



# Newsbytes

December 18, 2024

No. 1179

DAYS OF PRAISE

## *Wonderful Counselor*

BY HENRY M. MORRIS, PH.D.

**"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)**

This magnificent verse, used so often on Christmas cards, is a splendid prophecy of the divine/human nature of the coming Messiah. He would be born as a child, like every other human being, but He would also be given as a Son at the same time, with the giver clearly being God Himself. "He gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

The name of this God/man offers further testimony. At the introduction of this prophecy, God had named Him Immanuel, meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). Now He is given a series of names, all of which are needed to express His full identity. It is likely the first two names should be considered one name: He is our "Wonderful Counsellor" (the punctuation marks have been added to our translations, but the combined term is more in keeping with the structure of the other names).

This "child," amazingly, is also "The mighty God" and "The everlasting Father," stressing His absolute and eternal deity, as well as His omnipotence and the unity of the Father and the Son in the Triune Godhead. Finally, as "The Prince of Peace," it is only He that can unite the warring factions of mankind and bring true world peace. This stresses His humanity, but also His perfect and effective humanity.

Also, in His human nature, He is our "Wonderful Counselor," our perfect example and infallible teacher. He both shows and tells us what to believe and how to live, and He is never wrong, for in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:3, 9). HMM

# God's Breath Of Life For The Jewish State: The Physical and Spiritual Restoration Of Israel

December 13, 2024 Steve Herzig

The Talmud (a collection of Jewish rabbinical commentaries) tells a story of the great Rabbi Akiva. Shortly after the Temple's destruction in AD 70, he led a group of rabbis to Jerusalem's ruins. When they reached Mount Scopus and gazed at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox dart out from where the holy of holies stood. Immediately the other rabbis cried. But Rabbi Akiva laughed. Astounded, the rabbis said, "Akiva, you never cease to amaze us. We are crying, and you laugh!" Rabbi Akiva asked them, "And you, why are you crying?" They responded by quoting Lamentations 5:18: "Because of Mount Zion which is desolate, with foxes walking about on it." Akiva replied,

This is exactly why I laugh. For just as we have seen the prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction come to pass, so, too, know that the prophecies of her future consolation shall also be fulfilled. I laughed because I remembered the verses, "Old men and old women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with his staff in his hand because of advanced age; and the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets" [Zechariah 8:4–5]. The Holy One, blessed be He, has declared that, just as the first prophecies have been fulfilled, so shall the latter. I am joyous that the first has already come to pass, for the latter shall be fulfilled in the future.

Rabbi Akiva believed biblical prophecy and thus believed all his people would be joyfully back in the land one day. Twenty centuries later, another great rabbi, Abraham Heschel, also believed the Bible's promise of a land for the Jewish people. He said,

The love of this land was due to an imperative, not an instinct, not to a sentiment. There is a covenant, an engagement of the people to the land. We live by covenants. We could not betray our pledge or discard the promise. When Israel was driven into exile, the pledge became a prayer, the prayer a dream, the dream a passion, a duty a dedication.

. . . It is a commitment we must not betray. . . . To abandon the land would make a mockery of all our longings, prayers, and commitments. To abandon the land would repudiate the Bible.

## **The Dry Bones Come Together**

The Jewish people illustrate their collective return to Israel when they celebrate the Passover feast each year. The Torah commands Jewish people around the world to gather their families on the 14th day of the first month (Leviticus 23:5, 7). When the Seder concludes, they cry out, "Next year in Jerusalem!" This statement is a biblically based hope that one day all the Jewish people—no matter where they have been scattered—will celebrate the feast in their homeland, Israel.

The most familiar biblical passage regarding the hope of a reconstituted Israel is Ezekiel 37. God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision of dry, scattered bones and asked him, “Can these bones live?” (v. 3). The answer normally would be no, but in this case, Ezekiel knew the Person asking the question, and he responded accordingly, “O Lord G , You know” (v. 3). God asked Ezekiel this question at a time when the Jewish people were exiled in Babylon. Like the dry, scattered bones, these captives had no reason to hope of ever regaining nationhood. Yet in verse 7, the bones (the whole house of Israel, v. 11) started to rattle and make noise as they came together.

That process has taken shape throughout modern Jewish history. The rattling began in 1897 when Theodore Herzl, a journalist from Vienna, led the first Zionist Congress to discuss the necessity of a Jewish homeland. It seemed like a dream. But it was no dream. Although the dry bones coming together seemed impossible, hundreds of thousands of Jewish people made aliyah (returned) to their land over the next 51 years. That land, largely deprived of its people for nearly 2,000 years, was finally seeing them come home.

### **God’s Breath of Life for Israel**

Since then, Israel has survived four major wars: the 1948 War of Independence; the 1967 Six-Day War; the 1973 Yom Kippur War; and the current war with Hamas, the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Iran. It lived through two intifadas: 1987–1993 and 2000–2005. Yet here it stands in fulfillment of biblical prophecy, reconstituted, but with no breath in it (Ezekiel 37:8). American author Mark Twain said it best: “All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

Secret? There is no secret. We only need to believe the promise God provides in His Word. The apostle Paul did not want the church to “be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25). Paul knew, and we know today, that Israel’s people are in the land in unbelief. But one day God will breathe into His people the breath of spiritual life (Ezekiel 37:14), and He “will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).

Currently, the majority of Israelis are secular, without God. And yet God continues to bring His people back to their homeland. As a nation, Israel will remain in unbelief, except for a remnant of believers, until God breathes life into it and saves it. As Paul said with assurance, “All Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26). Despite the Jewish people’s unbelief, Bible-believing Christians will continue to unconditionally love, support, and bless them and the land of Israel, as God instructed us to do (Genesis 12:3).

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# With takeover of Syria, Muslim Brotherhood frontman Erdogan takes big step toward rebuilding Turkey's Ottoman caliphate

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressed the 7th Religious Council in Ankara last week, delivering a speech on the state of Islamic civilization while highlighting the event's focus on integrating artificial intelligence and digitization into religious practices.

According to the RAIR Foundation, Erdogan condemned Western civilization as wrought by blood, tears and genocide, a bitter irony given the Islamic Caliphate's own legacy of conquest, subjugation, and brutality etched into history. The Ottoman Empire, based in what is today called Turkey, butchered more than 3 million Armenian and Greek Christians and carried out a genocide against the native Armenian people.

President Erdogan, a leader of the global Muslim Brotherhood movement, has openly fantasized about restoring the old Ottoman Empire and rebuilding its war-making caliphate.

Erdogan's Sunni jihadist thugs, brought to power with the help of the American CIA and British MI6, are poised to carry out another genocide today inside Syria.

Turkey is backing a group of jihadists led by HTS, former ISIS and al-Qaida members, who are in the process right now of destroying the lives of Christians and Shia Alawite Muslims in Syria.

But Erdoğan criticized the foundations of Western hegemony, including its obsession with the so-called progress being made in the digital age:

While I agree that artificial intelligence and the rush to digitize the world is being pushed by the forces of evil in the world, this is like the pot calling the kettle black.

It should also be pointed out that modern-day Turkey is a member of NATO, which makes Turkey part of the "Western" military alliance. This makes other NATO member states, including the U.S., U.K., Canada, France, Italy, Germany, etc., at least partially complicit in whatever atrocities take place against Christians in Syria.

If Mr. Erdogan had approached this topic honestly, he would find that the powers that be in the Islamic world are entirely on board with the digitization of all things, including all banking and financial transactions, all information, and all things, both living and non-living. Islamic leaders are among the most enthusiastic backers of what's known as fintech (financial technology and replacement of cash with digital).

When the antichrist arises, he will be embraced by the leaders of all religions, including Islam, Judaism and the false Christian church.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ will ultimately put an end to this drive to create a fully digitized one-world beast system. But we as followers of Christ must resist it at every level as it approaches like a freight train of evil. We also must be careful not to get caught up in earthly narratives churned out by governments and their partners at Fox News, CNN, NBC, the NY Times, Washington Post and the rest of the corporate mockingbird media. What looks like a victory in Syria, and what was declared to be a victory by Joe Biden over the weekend, was likely just another step toward the grand deception that will culminate in that man of sin appearing on the scene with a plan that will initially bring peace and security for all but will quickly devolve into war and suffering.

Daniel 8:25 says: “And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.”

Another verse that came to mind as I followed the news about the sudden “victory” in Syria that Biden and so many on the right were celebrating was this from 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

“For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”

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## Seven Recent News Stories Which Point To The Nearness Of Jesus’ Return

By Jonathan Brentner  
December 15, 2024

Although we remain earthbound, the signs of the approaching Tribulation period continue to reach new heights in both frequency and intensity. We live in the season of Jesus’ appearing to take us home to glory; He could come for us at any moment.

Below, I have selected seven news stories from the past year that continue to shout with the message that we live in the last days leading up to the start of the Tribulation period.

### **Saudi Arabia-Israel Peace Initiative**

Mohammed bin Salman, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, spearheaded a gathering of nations during the closing months of 2024. His purpose was to begin the process of establishing a Palestinian state by means of a seven to ten-year peace agreement with Israel. The next meeting is scheduled for June 2-4, 2025, at the UN.

The interest of so many nations in the fate of Jerusalem tells us that the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:1-3 is happening before our eyes. It's more than a little stunning that the result of this ongoing initiative might lead to a seven-year peace accord with Israel. How close might we be to the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27 and the start of Daniel's seventieth week and the Tribulation period?

Even if next year's meeting doesn't result in the antichrist's seven-year deal with Israel, is it not significant that we already see the planning for this future covenant with the many?

### **Donald Trump's Reelection as President**

Donald Trump's election victory is good news for Israel as well as the American people. Once he takes office, the congress-approved weapons will flow freely to Israel.

With respect to the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, his win might enhance the peace negotiations already taking place. Once in office, Trump will likely revitalize his "Deal of the Century" plan from 2020 whereby he sought to resolve the Palestinian issue.

How might Trump's reelection factor into the antichrist's future peace initiative?

First, Israel will feel more secure with him as the U.S. President and, as a result, have a greater willingness to accept a seven-year peace accord. Second, many in Israel view Trump as sympathetic to their desire for a third temple. I believe his election increases the probability that the third temple will be a part of any future peace covenant.

### **The Continuing Attacks Against Israel**

If Israel is to accept the peace deal offered by the antichrist in fulfillment of Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, we would expect to see the nation besieged by warfare and threats of deadly attacks. If they were at peace with their neighbors, they would have no reason to enter into such a covenant. In other words, their current experience is exactly what we would expect to see in the months or years leading to their acceptance of the peace covenant that the beast will offer.

Despite delivering crushing blows to both Hamas and Hezbollah in 2024, these terrorist organizations remain active and capable of deadly attacks. There's also the threat of another Iranian missile attack on Israel and perhaps the future invasion of Israel described in Ezekiel 38-39. The continuing threats will eventually lead to a war-weary Israel agreeing to the terms of the antichrist.

### **The Fall of Syria**

The rapid fall of Syria to the rebel coalition surprised many people. Although the surrender of Damascus in recent days is not the fulfillment of Isaiah 17:1, we are now a giant step closer to seeing its fulfillment. The concern over the weapons left behind by the deposed government under Bashar al-Assad led to 300 Israeli airstrikes within

twenty-four hours against the leftover armaments of the previous regime. There's an ongoing concern about the chemical weapons that the former regime possessed and used.

Amir Tsarfati noted on Telegram that while new leaders of Syria seek to portray themselves as moderate, they are "ISIS and Al Qaeda in a new face – that's all." Although many in Syria rejoice at the removal of the wicked and brutal Bashar al-Assad, dark and chaotic days lie ahead for the nation. The future and total destruction of Damascus is now more likely to happen in the near term than it was a few weeks ago.

## **UN 2.0**

In September, the UN member nations voted to significantly strengthen the power of the UN. The summary of the approved proposal used the phrase "UN 2.0" to refer to its enhanced authority over the nations. Although we have yet to see the impact of this, it signifies the growing acceptance of most nations of the necessity of a powerful central government. The strengthened UN provides the structure needed for the establishment of the new world order that will rapidly materialize after the Rapture, if not before.

At the September 2024 UN summit, the nations also strengthened their resolve to implement Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) in their respective countries. The development of these systems has huge prophetic implications. At some point, the elite will combine all the individual CBDCs into one, which will enable the beast to control all the buying and selling by the midpoint of the Tribulation.

## **America's National Debt**

Recently, America's debt level reached thirty-six trillion dollars with 1.4 trillion needed each year just to cover the interest. It's only the Lord's restraining hand that keeps this from bringing financial ruin to the US and many other nations. A future U.S. debt explosion could be a key factor that leads to dire conditions of Revelation 6:5-6.

## **NATO's Permission for Ukraine to Fire Missiles into Russia**

In November, President Biden led the way in approving Ukraine's use of America's missiles to strike within the territory of Russia. Once NATO missiles began to cause death and destruction to his nation, I anticipated Vladimir Putin to quickly retaliate by attacking the U.S. and its allies. Although such a large-scale response has not yet happened, many claim that WWIII has already begun.

Is this not another sign that the second rider of the apocalypse will soon ride across the planet (Revelation 6:2-3, 7-8)? Although the Lord continues to restrain this future catastrophic eruption of violence, we now have a clearer picture of what lies ahead for the world after the Rapture.

As we await our departure from Earth to the place that Jesus is preparing for us in Heaven, the above sampling of headlines from 2024 tells us that we are ever so close to

meeting Him in the air. The stories from the past year paint a picture of a world on the edge of the Day of the Lord, which will quickly follow the Rapture.

*Jonathan Brentner is an author, writer, and Bible Teacher with a passion for encouraging believers with a sound biblical worldview and the nearness of Jesus' appearing.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**  
**Newsbytes will return in January.**