

# Israel News Desk

With BPF Secretary  
Steve Lloyd  
May 2018

Well, as we enter May, things are really hotting up in the Middle East. All of the Bible major players are there and involved, either directly or indirectly.

But before we look at these events and happenings I think it appropriate that we look at Israel itself, as a Nation in its 70th year, the apple of Gods eye, and their effect and blessing upon the rest of the world.

Whilst there are many who would still deny the Holocaust, the tears flowed on Memorial day for the 23,000 Jewish lives that have been lost in wars and terror attacks. On this day Prime Minister Netanyahu, who lost his brother Yonatan in the raid on Entebbe, said "The message left by the fallen is sharp and clear: Our lives may be too short, but we have guaranteed the life of the nation for ever".

As a prisoner in Auschwitz, Noah Klieger narrowly escaped death through sheer audacity. He was selected for the gas chamber on account of having pneumonia but managed to talk himself out of it in a personal encounter with the Nazi "Doctor of Death" Josef Mengele. He then faked his way onto a boxing squad at Auschwitz and enjoyed better meal rations. After liberation, he arrived in pre-state Israel aboard the *Exodus* ship and fought in the 1948 War of Independence. Klieger went on to be a journalist, writing several books and a long running column in the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot*. He covered the trials of Nazi criminals after the war and later worked as a sports journalist in Israel. He is still working today as a journalist - at the age of 92!

Whilst on the subject of the Holocaust, an audience of 3000 attended the JNF UK's *Notes of Hope* Concert in Jerusalem on 15<sup>th</sup> April where a collection of long lost music composed by those in the Nazi concentration camps. One of the highlights of the concert was when Holocaust survivor Aviva Bar-On, aged 85 sang a song written by a nurse, Ilse Weber, who perished in Auschwitz. It was the first time this song had been sung in public. The concert was the result of Italian Composer and Pianist Francesco Lotoro who has salvaged and recorded 8000 songs, symphonies and operas by camp inmates (not all Jewish). Lotoro stated that his work of over 30 years was a race against time, as many of the songs are only known by the survivors. The concert could be coming to London and Manchester.

The Israeli-Canadian philanthropist, Sylvan Adams, co-owner of the country's only professional Cycling Team Israel Cycling Academy approached the Italian cycling authorities with a crazy idea - to bring the Giro d'Italia, the second most important cycle race in the world to hold its opening stages in Israel. A year later it happened on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The Giro was watched by 840 million people last year - Now that's one in the eye for BDS movement.

USA - Following the revelation of half a ton of documents that show Iran's nuclear weapons programme, it is good to see President Trump, once again going against the rest of the world and supporting Israel by withdrawing from the disastrous Obama Nuclear deal. It has taken a daring Mossad operation to show the world what a bad deal it was, and how the Iranian Government were covering up their real intentions.

President Trump has also appointed John Bolton as his National Security Advisor. A move very much welcomed by Israel. Bolton is known as a "strong friend of Israel" and has supported Trump's Embassy move and has declared that the two-state solution to the Palestinian conflict is 'dead'.

The US Embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on May 14<sup>th</sup> and Guatemala moved their embassy to Jerusalem on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Despite good relations between the USA and Israel, anti-Semitism is still a major problem for Jews in the USA, on May 6<sup>th</sup>, an Israeli diplomat, Itay Milner, deputy consul general of Israel to the Midwest was thrown out of the car by a Uber driver, just because he answered his mobile phone in Hebrew. There had been no other interaction between the two before the incident, which happened in the middle of the highway in Chicago.

Syria - The situation in Syria gets worse by the day, with the Iranians setting up military bases and missile sites around Damascus. The expected response from Iran, that Israel was waiting and prepared for, finally came on May 7-8<sup>th</sup> with around 20 missiles being fired at Israeli positions in the Golan Heights. All the missiles were either neutralised by the Iron Dome system or landed harmlessly in non-populated areas. The Israeli response to this attack, as usual, was measured, precise and deadly accurate.

Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman warned Tehran: "If you give us rain, you will get a flood".

Not only have the USA and Germany condemned Iran's missile attack, but so has Bahrain's Foreign Minister Al-Khalifa, who posted on his twitter account "As long as Iran continues the current status quo of its forces and rockets operating in the region, any country - including Israel - has the right to defend itself by eliminating the source of danger".

UK - The British Ambassador to Israel David Quarry was at risk of being assassinated during a visit to Israel's border with Gaza. According to reports he travelled to the border fence with Israeli officials to conduct investigations into the deaths of Palestinians in Gaza, after the British Foreign Office raised concerns at the number of Palestinian deaths during recent riots. Mr Quarry was identified by Islamic Jihad after a photo was taken of him standing alongside Israel's General Yoav Mordechai, the Military Commander for the Palestinian territories. Palestinian factions often film Israeli commanders to be targeted by snipers. Both men left the area unharmed.

A number of people suffered minor injuries when a bonfire exploded at a Lag b'Omer event in London on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Reports suggest that the explosion was caused by fuel that had been thrown on the bonfire prior to its lighting or by a number of smartphones that had been placed on the bonfire.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has been accused by Jewish leaders of a 'missed opportunity' following a meeting with him in Greater Manchester. The leaders emerged frustrated and concerned after making extensive preparations to ensure he really understood the issues, including giving advance notice of their requests and holding a pre-meeting briefing the day before with Mr Corbyn's aides.

Saudi Arabia - The crown prince of Saudi Arabia has said that the Israelis are entitled to live peacefully on their own land. This statement is another important sign that ties between Riyadh and Jerusalem appear to be growing closer. He also said that the Palestinians also had the right to their own land. "But we have to have a peace agreement to assure the stability for everyone and to have normal relations". After he made these comments his father, King Salman reiterated Saudi Arabia's support for a Palestinian state. He also emphasised this in a phone call to president Trump after the demonstrations along the Gaza -Israel border.

UN - Israeli officials are furious that the UN Security Council chose to debate the explosive Gaza border flare up on the first night of Pesach.....when they knew no Israelis would be present. At the behest of Kuwait, the council met in emergency session while Jews worldwide were sitting down to a seder. Israeli ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon has lodged an official complaint about the timing of the debate into the deaths of 18 Palestinians in clashes on the Gaza border. He said "While Jews around the world gathered with their family at the seder table to celebrate Passover, the Palestinians sank to a new deceitful low so that they could use the UN to spread lies about Israel".

Keep praying for Israel, for the peace of Jerusalem and for the salvation of the Jewish people.

Maranatha

Steve