

Today's News in Light of the Bible

PROPHETIC Newsletter

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DR. ED HINDSON

My dear friends,

The world is in serious trouble, and everyone knows it. Never before in all of human history has the world seemed so vulnerable to disaster and at a loss for a workable solution to the world's problems.

Many people admit to a growing sense of unease about the future and feel like something ominous is about to happen.

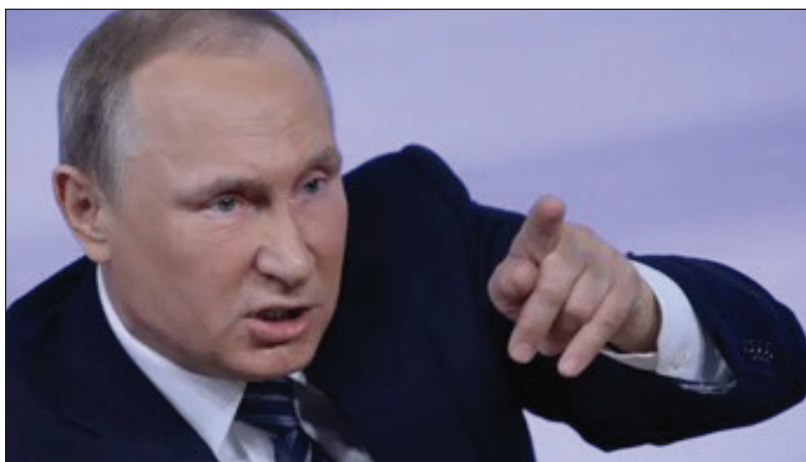
Paul tells us *“But make this: There will be terrible times in the last days”* (2 Timothy 3:1).

The growth of the church and world evangelism will continue until the body of Christ is complete. Until that day, our ministry will share — straight from the Bible — the message of hope and salvation in Christ!

There is comfort in the knowledge that God has a plan and purpose for the world.

Until He returns,

The Russian Bear is on the Prowl!



When Communism collapsed in the old Soviet Union thirty years ago, many in the West naively assumed Russia was no longer a threat to world peace. For three decades America and its NATO partners have had to carry on a dangerous political “dance” with Russia’s political leaders. In the current climate of “political correctness”, many foolishly have advocated peace through compromise, negotiation and economic co-operation. They have assumed that if we are nice to other nations, they will reciprocate nicely as well.

All of this tactic is based upon an unrealistic view of human nature. Unregenerate people are not naturally “nice” people. The Bible reminds us that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). As a result, “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mask their ways; and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:15-18).

See **THE RUSSIAN BEAR** on page 4

Israeli's Believe that Ukraine is a Sign for Iran's Future

For many years, Vladimir Putin has complained about the injustice of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of Russia's rightful hegemony of the former Soviet Republics.

In 2005, he said "the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century... Tens of millions of our citizens and fellow countrymen found themselves outside

the Russian Federation." The world watched him take northern Georgia (2008), Crimea and eastern Ukraine (2014), and did little about it. He took the measure of America during the Afghanistan retreat and read the polls of the American people's appetite for foreign engagements. The dictators watched closely when the US did not respond to attacks on its soldiers in Syria near al Tanf.

Putin watched, learned and acted. The authoritarian President Xi Jinping in China, the Revolutionary Shi'ite Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his Republican Guards henchmen, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, are all watching. They are now analyzing and strategizing the best time to invade Taiwan; attack the Gulf states; let loose proxies in Gaza, Yemen and Lebanon; confront India, and threaten the Far East.

Authoritarian birds of a feather flock together, vocally supporting Putin's invasion of Ukraine. During the unprovoked assault, Putin met with Pakistani Prime Minister Khan, while President Xi of China offered his

support of Russia. The "Butcher of Tehran," Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi told Putin, "The continued expansion of NATO is a serious threat against the stability and security

of independent countries in various regions of the world." The Iranians know that the US desperately wants to rejoin a weakened nuclear deal. It is an agreement that demands absolutely no restrictions on



Iran's expansionism; its support of aggressive proxies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen; or any limits on Iran's terrorism, human rights abuses or missile development. The lesson of Ukraine for Iran is to hold out for more, as America under this administration is perceived not as a superpower but more of a 98-pound weakling.

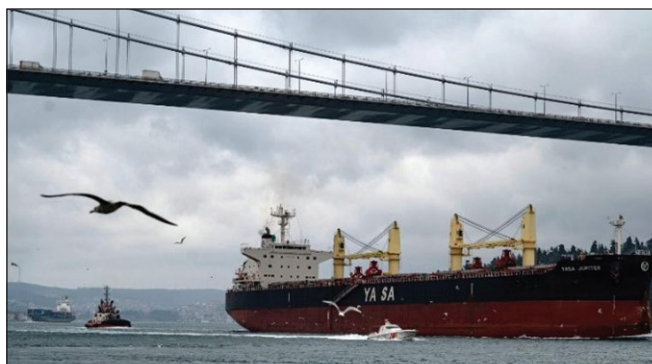
As Yoav Limor, writing in Israel Hayom, says, "The lesson for the world is broader: Without resolve, the familiar global security order will crack. The Russian invasion of Ukraine poses dangers that could extend beyond the immediate battlefield, potentially changing the world security order for the worse."

The Israelis are watching closely and know that their national security is in worse shape than just a month ago. The lesson of Ukraine for Israel is that it must rely on itself by itself, and that is the message most other nations will also take. With a new nuclear agreement whose feeble restrictions on nuclear development will evaporate in just a

See **Israel and Iran's Futures** on page 6

Turkey's Dilemma: Russia or the West?

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to end his own inaction on Ukraine's request for Ankara to close the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and with them access to the Black Sea, to Russian warships per the 1936 Montreux Convention. The Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, announced that what was unfolding in Ukraine was indeed



a “war,” effectively closing the straits to the warships of belligerents. Erdoğan gave his implicit blessing to the decision by declaring how Turkey intends to continue to implement the convention in a manner to prevent crisis escalation, underlining that Turkey desires peace in the region. He expressed disappointment that Turkey's offers of mediation/arbitration did not bear fruit and that Turkey does not wish to give up good relations with both countries.

The decision was partly prompted by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's tweet thanking Turkey for closing the straits and partly by the necessity of not being left behind. Zelenskyy deliberately put Erdoğan in the spotlight to break the Turkish president's indecision. Nevertheless, Erdoğan's dilemma of choosing between Ukraine and Russia in the conflict has not been resolved. Furthermore, he faces a greater and more fundamental dilemma of whether he will persist with his anti-Westernism, including cozying up to Russia, or take a bold strategic step and return Turkey to its traditional Western vocation.

The Montreux Convention has regulated merchant and military maritime traffic into and out of the Black Sea for 85 years. It lays down a set of provisions to regulate the passage of

warships through the straits. These provisions govern the mode of entry, duration of stay, and tonnage, as well as the nature of weapons they can carry on board. Their application varies

depending on whether a passage occurs in peace or wartime or when there is a threat of war. Although the agreement generally favors Black Sea states (Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia) over others in terms of

transit of warships through the straits, certain restrictions apply universally.

Turkey could have possibly argued that what is unfolding in Ukraine is not a war especially given that Moscow has not officially declared war on Ukraine. However, given the blatant nature of Russia's aggression, so transparently revealed through social media, such a position would have been embarrassingly lacking in credibility. It would have also opened a Pandora's box concerning the future of the Montreux Convention. The convention's implementation was never perfect, but the fact that, so far, there has been no attempt to revise it and the international community has continued to abide by its terms speak volumes. This could have changed, and triggered demands for revisions, a longtime nightmare of Turkey. Moreover, the decision to close the straits to the warships of the belligerents is unlikely to alter the military situation in the Black Sea. Russia's Black Sea Fleet, based in Crimea, is formidable; Moscow had already completed its naval buildup, and Ukraine's navy is very limited.

The Turkish economy is in its worst state since in a long time, marked by inflation and a growing current accounts deficit. Both Russia

See **TURKEY'S DILEMMA** on page 4

THE RUSSIAN BEAR from page 1

The cold, icy stare of Vladimir Putin reveals his cold heart, which is evidence of his evil intents. When the Soviet Union collapsed, even many Bible teachers assumed they had been wrong about identifying Russia and the ancient people of Magog in Ezekiel 38:1. Perhaps Ezekiel had some other nation in mind they suggested. In the meantime, serious students of prophecy warned that while the Soviet Union had disappeared, the Russian Bear was still on the prowl and would eventually re-emerge as a major threat to world peace.

Many of us who have been to Russia can testify to their incredible history of survival, the strength of their people and their amazing cultural heritage. But Russia has suffered under the iron grip of czars, oligarchs, and dictators for centuries. Mistreatment, mismanagement and misdirection have often plagued the

Russian people because of their leaders.

While we in the West are sickened and saddened by Russia's harsh treatment of neighboring Ukraine, we need to pray for God's divine intervention for the sake of true believers in both countries who are caught in the middle of this current crisis. War is an ugly thing because it reveals the ugliness of human depravity at its worst.

No matter how the current conflict ends, this will not be the end. Greed, corruption and hatred are the results of unregenerate and unredeemed hearts. The Spirit of God inspired the prophets to look down the tunnel of time into the distant future and warn His people that Satan is always prowling about seeking who he may devour. And he uses leaders and nations to fulfill his evil desires. No wonder he is called, Apollyon, the Destroyer (Revelation 9:11).— *PNL*

PRAY: Intercede on behalf of the believers caught in the middle of this war.

TURKEY'S DILEMMA from page 3

and Ukraine are economically dear to Turkey. 78% of Turkey's grain imports come from the two countries (64.6% from Russia and 13.4% from Ukraine). At a time when Western tourists are staying away, Russian and Ukrainian tourists have constituted an important source of income for a sector that accounts for around 4% of the Turkish GDP. Both countries are important markets for Turkish exports as well as construction services. Finally, Turkey has important defense projects with both.

However, in terms of dependence, the balance has favored Russia. On energy, Turkey depends heavily on Russia and is the

second largest importer of Russian natural gas after Germany. Russia has been constructing a nuclear energy station that would supply 30% of Turkey's energy needs by 2030. Second, Turkey has relied on Russian acquiescence in northern Syria to deter the Assad regimes from mounting an offensive that risks displacing large numbers of displaced Syrians into Turkey at a time when public discontent against Syrian refugees is peaking. These developments leave Erdoğan facing a new dilemma: to persist with his current policies or return Turkey to its traditional Western strategic orientation with NATO. — *PNL*

PRAY: Pray the spread of the Gospel during this time of global turmoil.

Second Synagogue Discovered in Mary Magdalene's Hometown

Archaeologists say a second synagogue dating back to the Second Temple period has been discovered in what is believed to have been the birthplace of Mary Magdalene of the Bible and is “changing our understanding of Jewish life in this period.” While excavating the Galilean town of Magdala, known today as Migdal, archaeologists say they found the remnants of a second synagogue dating back to the Second Temple period — which in history was a time that is believed to have lasted between 515 or 516 B.C. up until 70 A.D.

“This is the second synagogue from the Roman period that has been uncovered in the village — and the first case of the existence of two synagogues in any locality from the Second Temple period, a period when the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing,” the Israel Antiquities Authority shared on Facebook.

Prof. Adi Erlich, who heads the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa, and Dina Avshalom-Gorni, who directs the excavation of the site on behalf of the University of Haifa, believe the discovery “sheds light on the social and religious life of the Jews in the Galilee during this period.” They contend that the finding “indicates the need for a special building for studying and reading the Torah and social gatherings.”

The first synagogue in Migdal was uncovered in 2009 through an excavation that found ritual baths, streets, a marketplace and industrial facilities in the ancient village. The

second synagogue was first discovered by probes conducted by Barak Tzin of the Israel Antiquities Authority and lies less than 200 meters away from the first synagogue. The



IAA statement states that the discovery of the second synagogue is “changing our understanding of Jewish life in this period,” IAA stated.

“We can imagine Mary Magdalene and her family coming to the synagogue here, along with

other residents of Migdal, to participate in religious and communal events,” excavation co-director Avshalom-Gorni told the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*.

The discovery was made amid a plan to build new infrastructure in the town of Migdal. But while the areas were being excavated — a typical practice in advance of construction — the second synagogue was discovered by the IAA, Y.G. Contractual and the University of Haifa. Avshalom-Gorni told the newspaper that the first synagogue had a decorative mosaic floor and the second one had a compacted, plastered and earthen floor, thus the second synagogue is said to be smaller and not as ornate as the first.

The first synagogue was in an industrial area, while the second was located in a residential street, which suggests they were built “within the social fabric of the settlement,” Avshalom-Gorni told *The Times of Israel*, who reported that the second synagogue consisted of the

See **ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE DISCOVERED** on page 6

ISRAEL AND IRAN'S FUTURES from page 2

few years, it means that Israel will need to act sooner rather than later to strike Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Ukraine is the flashing signal telling Israel it has to go it alone regarding Iran. The weak western response to the naked Russian act of aggression has increased the chance for regional and global wars.

Unlike the rest of the world, Israel believes what its adversaries say. Supreme leader Khamenei has called for the destruction of the Zionist entity on innumerable occasions: "Our stance against Israel is the same stance we have always taken. Israel is a malignant cancerous tumor... that has to be removed and eradicated: it is possible, and it will happen."

What is the Ukrainian connection to the Middle East? Russia is also the leading outside power in the region with the influence and desire to recreate the Soviet sphere of influence in the Levant and North Africa.

Russia has solidified its military status with new naval facilities at Tartus and an upgraded airbase at Khmeimim, both in Syria. It now projects on-the-ground military power from its bases in Syria into the eastern Mediterranean, affecting Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Israel, the Gulf States and Egypt. Those Russian bases are close to the Black Sea and Crimea and in range of the Suez Canal, the Straits of Hormuz and

Bab-el Mandeb – gateways and choke points of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Appeasing Iran with a weak nuclear agreement in 2015, forgetting about previous Russian hegemonic invasions in eastern Ukraine (2014) and Georgia (2008), and ignoring China's moves in Hong Kong and the South China Sea, were signboards for the dictators to move now or in the near future.

America's poor leadership on the global stage, rhetoric with evaporating red lines, and an isolationist sentiment are a perfect storm to ignite regional wars in the Far East, Mideast, Eastern Europe and southern Asia. America is a nation that has lost its way, looking more like America in the 1930s, which ignored the rise of Hitler and Japan until there was no choice. When Emmanuel Macron is the most decisive leader in the West, you know that your adversaries will take notice and act.

To avoid war, you need the means to fight and for your enemies to believe you have the will to use them. America has the former, albeit somewhat hollowed out in recent years, and lacks the latter.

Unless things change, by 2030, Xi will be in Taipei. Israel will have struck Iranian nuclear facilities, and Hezbollah and Hamas will have sent tens of thousands of missiles into Israeli civilian areas. — *PNL*

PRAY: Pray for the protection of Israel. Pray for the return of strong American leadership on the world stage.

ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE DISCOVERED from page 5

main hall and two side rooms. A stone bench was also recovered. Archaeologists found bases for two of the building's six pillars that held up the roof. The walls of the synagogue were

colorfully decorated and covered in plaster. Archaeologists believe that a room at the south end of the main hall with a shelf may have stored scrolls. — *PNL*