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A Deadly Spark on the Temple Mount

How a terrorist attack almost set off the Jerusalem powder keg

- Brent Nagtegaal
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Jerusalem—Terrorist attacks occur frequently in Israel, so much so that they rarely make international headlines anymore. However, the terrorist attack on July 14 this year was different—far different. The type of victims was not unusual: Security personnel are often targeted by Palestinian terrorists. The weaponry wasn't out of the ordinary: Homemade submachine guns, pistols and knives are the normal tools of the trade. Even the number of people who were murdered (two) did not make this attack especially noteworthy. What made this attack different was the location.

The terrorists purposefully chose the third-holiest site of Islam and the holiest site to Judaism: the Temple Mount. This was a shockingly bold move by the Palestinians, and one that caught the Israeli security establishment completely unprepared.

So ill prepared were Israel's police that they had to scramble to prevent a repeat. In the two days following the attack, the Israeli government closed down the 35-acre compound in order to search its mosques, shrines, tunnels and caverns for more weaponry. During the raid, police uncovered dozens of knives, slingshots, cudgels, spikes, inciting material, unexploded munitions and stun grenades. Then, in a move that seemed logical and innocuous, Israel set up metal detectors and cameras at the entrance to the Temple Mount so that terrorists could no longer smuggle such weapons onto the compound.

For the Palestinians, the new security measures were too much, with both the Muslim authority over the compound and the Palestinian Authority calling for "days of rage" against Israel and a boycott of the Temple Mount until the security measures were removed.

In the two weeks that followed, most days saw riots break out after a prayer session conducted outside the compound. Then, on July 28, large-scale riots erupted across East Jerusalem and the West Bank, leading to the deaths of three rioters. For the Palestinians, there would be no compromise. Rioting would continue until all metal detectors and cameras were removed.

Two days later, the Israeli government capitulated and began removing everything it had set up to prevent another attack from taking place.

This violent reaction to standard and fairly delicate practices aimed at preserving human life at a holy site bears contemplation and reflection. This event offers a unique glimpse into how a pivotal event in biblical prophecy will take place—one that will affect your life!

The First Domino of End-time Events

The *Philadelphia Trumpet* consistently encourages readers to watch Jerusalem because events in this pivotal city reveal specifically where we are on the time line of end-time events prophesied in the Bible.

Many prophecies indicate we are in the end time. One specific prophecy in the book of Zechariah makes July's events at the Temple Mount extremely important! This prophecy states that half of Jerusalem will fall into Arab hands and that this event will be the first domino to fall in a sequence that leads all the way to the coming of the Messiah.

Based on this prophecy, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has also forecast that before half of Jerusalem falls, an impasse will develop between the Arabs and Jews over the sovereignty of the Temple Mount. Palestinians will take up arms to seize the Temple Mount by force, and Israel will respond in kind. Furthermore, Mr. Flurry expects that this Arab takeover of the Temple Mount will likely be motivated by Iran. (Please request our free booklet *Jerusalem in Prophecy* for an in-depth study of this subject.)

With this in mind, consider how these factors came together in startling detail in Jerusalem.

Temple Mount Impasse

Militarily, Israel controls all of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. But due to the extremely sensitive nature of this city—and this location in particular—Israel strictly limits Jews' visitation to the site and permits the complex to be administered by the Waqf, a Jordanian Islamic organization. July's attack proved that more security measures were needed.

While Israel viewed the metal detectors as a simple safety decision to protect citizens from violence, the Arab street and the Muslim world reacted with rage, claiming that Israel was attempting to restrict their access to the site, and to ultimately take over the Temple Mount.

This lie has been promulgated for almost a century: that Israel is constantly scheming to take over the Temple Mount, destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque, then build the third temple on the area so that the Jews' Messiah can return. It is all patently false—the only restriction to religious access Israel makes to the Temple Mount is to block Jews from praying there—yet the lie remains the one rallying cry that unites the disunited Palestinians and the broader Muslim world.

Palestinian and regional leaders understand the unifying power of this lie and often use it to control the Arab street. This is what we saw during the violent protests in July.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas told supporters of his Fatah movement, "The campaign for Jerusalem has effectively begun and will not stop until a Palestinian victory and the release of the holy sites from Israeli occupation." He later claimed that the metal detectors had been "falsely presented as a security measure," hiding Israel's attempt "to take control over al-Aqsa Mosque."

Another Fatah statement praised the Palestinian demonstrators for their "intifada against the enemy," their "acts for the protection of al-Aqsa, and their struggle against the Israeli plans, while sacrificing souls and blood."

Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of Fatah's rival faction Hamas, castigated the rest of the Muslim world for being silent while Israel supposedly desecrated the Temple Mount (which Muslims call Al-Haram al-Sharif). "Where are you, nation of a billion, while prayer is being prevented at al-Aqsa? Where are the Arab summits while the mosque is being sullied by settlers? ... I say to the Zionist enemy that al-Aqsa and al-Quds [Jerusalem] are red lines."

In each of these cases, the narrative is consistent, clear and deceitful: Israel's security measures are an attempt to take over the Temple Mount and refuse access to Muslims. Thus, Muslims believe that they must stand up and fight the Jews any way they can in order to protect their holy places.

And naturally, some do.

One such person was 19-year-old Omar al-Abed from the Arab village of Kobar. On the Sabbath eve during the protests, he entered a nearby Jewish village in the West Bank. He knocked on the front door of a residence. The family inside was in the middle of its Shabbat meal, but they opened the door to the stranger. Omar entered and pulled out a knife.

Minutes later, he had murdered the grandfather and two of his adult children and severely injured the grandmother. The carnage ended only when an off-duty soldier next door heard the screaming, grabbed his weapon, and shot and wounded the terrorist.

This attack took place far from Jerusalem, far from the Temple Mount, far from al-Aqsa. Yet according to Omar, this family that was eating a meal and which had opened its door to him was a legitimate target in this holy war.

"I am writing my last testament, and these are my last words," Omar wrote on Facebook just two hours before his rampage, clearly intending to keep stabbing until someone killed him. It was a sacrifice he was willing to make—for al-Aqsa.

Jerusalem Post translated his post: "I am young, not even 20 years old. I had many dreams and aspirations. But what life is this in which our women and our young are murdered without any justification? They are desecrating the [al-Aqsa] Mosque, and we are sleeping. It's an embarrassment that we are idly sitting by."

Omar then spoke out against other Palestinians for not declaring war for Allah: "You, those who have a gun and who are worn out, you who only bring out your gun at weddings and celebrations, are you not ashamed of yourselves? Why are you not declaring war for God? Here they are closing al-Aqsa, and your gun is silent. All that I have is a sharpened knife, and it is

answering the call of al-Aqsa. Shame on you, you who preach hatred. God will take revenge on you and will make it count. All of us are the sons of Palestine and the sons of al-Aqsa. You, sons of monkeys and pigs, if you do not open the gates of al-Aqsa I am sure that men will follow me and will hit you with an iron fist, I am warning you.”

Omar’s sharpened knife answered the call to save al-Aqsa, and three innocent people are dead.

Now Omar is being hailed as a martyr in Muslim circles around the world. And while he sits in prison on a life sentence, he and his family will receive a generous reward from the Palestinian government: a lifetime of financial compensation.

Omar is a powerful illustration of how Palestinians, especially youths, are motivated by the “al-Aqsa is in danger” lie. Of course, this was already known, given the Palestinian response to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount back in 2000: They used the visit as a pretense to launch the second intifada. That explosion of murderous violence, often called the “al-Aqsa Intifada,” was fueled by the same narrative: Israel was trying to take over the Temple Mount. That narrative motivated Palestinians to blow themselves up on buses and in cafés throughout Israel. In the end, they murdered more than 1,000 Israelis, and thousands of Palestinians died as Israel defended itself. They died believing a narrative that was as false then as it is today.

In July 2017, Israel’s security measures sparked massive protests. This shows that the cause of “defending” al-Aqsa from a nonexistent threat remains a powerful motivation to Palestinians.

Opportunistic Muslim powers are poised to take advantage of this.

The Iranian Connection

While the July protests and riots were predominantly reported as a spontaneous grassroots uprising of the Palestinian people, there is growing evidence to suggest that Iran both instigated the Temple Mount attacks and encouraged the subsequent riots that led to the deaths of six Palestinian protesters and three Israeli civilians.

The first indication of Iranian involvement came from a speculative piece in *Tablet* magazine on July 27. Author Liel Leibovitz deduced that neither Fatah nor Hamas instigated the attack. Fatah’s leadership was caught unawares by it and only inserted itself into the fray after it realized that the Arab street was fully behind the ensuing riots, wanting to claim the leadership of a Palestinian cause that was already underway. Hamas can be discounted because it is in the habit of claiming responsibility for its attacks. It praised the Temple Mount attack, without taking credit for it.

Then Leibovitz wrote, “After you discount a host of other regional bystanders—like Jordan, where another weak regime depends on Israeli security cooperation for its very survival—you’re left with one conclusion, backed by no discernible evidence but eminently logical and hard to refute: The architect of the recent wave of violence is Iran.”

The key piece of circumstantial evidence is the location of the terrorists’ hometown. The three men—Mohammed Hamad Abdel Latif Jabarin (19), Mohammed Ahmed Mafdal Jabarin (19) and Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed Jabarin (29)—came from the large Arab town of Umm al-Fahm in northern Israel. This town is known to be a breeding ground for supporters of the Northern Front of the Islamic Movement, an organization outlawed in Israel back in 2015 for its connection to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the constant preaching of hate against the State of Israel.

Its leader, Sheikh Raed Salah, recently spent a nine-month stint in prison for a 2007 sermon he preached in al-Aqsa, in which he expressed hope that “the streets of Jerusalem [would] be purified with the blood of the innocent, who shed it in order to separate from their souls the soldiers of the Israel occupation, also in the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque.” He further said that “*our finest moment will be when we meet Allah as martyrs in al-Aqsa.*”

The fact that the three terrorists retreated into the al-Aqsa compound instead of fleeing elsewhere indicates they wanted to answer Salah’s call to help “purify the area” with their “innocent blood.”

The 2007 prison sentence wasn’t the only time Salah has been incarcerated. From 2003 to 2005, he was imprisoned on charges of funding Hamas (which was funded and directed by Iran at the time) and for being in contact with an Iranian intelligence agent.

Leibovitz acknowledged he had no proof of an Iranian connection to the July attack. However, proof of Iran’s efforts to fan the flames of the riots surfaced just two days later, on July 29.

Palestinian media began reporting that Iran had provided aid to Palestinians protesting Israel’s security measures. “The aid reportedly included boxes of food and drink,” *Times of Israel* wrote, “which came with a flyer attached depicting the Dome of the Rock and a quote attributed to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, reading, ‘With the help of God, Palestine will be freed. Jerusalem is ours’” (August 1).

The Palestinian Authority (PA), led by Mahmoud Abbas, apparently was aware of the Iranian infiltration into the West Bank to arrange what amounted to around a million dollars’ worth of support. However, Abbas didn’t warn the Israeli government about the Iranian penetration because he had cut off contact with the Israeli security establishment days earlier.

“It is clear to us that the regime in Tehran, by means of its long arms, is behind this catering operation,” a Palestinian official told *Israel Hayom*.

“The Iranian involvement also angered PA [officials],” *Times of Israel* continued, “with one unnamed official said to be close to Abbas telling the daily that it was a mistake to allow Iran to reach into the West Bank with its ‘tentacles’” (op cit).

“It is plainly obvious that the government in Tehran, by way of its long tentacles, was behind these efforts,’ the official said. ‘This involves millions of shekels, and it appears that the Iranians have found a way to cash in on this and to make it clear to the Palestinians that Iran is taking care of them,’” wrote *Israel Hayom* (August 1).

Are We Close to Jerusalem Falling?

While the Temple Mount crisis appears to be simmering down, it is important to take stock of what just happened:

There was a violent Arab-Israeli impasse over the sovereignty of the Temple Mount that was motivated in part by the Iranian regime.

These are the precise conditions the *Trompet* forecast two decades ago that would lead to half of Jerusalem falling.

But that is not where the prophecy ends. That event will start the chain reaction that leads to the return of Jesus Christ.

Though there is currently a relative calm in Jerusalem, the battle over Temple Mount sovereignty, and Iran’s desire to claim leadership of the Palestinian struggle against Israel, remains. The stage is set for the dramatic fulfillment of biblical prophecy in Jerusalem—prophecies that culminate in the Second Coming of the Messiah! ■



"Great Again"

Amerika zal weer groots worden, maar niet op de manier zoals miljoenen Amerikanen denken.

DOOR GERALD FLAHERTY

In het voorjaar van het eerst op de tellende mijn nieuwsbrief "Great Again" aanbevelen. Dit boek werd uitgegeven in de zomer van 2016. De nieuwgekozen president Donald Trump publiceerde ongeveer op hetzelfde moment een boek met dezelfde titel. Toen mijn nieuwsbrief boordje naar de drukker ging, wild ik niets over het boek van Mr. Trump. Oeps! Het was de titel "Crippled America" (Krompet Amerika!). Hij veranderde de naam naar "Great Again" (Grote Groots). In dit scenario slechts boordje? Ik denk het niet...

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