

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

Push For One World Religion As Pope & Muslim Imam Sign Interfaith Covenant

image: <http://prophecynewswatch.com>



A historic interfaith covenant was signed in the Middle East on Monday, and the mainstream media in the United States has been almost entirely silent about it.

Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb is considered to be the most important imam in Sunni Islam, and he arrived at the signing ceremony in Abu Dhabi with Pope Francis "hand-in-hand in a symbol of interfaith brotherhood".

News Image BY MICHAEL SNYDER/ECONOMIC COLLAPSE BLOG
FEBRUARY 08, 2019

But this wasn't just a ceremony for Catholics and Muslims. According to a British news source, the signing of this covenant was done "in front of a global audience of religious leaders from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other faiths"...

The pope and the grand imam of al-Azhar have signed a historic declaration of fraternity, calling for peace between nations, religions and races, in front of a global audience of religious leaders from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other faiths.

Pope Francis, the leader of the world's Catholics, and Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the head of Sunni Islam's most prestigious seat of learning, arrived at the ceremony in Abu Dhabi hand-in-hand in a symbol of interfaith brotherhood.

In other words, there was a concerted effort to make sure that all of the religions of the world were represented at this gathering.

According to the official Vatican website, a tremendous amount of preparation went in to the drafting of this document, and it encourages believers from all religions "to shake hands, embrace one another, kiss

one another, and even pray" with one another...

The document, signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, was prepared "with much reflection and prayer", the Pope said. The one great danger at this moment, he continued, is "destruction, war, hatred between us." "If we believers are not able to shake hands, embrace one another, kiss one another, and even pray, our faith will be defeated", he said.

The Pope explained that the document "is born of faith in God who is the Father of all and the Father of peace; it condemns all destruction, all terrorism, from the first terrorism in history, that of Cain."

There is a lot of language about peace in this document, but it goes way beyond just advocating for peace.

Over and over again, the word "God" is used to simultaneously identify Allah and the God of Christianity.

Here is just one example...

We, who believe in God and in the final meeting with Him and His judgment, on the basis of our religious and moral responsibility, and through this Document, call upon ourselves, upon the leaders of the world as well as the architects of international policy and world economy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace; to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing.

On top of that, the document also boldly declares that "the diversity of religions" that we see in the world was "willed by God"...

Freedom is a right of every person: each individual enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action. The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings. This divine wisdom is the source from which the right to freedom of belief and the freedom to be different derives. Therefore, the fact that people are forced to adhere to a certain religion or culture must be rejected, as too the imposition of a cultural way of life that others do not accept;

In essence, this is saying that it is the will of God that there are hundreds of different religions in the world and that they are all acceptable in His sight.

We know that the elite want a one world religion, but to see the most important clerics from both Catholicism and Islam make such a dramatic public push for it is absolutely stunning.

U.S. to Purchase Israel's Iron Dome Missile Defense, Citing 'Immediate Need'

'Israel has an Iron Dome and an iron fist. Our systems can face any threat,' Netanyahu said in response to the deal

Haaretz and Reuters Feb 06, 2019 4:41 PM

Breaking down the math behind Trump's claim that Israel gets \$4.5 billion from the U.S:
The U.S. military said Wednesday it plans to buy a limited number of Iron Dome missile defense systems from Israel to fill a short-term need for interim indirect fire protection capability.

"The Iron Dome will be assessed and experimented as a system that is currently available to protect deployed U.S. military service members against a wide variety of indirect fire threats and aerial threats,"

the U.S. army said in a statement.

According to a statement from Israel's Defense Ministry, the American military told Israel it had decided to purchase the systems "for immediate needs of the U.S. army."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who also serves as defense minister, called this a "great achievement for Israel" and "further proof of our solid bond with the U.S., as well of Israel's rising status in the world."

Damascus the Damned

iamawatchman.com

Hold the emails. Look up the definition; it's 100% accurate. Damascus is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, founded in the third millennium BC and over subsequent centuries has been part of 42 different states. Some have improved, and some have impoverished the city. The next will annihilate Damascus the Damned.

Isaiah the prophet wrote, "A prophecy against Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins." (Isaiah 17:1)

Other translations state: "the city of Damascus will disappear!" [NLT]; "Damascus will cease to be a city." [ISV]; "Behold, Damascus is no longer a city; it has become a heap of ruins." [Berean Study Bible]

The New American Standard Bible takes an ominous future tone: "Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city." The KJV uses the apt description of the city's final state, calling it simply, "a ruinous heap."

The Good News Translation isn't such good news for Damascus. "The LORD said, "Damascus will not be a city any longer; it will be only a pile of ruins."

The Contemporary English Bible puts it bluntly, "This is a message about Damascus: Damascus is doomed! It will end up in ruins."

Ruinous heap. Heap of rubble. Wasteland. Barren. Ruins.

The City of Jasmine has seen its share of extreme highs and lows, but what happens in the end that turns the world's longest continuously inhabited city into a ghost town? More accurately, what wipes the town off the map? It's not merely uninhabited; it's "removed from being a city."

Many famous tourist attractions are called 'ruins' and draw millions of visitors. They include: the Coliseum in Rome; Machu Pichu, Chichen Itza, Stonehenge, Ta Prohm – famous for its scenes in the film Tomb Raider; the Luxor Temple in Egypt; Easter Island, Petra, Pompeii, the Ajanta Caves in India and many others are in some cases literally just a few stones stacked up amidst tangles of jungle or carved rocks. They're impressive, and they make us wonder how ancient civilizations built them. But in the end, they are ruins. The civilizations who built them are in most cases gone; extinct, exterminated, or non-existent.

We wonder what could have happened that made them vanish. In a few cases we know; Pompeii was buried under ash and lava when the volcano erupted. Other civilizations are just gone; their language, culture, and people are no longer here. There is no other way to put it – gone. Damascus will be gone as well. There is one major difference; we know it's going to happen.

The History of Damascus

Damascus rose to prominence in the 11th century BC under the Aramaeans, but the city grew into a thriving metropolis by the 2nd century under Roman control. Damascus, the western terminus of the Silk Road, was a key trade and cultural center.

In 476 Damascus came under Byzantine rule and became renowned for its breathtaking beauty and splendor. Legend tells of the Prophet Muhammad, who on his journey from Mecca to Syria, observed Damascus in the distance, and turned away saying, “a man should only enter paradise once, and that is upon his death.”[1]

The Islamic Rashidun Caliphate conquered Damascus in 634, and it fell to the Umayyad Caliphate in 661, after which the city became Syria’s hub, and the city’s main mosque was erected. The flourishing Damascus, affluent and splendid, was declared the capital of the world’s largest empire, which at its zenith stretched from Spain in the west to Afghanistan in the east.

After the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750, the Abbasid dynasty took control and moved Syria’s official capital to Baghdad. Damascus began a slow decline until the 12th century when it enjoyed another resurgence under the Zengid dynasty. By the 1500s, the city had fallen on hard times again and was captured by the Ottomans.

Damascus declined further under Ottoman rule; the economy stagnated, and the city became less and less relevant in both industry and influence. The Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923, and languishing Damascus fell into French hands. It gained independence along with the rest of Syria in 1945.

Syria’s economy has been a volleyball match since its founding but tanked in the 1980s – real GDP per capita plunging over 20%. Limited recovery during the 1990s and 2000s brought some growth, but all that (and much more) has been unraveled by the brutal Syrian Civil War. The conflict, raging since 2011, has left Syria as a whole, and Damascus in particular, shattered, shelled and destitute, but still inhabited. And according to Isaiah, doomed.

Hope for Damascus

Is there hope for the city of Damascus? Simply put, no. God’s word never fails (Isaiah 55:11). His promises always prove true (Psalm 18:30). His guarantees are “yes and amen” (1 Corinthians 1:20). None of God’s prophecies have ever been wrong (Luke 24:44). The prophecy about Damascus will not be His first. The city will be destroyed. The place will become a heap of ruins, but unlike the places we listed before, no one will ever visit the place again. Why? We aren’t told exactly.

It could be a nuclear detonation makes it impossible for humans to live there. It could be that chemical attacks continue, and no one wants to live there. It could be that people evacuate the region because the war leads to another economic catastrophe and the city cannot function because people flee Damascus to find jobs, food, and safety. Like many small towns when industry moves, the town eventually dies. Regardless of the how, we know the what – “a ruinous heap.” And we know the why – God said.

What about the hope? Any hope for Damascus is the same as the hope you and I have – Jesus Christ.

“...this hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie, promised before the beginning of time...” (Titus 1:2)

“In His name, the nations will put their hope.” (Matt. 12:21, Isaiah 42:4)

“...Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

“Set your hope fully on the grace to be given to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at His coming.” (1 Peter 1:13).

The Future of Damascus

The immediate future of Damascus is dark and ominous. It is being poisoned by its own government. It could be invaded or re-invaded by Iran, or Russia, ISIS, or some group we don't even know about. Radical groups seem to pop up weekly in the Middle East. Some believe Israel will destroy Damascus; either pre-emptive or in self-defense, or to drive out one of several other forces intent on using the city as a forward base to attack Israel.

We can't say for sure. The Bible does not say, “Israel will blow up Damascus on July 28” (or any other date). We do know this – Isaiah was right about the birth and death of Christ, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, and many other events. He won't be wrong about Damascus.

What Should Christians Do?

First, we should pray for the people who live in Damascus. John 3:16 applies to them as much as Mexico Africa or Nebraska. God loves the citizens who live there. He loves their children and families, no matter their religious or political affiliations. Salvation is available to all.

Pray for the oppressors of Damascus. As difficult as it is to imagine, God loves the people who are destroying the city and killing its residents. He loves unconditionally. If Assad, the current tyrannical leader of Syria, repents and asks Christ for forgiveness, he will be saved. More bizarre things have happened in history.

Numerous ancient kings decreed national repentance; some were believers in Jehovah, but not all. Josiah (2 Kings 23:25), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:1), Cyrus (Ezra 1:2), Ahasuerus (Esther 4:3), Darius (Ezra 6:25-27), Ahab (1 Kings 21:27), Hezekiah (Isaiah 37:1), Eliakim (2 Kings 19:2), Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:12), and the unnamed king of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-7). Nothing is too hard for God.

On March 30, 1863 our own President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a National Day of Prayer and fasting. He eloquently said,

“We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

Nations have turned to God before, it can happen again, and God would welcome them. Pray for the oppressors and haters of the citizens of Damascus. 2 Chronicles 7:14).

Raise your voice. If a bill or motion arises in Congress or the Supreme Court, or some referendum is circulated that empowers the UN to do something stupid; make a call to your representative, write an email, say something. Be involved, don't just complain.

Peace plans come and go. Look it up, and you'll find every American President for the last 70 years has a photo of him and the leaders of the primary Middle East nations. They're always smiling and shaking hands because they just solved the Middle East crisis. Oddly, the next president had to solve it again, and again and again. Seriously, look it up. Every president back to and including Harry Truman: 12 US

Presidents – have declared peace in the Middle East and taken credit for it. None lasted.

Finally, speak up for peace. I'm not talking about just any peace, I'm talking about the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and the "peace that passes all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Know Him, Know Peace. No Him, No Peace. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is still the only hope for the world. Share it, teach it, post it, pray it.

Finish Well Watchmen.

1. Quoted in These Cities Used to be Rich but Are Now Poor; Daniel Coughlin, MSN.com 12/18; (accessed 1/16/19)

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Police Contacting Private Citizens Who Criticize Transgenderism Online

www.prophecynewswatch.com/

Remember that incident a couple of weeks ago, when the police contacted a docker from Humberside about his decision to tweet a limerick highlighting the ludicrousness of transgender ideology? Well, it turns out that the British cops are planning to make a habit of this sort of thing. From the Spectator:

Margaret Nelson is a 74-year-old woman who lives in a village in Suffolk. On Monday morning she was woken by a telephone call. It was an officer from Suffolk police. The officer wanted to speak to Mrs Nelson about her Twitter account and her blog.

Mrs Nelson, a former humanist celebrant and one-time local newspaper journalist, enjoys tweeting and writing about a number of issues, including the legal and social distinctions between sex and gender.

Among the statements she made on Twitter last month and which apparently concerned that police officer: 'Gender is BS. Pass it on'.

Another:

'Gender's fashionable nonsense. Sex is real. I've no reason to feel ashamed of stating the truth. The bloody annoying ones are those who use words like 'cis' or 'terf' and other BS, and relegate biological women to a 'subset'. Sorry you believe the mythology.'

The blog, meanwhile, is mainly about death and funeral rituals: Mrs Nelson has officiated at many funerals. One of her blog posts, on 19 January 2018, challenges the statement that 'transwomen are women' on the grounds that a person's proclaimed gender does not change their biological sex.

Mrs Nelson wrote:

'If a transgender person's body was dissected, either for medical education or a post-mortem examination, his or her sex would also be obvious to a student or pathologist. Not the sex that he or she chose to present as, but his or her natal sex; the sex that he or she was born with.'

Even when a body has been buried for a very long time, so that there is no soft tissue left, only bone, it is still possible to identify the sex. DNA and characteristics such as the shape of the pelvis will be clear proof of the sex of the corpse.'

Mrs Nelson told me this about the call from the police:

'The officer said she wanted to talk to me about some of the things I'd written on Twitter and my blog. She said that some of the things that I'd written could have upset or offended transgender people. So could I please stop writing things like that and perhaps I could remove those posts and tweets?'

'I asked the officer if she agreed that free speech was important. She said it was. I said that in that case, she'd understand that I wouldn't be removing the posts or stopping saying the things I think. She accepted that and that was the end of the conversation.'

Mrs Nelson says the that officer made no suggestion that anything she had done was illegal. She says the officer gave no reason for the call.

She later asked the Suffolk force for an explanation, and received, via Twitter, this explanation:

'Hi Margaret, we had a number of people contact us on social media about the comments made online. A follow-up call was made for no other reason than to raise awareness of the complaints. Kind regards, Web Team.'

Shortly after this piece was published, Suffolk Police sent me a statement effectively admitting that they made a mistake by calling Mrs Nelson. A Suffolk Constabulary spokesman said:

"We accept we made a misjudgement in following up a complaint regarding the blog. As a result of this we will be reviewing our procedures for dealing with such matters. We are sorry for any distress we may have caused in the way this issue was dealt with, and have been in contact with the woman who wrote the blog to apologise."

It's nice that the cops apologized, but how in the world did they think that harassing private citizens for expressing their opinions was a good idea?

What possible justification did they think they had for letting an elderly woman know that her opinions on the transgender ideology--which, incidentally, are far more accurate than the dangerous drivel being pumped out by the mainstream media and their ideological puppet masters--were unwelcome?

Think about it for a moment: Police officers actually contacted a member of public and asked her to stop tweeting her thoughts and suggested--a word that seems suddenly sinister in this context--that she perhaps might want to remove them.

Trans activists have managed to mainstream their movement in a mere half-decade, and now it appears that even law enforcement has chosen a side. And not only have they chosen a side, but they have even decided to police speech and let people know when their social media activity has attracted the attention of the cops. If that isn't a creepy sign of things to come, I don't know what is.

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