

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update July 19, 2018 ***(7th of Av, 5778)***



[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For July 2018](#)

NEW MUSEUM IN JERUSALEM SHOWS LIFE IN YESHUA'S TIME: The Terra Sancta Museum's new wing, built into the ruined remains of Crusader and Mamluk buildings along the Via Dolorosa in the Old City, showcases objects discovered in excavations at biblical sites over the past century. Many of the items going on display in the new exhibit, titled "The House of Herod: Life and Power in the Age of the New Testament," have never been shown to the public. Coins, ceramic fragments, ossuaries, and stone slabs bear inscriptions in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Samaritan, illustrating the kaleidoscopic variety of cultures present in the Holy Land during the first centuries. The artifacts include everything from elegant Corinthian columns from Herod's palace to humble wares from Galilean homes. Father Eugenio Alliata, the museum director, said it was important to "present something of the real life of people at the time," given that the teachings of Yeshua "are so much intersected with the common life of the people." (Times of Israel)

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER GATE TO BIBLICAL CITY OF ZER: A team of archaeologists, led by director of the Bethsaida Project, Dr. Rami Arav, have uncovered the entrance gate to the biblical city of Zer during excavations carried out in the Golan Heights over the past two weeks. The ancient fishing village is mentioned several times in the New Testament as a city where Yeshua lived and where he miraculously fed a multitude of people with five loaves and two fish. Archaeologists said the size, wealth and impressive fortifications indicate that Zer was a major city. Bethsaida was the name of the city during the Second Temple period, but during the First Temple period it was the city of Zer," Arav said, pointing to Joshua 19:35, which says: "The fortified towns were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth." Arav began carrying out excavations of et-Tell on behalf of the University of Nebraska nearly 30 years ago. In these excavations, he identified the ancient Bethsaida, and following his excavations and discoveries, masses of Christian pilgrims visited the site because of its great importance to Christianity. The excavations are conducted northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Avi Lieberman, director of the Jordan Park in which Bethsaida is located said: "The staff at the Jordan Park and the Golan Tourism are happy for the tens of thousands of visitors who visit the park every day. The wonderful park is also an impressive archaeological site. I am amazed each time by the arrival of thousands of evangelical visitors to Bethsaida. The latest discoveries will bring more visitors to the park from around the world and from Israel." (INN)

1,600-YEAR-OLD BIBLICAL MOSAICS PAINT NEW PICTURE OF GALILEAN LIFE: In its eighth dig season, the vibrant mosaic flooring of a fifth-century synagogue excavated in the small ancient Galilee village of Huqoq continues to surprise. The 2018 Huqoq dig has uncovered unprecedented depictions of biblical stories, including the Israelite spies in Canaan. With its rich finds, the Byzantine-period synagogue busts scholars' preconceived notions of a Jewish settlement in decline. University of North Carolina Prof. Jodi Magness said the biblically based depictions are "unparalleled" and not found in any other ancient synagogue. Before wrapping up the dig season last week, the team of 20 excavators uncovered a further biblical mosaic panel, which shows a youth leading an animal on a rope and includes the inscription, "a small child shall lead them." It is a reference to Isaiah 11:6, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Huqoq was a prosperous village about 3 miles from Magdala (home of Mary Magdalene) and Capernaum (where Yeshua taught in the synagogue)," located next to a fresh spring. It appears twice in the Hebrew Bible, in Joshua 19:32–34 and 1 Chronicles 6:74–75. (Times of Israel)

RECORD NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISIT ISRAEL IN FIRST HALF OF 2018: During the period between January and June 2018, about 2.1 million tourist entries were recorded, an increase of 19% compared to the same period in 2017 (1.74 million) and 26% more than in 2016. The number of 310,200 tourist entries recorded in June 2018 amounts to about 2% more than in June 2017. Since the beginning of the year, tourism has injected more than 12 billion shekels into the Israeli economy. Tourism Minister Yariv Levin said, "The marketing efforts and activities that we are spearheading in the ministry are leading us to new records, as, for the first time, we have crossed the 2 million threshold for tourist entries over the course of half a year. I am sure that all tourism-related enterprises will feel these results in the tourism industry, which contributes tens of billions of dollars every year to the Israeli economy," he added. (Arutz-7)

GERMANY INCREASES FUNDING FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS BY \$88 MILLION: The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany in its announcement last week said the increase brings global allocations by Germany for 2019 to \$564 million. The Claims Conference and representatives of the German government negotiated the increase in Washington, D.C. During the negotiations, the German officials were taken on a tour of the USA Holocaust Memorial Museum and heard from survivors about their personal experiences. "The significant increase for social welfare services secured by our negotiating team will lead to more home care, food support, medicine and transportation services for Jewish Holocaust survivors around the world," said Claims Conference President Julius Berman. Also as a result of the negotiations, 55,000 Holocaust survivors in Central and Eastern Europe will see an increase in pensions and more child survivors who were living in hiding or under a false identity will be eligible to receive payments. (JTA)

ISRAELI FIRM GETS GREEN LIGHT TO ADVANCE TRIALS FOR NON-OPIATE PAINKILLER: Israeli pharmaceutical company PainReform last week received approval from the USA Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to begin late-stage clinical studies for a pain relief drug that is a departure from opiate-based narcotics. Many patients are prescribed opioids to deal with pain following surgery which can be highly addictive and after surgery are at the heart of a costly health crisis in the United States. PainReform said the FDA had given it a green light to carry out two Phase 3 trials on its product PRF-110, which prolongs the action of a local analgesic, or painkiller, called ropivacaine. FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said that the agency "remains focused on striking the right balance between reducing the rate of new addiction by decreasing exposure to opioids and rationalizing prescribing, while still enabling appropriate access to those patients who have legitimate medical need for these medicines." Opioids were involved in more than 42,000 deaths in the United States in 2016, more than any previous year on record, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 40% of the opioid overdose deaths reported involved prescription drugs. (Haaretz)

HADASSAH EIN KEREM HOSPITAL TO USE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED MICROSCOPE:

Hadassah Ein Kerem announced Wed, 11 July, 2018 that its neurosurgery department has begun using the world's most sophisticated surgical microscope, the KINEVO 900. Manufactured by the German optical company Zeiss, the microscope features a visualization system allowing surgeons to observe tumors in high-resolution without an eyepiece; and a robotically- controlled navigation system that facilitates precise microsurgery. Dr. Sergey Spektor, the director of the Skull Base Surgery Center of Hadassah's neurosurgery department, said that microscopes play a critical role in brain operations. "Neurosurgery is a microscopic challenge... We need very good quality magnification, [for] crisp images, in order to see what we are doing," he said. "But nowadays, a microscope is not only used for magnification, as a magnifying glass; it is also an instrument which is a part of the robotic operative system used in neurosurgery." He praised the quality of the KINEVO 900's cameras, as well as the microscope's "wonderful mechanics." While weighing more than 500 kg., the microscope remains "completely balanced" and thus easy for surgeons to operate during procedures, he said. Spektor added the machine enables surgeons to view images on an external screen rather than looking through the eyepiece, and to view those images in 3D. (J.Post)

ISRAELI LUNAR LANDING PLANNED FOR 2019: An Israeli spacecraft will land on the moon early in 2019, the SpaceIL Corporation announced this week, in a mission which would make Israel the fourth country to make a lunar landing. On 7 July 2018, SpaceIL representatives announced that the unmanned lunar landing craft will be transferred to the USA in Nov. 2018, with a launch date in Dec. 2018. According to SpaceIL, the space vessel will reach the moon and complete the lunar landing on 13 Feb. next year. If successful, the mission would make Israel the fourth country to make a soft-landing by an unmanned vehicle on the moon; preceded by the USSR, USA, and China. During its mission, the unmanned SpaceIL vehicle will plant the Israeli flag on the moon. (INN)

IDF ATTACKS SYRIAN MILITARY POSTS: The IDF targeted three military posts in Syria overnight Wed, 11 July 2018, in response to the infiltration of the Syrian UAV that was intercepted by the IDF earlier in the day. "The IDF will continue to operate determinedly and decisively against any attempt to breach Israeli sovereignty and will act against any attempt to hurt its civilians," said the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. "The IDF holds the Syrian regime accountable for the actions carried out in its territory and warns it from further action against Israeli forces." The Israeli attack came hours after a Syrian UAV infiltrated Israeli territory before being shot down by a Patriot missile. IDF Spokesman Ronen Manelis said, "From the moment the Syrian drone was identified, we had full operational control over its movement. Our forces carried out a number of defensive actions to prevent friction, and once they met the optimal conditions, we intercepted and destroyed it," said Manelis. (Arutz-7)

DANON TO UN: 'CONDEMN UAV INCIDENT': Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, on Wed. 11 July 2018 called on the Security Council to condemn the infiltration of Israeli airspace by an unmanned aerial vehicle launched from Syria. "Earlier today, an unmanned aerial vehicle was launched from Syria into Israel, penetrating 9.6 kilometers into Israeli airspace and threatening the safety and security of Israel's northern cities and towns. Thankfully, the Israel Defense Forces intercepted the UAV, preventing the possibility of a more serious security incident," Danon wrote to the Council. He noted that Wednesday's incident comes during a time of heightened tensions on Israel's border with Syria. "We have repeatedly warned the Security Council of the destabilizing activities taking place in Syria and the threats they pose to Israel and the Middle East. I urge the Security Council to condemn this dangerous act that not only threatens Israel, but the stability of the entire region," Danon concluded. The UAV was intercepted by an Israeli Patriot missile. The launch of the missile caused sirens to sound in communities in the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley. (INN)

ISRAEL TO RUSSIA: ASSAD'S SAFE FROM US, BUT IRAN MUST QUIT SYRIA: Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu told Russia on Wed. 11 July 2018 that its ally Syrian President Bashar al-Assad would be safe from Israel, but Moscow must ensure that Iranian forces quit Syria, a senior Israeli official said. The message, which the official said Netanyahu conveyed in talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, came just hours after Israel shot down a Syrian drone that had penetrated its airspace, underscoring the frontier's volatility. Israel has been on high alert as Assad's forces advance on rebels in the vicinity of the Golan Heights, much of which Israel captured from Syria in 1967. Israel worries Assad could let his Iranian and Hezbollah reinforcements entrench near Israeli lines or that Syrian forces may defy 1974 Golan demilitarization. "They (Russia) have an active interest in seeing a stable Assad regime and we in getting the Iranians out. These can clash or it can align," the Israeli official said. Israel's willingness to leave Assad in power echoes the USA position. (Ynet)

SYRIA: 35 KILLED, 15 INJURED IN ISIS ATTACK: The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army terror group this week killed 35 Syrian soldiers and injured an additional 15 people. The attack comes after a recent ceasefire agreement in southern Syria failed to include the Khalid ibn al-Walid Army. According to reports, the attack was a suicide terror attack and occurred in the town of Zaizun, less than 9 miles from the Israeli border. ISIS reports claim that the terrorists succeeded in planting an explosive vehicle among Syrian and Russian military vehicles advancing along the Jordanian border towards Israel. In an unprecedented statement, ISIS took responsibility for Khalid ibn al-Walid Army's attack and referred to southern Syria as a "province" of ISIS. (INN)

SYRIA CIVIL WAR NEARS ISRAEL'S BORDER, BRINGS POSSIBLE IRAN MILITARY PRESENCE: A group of Syrians on Tues. 10 July, 2018 approached the Israeli fence along the Golan. They demanded that the border be opened and brandished a sign reading, "Israel should stop the barbaric attacks against us now." An increasingly effective offensive by the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, backed by Russian air power and Iranian-supported militias, has driven long-entrenched rebel groups from southern Syria since mid-June, profoundly changing the dynamic of the 7-year-old civil war. The destabilizing presence of Iranian forces aiding Assad is likely to be a prime topic of concern when President Trump meets on Monday 16 July, 2018 with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki.

The rebels last week signed a deal with Moscow to lay down heavy weapons and cede the border regions with Jordan to Assad's forces. Iranian and Syrian news outlets reported that government forces had cut off the key southern provincial capital of Daraa, just 8 miles from the Jordanian border, and that its fall was imminent. As the Syrian regime and Russian air power hammered Syrian rebels, an estimated 320,000 civilians fled the fighting and thousands clustered in tents next to the border fence with Israel. Israel delivered 300 tents, 13 tons of food, 30 tons of clothes and 15 tons of other humanitarian aid for children across the border as part of Operation Good Neighbor. Israel has provided humanitarian aid to Syrians for years. Now Israel faces its greatest test in seven years of war: How to keep Iran from benefiting from Syria's offensive and threatening Jerusalem. The USA and Israel assert that there is in Syria a widespread presence of Iranian forces. (Washington Times)

'TO BE PREPARED FOR ARSON, FIRES, AND EARTHQUAKES': Dudi Simchi, the chief of the Fire and Rescue Service, spoke to media sources this week about how the firefighting forces cope with the phenomenon of kite terrorism and arson, which causes dozens of fires on a daily basis throughout the Gaza envelope and the Negev. Simchi said that the firefighting forces have improved their ability to minimize the damage caused by the fires. "Unfortunately, many dunams were burned, but we can say that in the past week and a half, the amount of area burned has been small, mainly due to the faster activity of the firefighting forces. Simchi also referred to the question of whether preparations are being made for a situation in which kite terrorism will spread to Judea and Samaria: "We have been preparing for a few months now for instances of terrorists setting fire to Judea and Samaria and we work together with the heads of the local authorities and

the army. We will explain to the population and make sure that there are no weeds that will allow the fire to spread. Along with the observations and forces of many volunteers in Judea and Samaria, we will also minimize damage caused by arson." The Fire Commissioner also spoke about the country's preparations for a severe earthquake, in light of the recent series of minor earthquakes in northern Israel. "I think it is impossible to know when a strong earthquake will occur, so all the citizens of Israel must prepare for an earthquake, and we must see that we are preparing and knowing what to do." (Arutz-7)

JERUSALEM MUFTI ISSUES LAND TRANSFER FATWA: The Palestinian mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, on 10 July 2018 issued a new fatwa (Islamic religious decree) banning Muslims from "facilitating the transfer of ownership of any part of Jerusalem or the land of Palestine to the enemies." The fatwa came in response to an Israeli bill allowing Jews to purchase land in Area C. According to the 1993 Oslo Accords most of geographic Judea & Samaria (60% of the area) is designated Area C, over which Israel has exclusive jurisdiction both administratively and in security matters. All Israeli settlements, including those in and around East Jerusalem, are located in Area C. The bill, put forward by MK Bezalel Smotrich aims to change a 1953 Jordanian law that prevents foreigners and non-Arabs from directly purchasing land in this area. The explanation for the bill states that it is "unacceptable" for Israeli citizens to be barred from buying land just because they are Israeli citizens.

The fatwa ruled that the "land of Palestine" was waqf – meaning an inalienable religious endowment in Islamic law – and as such it is prohibited to sell, bestow ownership or facilitate the transfer of ownership of any part of it to non-Muslims. "Anyone who sells his land to the enemies, or accepts compensation for it, will commit a sin," said Hussein in his fatwa. He also warned that anyone who violates the fatwa will be considered an infidel, apostate and a traitor to God, Islam and his homeland. The fatwa ruled that Muslims were obliged to boycott anyone who violates the ruling, which includes refusing to do any business with the offenders or marrying them or attending their funerals or burying them in Islamic cemeteries. (J.Post)

80,000 RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS VULNERABLE TO QUAKES, ISRAEL'S DISASTER AGENCY TOLD: After a series of minor earthquakes hit the north of the country over the past several days, a hastily organized seminar hosted by the National Disaster Management Agency on Wed. 11 July, 2018 heard that tens of thousands of residential buildings in Israel are vulnerable to more powerful tremors. The meeting, called earlier this week by the Defense Ministry, included representatives from the police, army and ambulance services as well as from local authorities. A recent rash of minor quakes has raised public concerns that a major one could be coming, and instructions have been issued to review and refresh procedures. A situation assessment reported 80,000 residential buildings of three floors or more, and 4,600 public buildings, were built before new regulations requiring reinforcement against earthquakes were introduced in 1980, and are thus deemed potentially vulnerable. New details were published on Monday 9 July, 2018 showing that the government has been making very little progress in preparing for a strong tremor and in strengthening structures. (Times of Israel)

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