

Today's News in Light of the Bible

PROPHETIC *Newsletter*

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Dear Friend,

Welcome to 2023!

We don't know what this year holds, but we DO know Who holds it!

As time moves on, we begin to see the development of political strategies, new attempts for peace in the Middle East, new weaponry, and a rise in violence against Jews and Christians.

In Matthew 24:6, Jesus warns us that we will hear of “wars and rumors of wars” and that we should not be troubled. He has a purpose and a plan!

What a day that will be when He reveals all to us and returns to reign as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, ruler of creation. What can we do until that day arrives?

We can PRAY for peace, we can ALERT Christians to global events and we can purposefully and continuously SHARE the Gospel to a searching world.

Now is not the time to sit back and be an observer. We have been told “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.” Please join us as we continue to labor for Christ!

-World Prophetic Ministry

Netanyahu Wins Election as Israel's Prime Minister



Benjamin Netanyahu has once again become prime minister of Israel in the country's fifth election in less than four years. Yair Lapid conceded defeat after nearly all the votes were counted, allowing the 73-year-old Netanyahu to claim victory in the election. “The State of Israel comes before any political consideration,” Lapid said. “I wish Netanyahu success, for the sake of the people of Israel and the State of Israel.”

Netanyahu's return to the executive office came as his Likud Party formed a political alliance with two other political parties known as Jewish Power and Religious Zionism. Religious Zionism and its allies have weathered claims that they are extremists who will target the nation's

Continued on page 4

Israel, US Hold Air Drill Simulating Striking Iran Nuclear Program

The Israel Air Force held one of its largest drills in years with the United States Air Force simulating offensive strikes against Iran's nuclear program. The drill took place over the Mediterranean Sea and Israel. It included long-range flights such as those that Israeli pilots might need to make in order to reach the Islamic Republic. The exercise included refuelers as well as fighter jets from both forces. Washington and Israel have signed an agreement that would see the US come to assist Israel with missile defense in times of war, and the two militaries have held numerous joint air defense exercises in recent years.

These drills occurred at a time when tensions between Israel and Iran remain high. Iran, which possesses over 1,000 short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, continues to smuggle weapons to countries and non-state actors such as Hezbollah, which is estimated to have an arsenal of some 50,000 missiles on Israel's northern border. With tensions high over Iran's nuclear program and regional hostility, Israel and the Islamic Republic have been threatening each other with senior officers stating that their militaries are capable of striking the other. Israel has significantly increased its readiness level and has taken steps throughout the past year to prepare a credible military option against Iran's nuclear facilities.

The NIS 58 billion defense budget set for the IDF in the coming year is expected to allow the Israeli military to focus on the threats posed by Iran across the region, with some

NIS 3.5b. designated specifically for this very task. The drill was discussed by IDF Chief of



Staff Lt.-Gen. Aviv Kohavi during his visit to Washington recently. Kohavi, who returned to Israel a day earlier than planned following a deadly double bombing in Jerusalem, met with

senior American officials including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, and CENTCOM Commander Gen. Michael Kurilla. In the last year, the IDF and CENTCOM forces have held several joint drills as well as operational missions.

Kurilla was in Israel a week prior to Kohavi's visit and toured the northern border as well as the IAF's fleet of F-35 Adir stealth fighter jets. "We are operating together on all fronts to gather intelligence, neutralize threats, and prepare for various scenarios in either one or multiple arenas" Kohavi declared. His counterpart, IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Aviv Kohavi, also stated,

"We are operating together on all fronts to gather intelligence, neutralize threats, and prepare for various scenarios in either one or multiple arenas," adding that the two countries were "developing joint military capabilities at an accelerated rate" against Iran and other threats in the Middle East.

Outgoing Defense Minister Benny Gantz told reporters that while Israel has the capabilities to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu must consider the issue

See **ISRAELI AIR DRILLS** on page 3

Persecution on the Rise

Persecution of Christians is on the rise in at least 18 countries, especially in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, due to growing jihadism and nationalism, according to a report released by the group Aid to the Church in Need. The ACN examined human rights violations against believers in 24 countries where it is particularly difficult to be a Christian. An analysis of the persecution in the years 2020-2022, compared to 2017-2019, shows that the situation for Christians has become worse, or “slightly worse,” in at least 18 countries.

These countries include Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Mali, Sudan, Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Russia, North Korea, China, Vietnam, India and Qatar, according to the report titled *“Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2020-22.”* Around the world, more than 360 million Christians live in places where they experience high levels of persecution just for following Jesus — that’s one in seven



believers worldwide, according to Open Doors USA’s World Watch List, which ranks the top 50 countries where Christians experience the worst persecution for their faith.

The ACN said its report was presented in the Houses of Parliament in the U.K. with a keynote address by Nigeria’s Bishop Jude Arogundade. Arogundade’s Diocese of Ondo was targeted

by gunmen who killed more than 40 people at a packed Sunday service on Pentecost Sunday last year. He commented, “no one seems to pay attention to the genocide” taking place in swathes of Nigeria’s Middle Belt. “The world is

silent as attacks on churches, their personnel and institutions have become routine. How many corpses are required to get the world’s attention?” he said.

African countries saw a sharp rise in terrorist violence from non-state militants, with more than 7,600 Nigerian Christians murdered

See **PERSECUTION ON THE RISE** on page 6

ISRAELI AIR DRILLS from page 2

“carefully” before giving the order. “Israel has the ability to act in Iran. We have the readiness, development capabilities, and long-term plans we are managing. We need to prepare for this possibility, and we will also need to consider this issue very carefully before carrying it out,” he said.

Biblical Connections: Ezekiel 38-39 has Israel being invaded in the future by a coalition

in which Iran is a major player of in the battle of Gog and Magog. The fact that Iran and Israel continue to have major tension in the region should be a warning to followers of Biblical prophecy. In prophecy, Israel is attacked without allies and only through God’s intervention are they delivered. It will be interesting to see what role, if any, America would play in that future invasion. — PNL

PRAY: Pray that peace would remain in the region and that the tension between Iran and Israel would not lead to a major war.

minority Arab community, and the LGBT community if they take power. “We’re not going to hammer anyone,” said MK Orit Strock, a member of Religious Zionism. “We will serve all citizens, including those who do not think like us and whose lifestyles are different.”

Strock did say that her party wants to “bring order to the public space,” apparently taking issue with lewd, vulgar and pornographic aspects of LGBT pride events. “Regardless of pride, there shouldn’t be marches of people walking down the street naked or half naked,” she added. “The problem is with years-long efforts, not just here but around the world, to force things on the public.”

The *Jewish News Syndicate* reported that the total number of seats for the coalition government had decreased from an expected 65 seats to 64. Nevertheless, the JNS added, Netanyahu only needed 61 seats to have a majority in the 120-seat Knesset. This gives the group a solid majority that, barring any major break, should allow them to remain in power for the foreseeable future, something that has not occurred in recent years in Israel.

The election news was not met with excitement in some circles due to Netanyahu’s past legal problems. In 2019, Netanyahu became the first sitting prime minister in the history of the modern state of Israel to be indicted, with various charges, including breach of trust, bribery and fraud. “This is a hard and sad day,” said Attorney General

Avichai Mandelblit in a speech given before the Justice Ministry at the time. “I am bringing an indictment on public corruption against the prime minister in three cases. It is sad for me personally and for the country.”

For his part, Netanyahu denied the allegations, labeling the indictment “a political coup” and “a contaminated process,” in which he felt the investigators “were after me personally.” In June 2021, Netanyahu lost his position as prime minister after 12 years in the role, being replaced by Naftali

Bennett, who held on to power with a very slight majority in the Knesset.

However, because of the structure of the Jewish Knesset, holding power with slim majorities that can change quickly means that Israel,

unable to gain a strong majority, has went through massive election changes for several years.

Netanyahu’s reelection is seen as a shift back to a more conservative stance for the nation. It is also seen as a potential powder keg for Israel and Iran, as Netanyahu has never been afraid to stand up to the Iranian regime, either political or even militarily when deemed necessary.

Biblical Connection: While Netanyahu is not without controversy, he does tend to offer a stronger front for Israel against their enemies. The Bible clearly identifies Israel as a major player in the end times and thus their continued perseverance is essential for end times prophecy. — PNL

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

PROVERBS 21:1

PRAY: Pray for the new leadership in Israel and that America will continue to be an ally of Israel in the region.

Christianity Shifting from Western Europe, Growing in Central America

For the first time since 1801, when the United Kingdom took its first census, less than half of the population identify as “Christian,” while the share of individuals who say they have no religion has swelled by millions, the latest data from their census show. The data published by the U.K.’s Office for National Statistics show that only 46.2% or 27.5 million of the country’s more than 67 million people say they are Christian. In 2011, when the last census was done, 59.3% of the population or 33.3 million, people described themselves as Christian.

As in the United States, the number of people with no faith in the U.K. has been growing with the decline of Christianity. Some 22.2 million people or 37.2% of the population reported that they had “no religion.” Ten years earlier, only 14.1 million people or 25.2% of the population, said they had “no religion.” Responding to the results of the census, Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said the U.K. had “left behind the era when many people almost automatically identified as Christian. It’s not a great surprise that the census shows fewer people in this country identifying as Christian than in the past.” Similar drops have occurred throughout much of Western Europe.

In contrast, according to a new survey in Central America, evangelicals are the majority with 37% of the population; while Roman Catholicism experienced a big decrease, reaching only 32.6%. 29.1% said they were unaffiliated believers and 1.3% non-believers. Among the 32.6% of Catholics, 19.3% attend

their church more than once a week and generally participate in church activities. Evangelicals participate almost three times more than Catholics in church activities (58.4%).



This increase in evangelicalism has also led to an increase in beliefs on traditionally Christian values. The study says that 83.9% of Central American citizens do not agree with same-sex relationships. Regarding abortion, for 61.3% it is only acceptable if the woman’s life is at risk and for 54.6% in case of health reasons. For 46.8% both men and women should be virgins at marriage. These are all significantly higher than anything in Western Europe or the United States.

Biblical Connections: Daniel 7:7-8 states “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.”

Conservative scholars have generally agreed that the fourth beast in Daniel’s vision represents the Roman Empire and the little horn in this passage represents

See **CHRISTIANITY GROWING** on page 4

PERSECUTION ON THE RISE from page 3

between January 2021 and June 2022 the ACN reported. In May, a video was released showing 20 Nigerian Christians being executed by Islamist terror group Boko Haram and Islamic State's West Africa Province.

In Asia, "state-authoritarianism" was behind the worsening oppression, especially in North Korea, where religious beliefs and practices are routinely and systematically repressed, it said. The report also noted that religious nationalism has triggered increasing violence against Christians in the region, with Hindu nationalist and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist groups active in India and Sri Lanka, respectively.

The report noted that India witnessed 710 incidents of anti-Christian violence between January 2021 and the start of June, "driven in part by political extremism." It cited an example of a mass rally in Chhattisgarh state, where members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party applauded as right-wing Hindu religious leader Swami Parmatmanand called for Christians to be killed.

In the Middle East, the report said a migration crisis threatened the survival of some

of the world's oldest Christian communities. In Syria, the Christian population declined from 10% to less than 2%, falling from 1.5 million just before the war began to around 300,000 today. ACN added that while the rate of exodus is slower in Iraq, there was a community that numbered around 300,000 before the 2014 invasion by ISIS had halved to 150,000 by the spring of 2022.

Even Europe was not immune to the rise in persecution. From 2020-2021, over 1,500 anti-Christian hate crimes occurred

Open Doors USA's 2022 World Watch List, which looked at incidents reported between Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021, found at least 5,898 Christians were killed, 5,110 churches were attacked or closed, 6,175 Christians were arrested without trial, and 3,829 Christians were kidnapped. 2021 saw a 24% increase in Christians killed for their faith.

Biblical Connection: The Bible describes a great persecution on the Tribulation Saints that will arise in the last days. Could current situations be laying the foundation for this prophecy? Only time will tell. — PNL

PRAY: Pray that more nations in the Middle East will make agreements with Israel so that Iran's ambitions to destroy the nation will be halted.

CHRISTIANITY GROWING from page 5

the future Antichrist, thus linking him to the Roman Empire, or more accurately a revived Roman Empire. Daniel 9:26 also links the Antichrist to the Roman Empire, as they are the people who destroyed the second temple. However, for centuries Western Europe was viewed as the bastion of Christianity, sending missionaries throughout the world. People

wondered how such a Christian center could one day give rise to the Antichrist. This is no longer the case. Western Europe's Christian influence has completely collapsed, to the point that even nominal Christianity is dying. The secularization of Western Europe could easily be setting the stage for the kingdom of the Antichrist to rise. — PNL

PRAY: Pray that Christianity will continue to grow in Central America and other places throughout the world and that Christianity may once again take hold in Western Europe.