iran is already very dangerous without a nuclear bomb. The region is witnessing a state of chaos and agitation by fundamentalist forces, which threaten all Arab countries without exception." — Mishary Dhayidi, Saudi writer, *Al-Arabiya*, July 21, 2021
- The Arabs appear clearly worried about the perceived apathy of the US and other Western powers towards Iran's scheme to extend its control to Lebanon. They seem particularly alarmed that Lebanon will meet the same fate as Iraq, Syria and Yemen.... thanks to Iran's continuous efforts to export terrorism and the "Islamic Revolution" to the Arab countries.

- [T]he mullahs in Tehran are doubly dangerous: they aspire not only to develop nuclear weapons, but also to occupy Arab states.
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For several weeks now, the hashtag "#Lebanoniscollapsing" has been trending on various social media platforms, including Twitter. Many Lebanese and Arabs are using this hashtag to describe the dire economic and financial situation in Lebanon and warn of Iran's ongoing meddling in the internal affairs of the country. They seem to fear that that Iran's mullahs are about to instigate instability and chaos in Lebanon as they have done in Iraq, Yemen and Syria.

"The Lebanese people are dying," commented Lebanese social media user Marianne Mouzaya. "No medicine, no hospitals, no electricity, no water, and an almost non-existent purchasing power."

"Lebanese people feel despair about this situation, and they do not believe that anything good will happen soon," according to Ferhat Tutkal, an international affairs graduate student at the Lebanese American University. "The country suffers from a brain drain, and qualified people leave Lebanon for developed countries that offer a better life. Mass migration is also possible in the future if the crisis continues as it has. Such a situation may affect the balances in the region and cause other problems."

Egyptian writer Ali Masoud believes that the Lebanese have finally realized that Iran and its Hezbollah proxy terrorist group are leading Lebanon toward "humiliation, starvation and an unknown future."

Iraqi political analyst and columnist Farouk Yusef pointed out that "Lebanon today is in its worst phase. For many, there is no Lebanon. A large part of the international community is no longer able to deal with Lebanon as an independent, sovereign state. It is an Iranian protectorate. But Hezbollah sarcastically calls on the world to save Lebanon."

Yusef scoffed at the appeal of some Lebanese leaders to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states to rescue Lebanon and said that the request for help should instead be directed to Iran, which is directly responsible for the country's crisis.

"Lebanon will remain deprived of the means of life because Iran, which has tightened its control over the country, is determined to drive it toward annihilation," Yusef wrote. He said that if the Lebanese were aware that Hezbollah was using Lebanon as a launching pad to attack Israel and that they would end up without electricity, water or medicine, they would have preferred that Israel remain in their country.

Roger Edde, a Lebanese lawyer and president of the Lebanese Peace Party, warned that Lebanon will remain a "failed state" as long as it is "occupied" by Iran.

"There is no glimmer of hope in the horizon unless the Security Council declares Lebanon a failed state that is occupied by Iran and its tools," Edde stated. Echoing the same sentiment, Lebanese social media user Rita Ballan accused Hezbollah of working to "perpetuate the [Iranian] occupation." According to Ballan, Iran and Hezbollah have taken Lebanon back to the stone age, and the Lebanese are now suffering from "isolation, deprivation and humiliation."

Abdel Wahab Badrakhan, a prominent writer and political analyst who previously served as deputy editor of the London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat*, said that Lebanon has "entered the stage of grave imminent danger, not only because the comprehensive collapse continues politically, economically and socially, but especially because the features of the Iranian takeover of the country are becoming clear and confirmed."

Badrakhan too believes that Iran and its Lebanese supporters have chosen "to prolong the financial-economic crisis to facilitate the handover of Lebanon to Iran."

The international community, he noted, has failed to realize that that Lebanon is about to fall into the hands of Iran.

Saudi writer Mishary Dhayidi holds Iran responsible for the unrest and instability in a number of Arab countries, including Lebanon. "What is happening in Iraq and Lebanon and the decline in public services and infrastructure -- electricity, fuel, food, medicine, security, and the dominance of the militias over the state, is because of the Iranian Khomeinist regime," he wrote.

He warned that the Biden administration needs to take note that the threat of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons was not the only problem.

"Iran is already very dangerous without a nuclear bomb," he argued. "The region is witnessing a state of chaos and agitation by fundamentalist forces, which threaten all Arab countries without exception."

"Iran believes that it has its pressure cards and that the US administration should yield to it," Khairallah cautioned. "The question remains how the international community will deal with the Lebanese situation."

When Khairallah and other Arabs talk about the international community, they are specifically referring to the Biden administration. Judging from the remarks of many Arab political analysts and columnists, the message they are sending to the Biden administration is that the mullahs in Tehran are doubly dangerous: they aspire not only to develop nuclear weapons, but also to occupy Arab states.

## **Russia says its air defense systems in Syria intercepted Israeli missiles**

Hezbollah, Iranian commanders reported killed in Israeli strikes; Russian military official says 7 of 8 Israeli missiles struck down this week

Time of Israel July 25

Russian anti-aircraft artillery systems in Syria intercepted a number of missiles launched by Israel in airstrikes this week in an area southeast of Aleppo, according to a Russian military official.

The strikes were reported to have killed senior Hezbollah and Iranian fighters. Vadim Kulit, deputy chief of the Russian Center for Reconciliation of the Opposing Parties in Syria, told the Russian news agency TASS on Tuesday that Israeli fighter jets fired eight guided missiles on Monday, seven of which were intercepted by

Russia's Pantsyr-S and Buk-M2 systems, both self-propelled, medium-range surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft systems.

"In a span from 23:39 to 23:51 on July 19, four F-16 fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force entered Syria's airspace via the US-controlled al-Tanf zone and fired eight guided missiles at facilities southeast of the city of Aleppo," said Kulit, according to the TASS report.

"One missile damaged the building of a research center in the settlement of Safira in the Aleppo governorate," he said. The comments came amid a new report on Saturday that Russia has "run out of patience" with Israel in Syria and is planning a shift in its policies toward Israeli sorties over the country, according to the London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat which cited an unnamed "well-informed" Russian source. Syrian media reported two Israeli attacks this past week, on Monday night and early Thursday. It claimed that in both cases most missiles were shot down — though Syria has regularly made such claims in the past, in what Syrian war analysts have generally believed to be empty boasts.



Syrian President Bashar Assad listens to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their talks via video conference, in Damascus, Syria, November 9, 2020. (SANA via AP)

But on Saturday, the Saudi-based Al-Arabiya news network reported that Imad al-Amin, a military commander for Lebanese terror group Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy whose members have fought in Syria on behalf of Bashar Assad's forces, was killed in one of the Israeli airstrikes this week. Hezbollah confirmed on Telegram that al-Amin was killed "while fulfilling his duties" but did not specify when or how, Israel's Kan public broadcaster reported on Saturday night. Al-Arabiya also reported that a senior official in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Sayed Ahmed Qurayshi, was killed under unknown circumstances in Syria this week. There has been no official confirmation from Iran.

Earlier Saturday, Asharq Al-Awsat cited an unnamed Russian source as saying that following talks with Washington, Moscow had got the impression that "Washington does not welcome the continuous Israeli raids," and thus believes it has the freedom to act more aggressively to thwart them.

In light of this, the Russians were now supplying Syrian forces with more advanced anti-missile systems and know-how, making them more capable of shooting down Israeli armaments, the report said. It claimed the effect of this was already being seen, with Syrian air defenses shooting down seven of eight Israeli missiles during a July 19 Israeli raid.

*This last article is a few years old, but I wanted to run it because not only does the Vatican still believe this, but they have their own high-powered telescopes, particularly one in Arizona, that exists to scan the skies for aliens. The Jesuit priest who oversees this operation, Gabriel Funes, actually says that aliens are such higher beings that they are not subject to the fall of man, therefore they are closer to God, and they should probably be “baptizing us”. Now, not only can you not make this stuff up, the level of deception here is mind-boggling. Jan Markell’s podcast from July 9 is an interview with Pastor Billy Crone on this very subject. – MD*

## **Pope Francis says he would baptise aliens: 'Who are we to close doors?'**

**Adam Withnall**@adamwithnall

Pope Francis has said that he would be willing to baptise aliens if they came to the Vatican, asking “who are we to close doors” to anyone - even Martians. In a homily yesterday dedicated to the concepts of acceptance and inclusion, Francis recalled a Bible story about the conversion of the first pagans to Christianity, according to reports on Vatican Radio.

He said Catholicism was a church of “open doors”, and that it was up to Christians to accept the Holy Spirit however “unthinkable” and “unimaginable” it appeared.

Describing how, according to the Bible, Peter was criticised by the Christians of Jerusalem for making contact with a community of “unclean” pagans, Francis said that at the time that too was “unthinkable”.

“If, for example, tomorrow an expedition of Martians came to us here and one said ‘I want to be baptised!’, what would happen?”

Clarifying that he really was talking about aliens, the Pope said: “Martians, right? Green, with long noses and big ears, like in children’s drawings.”

Francis said that Christianity had struggled from its earliest stages with the temptation to reject “the living presence of God” in various forms.

But he added: “When the Lord shows us the way, who are we to say, ‘No, Lord, it is not prudent! No, let's do it this way’. Who are we to close doors?”

While Francis appears to have taken the argument to its logical extreme, this is not the first time that the Vatican has raised the prospect of baptising extra-terrestrial beings. Speaking at the British Science Festival in 2010, one of then-Pope Benedict XVI’s astronomers said he would baptise an alien “if they asked”. While he accepted that the chances of ever getting such an opportunity were slim, Guy Consolmagno said: “Any entity – no matter how many tentacles it has – has a soul.”