

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

THE SYRIAN KURDISH DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT



Kurdish fighters regain Kobani from Isis

The following is excerpted from Macer Gifford, “The Unknown American Heroes of Syria’s Civil War,” *National Review*, Feb. 6, 2017: “There is no better way to describe the impact that the March 2015 victory in Kobani had on the war against the Islamic State. ISIS’s defeat in this north Syrian city will go down in history as the moment the group began to decline. ... The liberation of Kobani wouldn’t have been possible without the intervention of the American military. High in the sky, U.S. Air Force pilots killed hundreds of jihadists and annihilated their heavy equipment. ... The Kurdish fighters were surrounded, outgunned, and short on supplies. Refusing to surrender to the jihadists, many used up their bullets and ran at the enemy with their last grenade, dying in one final act of defiance. ... What few in the West realize is that from the very beginning of this war, young Americans have been fighting against the Islamic State in support of the fledgling democratic movement in Rojava, the

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TEMPLE TAX REINSTATED BY THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN

The following is excerpted from “Half-Shekel Tithes for Building Temple Reinstated,” *BreakingIsraelNews.com*, Jan. 30, 2017: “After a 2,000 year moratorium, it is now possible for a Jew anywhere in the world to perform the mitzvah (commandment) of paying the half-shekel, a Biblically-mandated tax incumbent on every Jew to finance the day-to-day operations of the Temple. There are now two ways to perform this commandment: one method for people who can hand-deliver their offering, and another for those who can’t. While the Temple was standing, every Jewish man was required to give one half-shekel weight of silver, approximately eight grams of silver (worth about \$4 today), as a mandatory tax to support the Temple. Each man was obligated to give the same amount, regardless of his economic condition. The coins, once deposited in the Temple courtyard, were *hekdesh*

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TRUMP'S DAUGHTER AND SON-IN-LAW STRONGLY SUPPORT LGBT RIGHTS

The following is excerpted from "Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner worked to sink LGBT order," *Politico*, Feb. 3, 2017: "Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump helped lead the charge to scuttle a draft executive order that would have overturned Obama-era enforcements of LGBT rights in the workplace, multiple sources with knowledge of the situation told POLITICO. A draft executive order on LGBT rights that outlines how to roll back former President Barack Obama's protections and expand legal exemptions based on religious beliefs has been circulating among journalists and worried progressive groups this week. But two sources close to Kushner and Ivanka Trump, who have a record of supporting gay rights, said the couple favored putting out a clear statement from the president, promising to uphold the 2014 Obama executive order and stopping the momentum for the turnaround in its tracks. On Tuesday night, the White House released a statement saying that 'President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community. President Trump continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights, just as he was throughout the election.' ... Trump, the first Republican nominee to feature an openly gay speaker at his convention, did not highlight action on religious freedom."

ANIMAL WELFARE AND THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

The following is excerpted from "Animal Welfare," *Pulpit & Pen*, Jan. 6, 2017: "*Pulpit & Pen* has been reporting for months about the socially progressive agenda of Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) fellow Karen Swallow Prior. With the publishing of *Every Living Thing: How Pope Francis, Evangelicals, and Other Christian Leaders Are Inspiring All of Us to Care for Animals*, Southern Baptists have a whole new reason to be embarrassed of Prior and incensed about funding Dr. Russell Moore's ERLC. JD Hall covers more of the story at the *Polemics Report* in his piece 'Southern Baptists' Secret Animal Rights Agenda': 'Southern Baptists divert approximately four million dollars from missions every year to the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Since the inauguration of ERLC president Russell Moore, that four million dollars has given Southern Baptists the return of a strong advocacy for a Mosque to be built in New Jersey, a softening tone on homosexuality, a partnership with George Soros' amnesty-focused Evangelical Immigration Table, and an incoming United States President who thinks the ERLC president is a "very nasty guy."'"

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unofficially autonomous region that is home to Kobani. ... It's not just Americans who have flocked to aid the Rojava Revolution; hundreds of volunteers from around the world have joined the fight, too. ... What the International Volunteers are supporting is truly remarkable. The Syrian Kurds believe in secular democracy, societal equality, and the rule of law. They want devolved power so each community has control over its own affairs. There is no law in the land that can tell you who to worship, when to worship, how your children should be educated, or how you should lead your life. ... While the rest of Syria slips into anarchy, as the Assad regime barrel-bombs people from the sky and the Free Syrian Army rips itself apart, the entire northern part of the country has children in school, police on the street, and a functioning democracy."

TEMPLE TAX REINSTATED BY THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN

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(sanctified) and not permitted to be used for any other purpose. The nation of Israel continued to observe the commandment even after the First Temple was destroyed until the practice was outlawed by Roman Emperor Hadrian in the year 135 CE. ... Twenty years ago, Reuven Prager revived this mitzvah. He began minting silver coins that adhered to the Biblical requirements, producing a new and unique design every year. Those who wish to perform the mitzvah buy the silver coins from Prager, and then deposit them with *Otzar Hamikdash* (Treasury of the Temple), an organization set up to collect these coins. ... Prager has also arranged a method of sending the silver coins from the US. The nascent Sanhedrin has instituted a way to revive the mitzvah to rebuild the Temple. Last September, in honor of counting the first complete year of the 50-year Jubilee cycle on Rosh Hashanah, the Sanhedrin issued a medallion which can be used in place of the actual silver coin to perform the mitzvah. The biggest advantage of the Sanhedrin coin is that the medallion represents the half-shekel and is not considered sanctified. It therefore does not have to be physically deposited, but the funds are still dedicated for use in the Temple. The Sanhedrin and the Temple Movement hold reenactments of the ceremonies, training Kohanim, men of the priestly class, to accept the tithes. Funds raised from the Sanhedrin medallions are dedicated to priestly training and the recreating of special vessels and utensils for Temple use." "This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel *shall be* the offering of the LORD" (Exodus 30:13).

ANCIENT HUMMINGBIRDS WERE QUITE MODERN

The following is from CreationMoments.com, December 13, 2016: "Today, hummingbirds are found only in North, Central and South America. Of course, since Noah's Ark landed in the mountains of Ararat, they had to cross Europe and the Atlantic or Asia to get there. However, until now, there was no evidence for this migration. Scientists have now discovered two hummingbird fossils in a clay pit in southwestern Germany ("Ancient Buzzing," *Science News*, May 8, 2004). These tiny fossils are remarkable in many ways. Until now, evolutionists claimed the earliest hummingbird fossils to be one million years old. The new fossils are said to be 30 to 34 million years old. While we would not agree with the evolutionary dating, we would expect the hummingbird fossils in Europe or Asia to predate those in the New World. Even more interesting is that the fossils suggest that these older birds are fully functional hummingbirds. Their wing bones are like those of modern hummingbirds, which suggest that they could hover and fly backward just like the hummingbirds we know today. Their beaks were twice as long as their skulls, suggesting that they drank nectar just like modern hummingbirds. In other words, there is no sign of any evolutionary development, another fact we would expect. While the evidence for the history of hummingbirds is what we would expect, we do not need scientific evidence to uphold scriptural truth. We have God's Word on it."



HISTORIC HEBREW COLLECTION PURCHASED BY ISRAEL'S NATIONAL LIBRARY

Israel's National Library has announced the purchase of a collection of some 8,000 Hebrew manuscripts and books from the Valmadonna Trust Library through a Sotheby's auction ("National Library makes historic acquisition," *The Times of Israel*, Jan. 18, 2017). The Trust Library was collected by Jack V. Lunzer, who died in December at age 92. It has been described as "the finest private library of Hebrew books and manuscripts in the world." The holdings span 1,000 years and come from all parts of the globe. There is a 1492 printed Pentateuch printed in Lisbon, and the Plantin Polyglot "King's Bible" (Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Aramaic, and Syriac) printed between 1568-1573. Another treasure is a Passover Hebrew language Haggadah printed in Prague in 1556. The Haggadah is the text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder, which is the Jewish tradition that has replaced the biblical Passover since the destruction of the Second Temple. It was probably written about one hundred years later. The Seder celebrates God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It enumerates the Ten Plagues and describes the Passover. Various Psalms and prayers are said, including the Hallel (praise), which consists of Psalm 113-118. Psalm 116:19 mentions the house of the Lord, which does not currently exist. Psalm 118 is a Messianic Psalm which foretold the rejection of Jesus as Christ and His exaltation (Psa. 118:22; Mat. 21:42-44; Acts 4:10-12). Psalm 118:25-26 was sung by the crowd when Jesus

entered Jerusalem on an ass before His crucifixion (Mat. 21:9-10). That is a foreview of the day when Israel will repent and receive Jesus as Messiah. In many traditions, the Cup of Elijah is drunk during the Seder, pointing to the coming of Elijah to prepare the way for the Messiah. The Seder ends with a prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem!" The newly purchased library reminds us of the miracle of God's preservation of Israel during her 2,000+ years of global dispersion. This is one of history's most amazing stories, and it was the fulfillment of precise prophecies written by Moses in Deuteronomy 28 before Joshua conquered the Promised Land.



The Valmadonna Trust Library exhibited at Sotheby's earlier this year. (Photo courtesy of Sotheby's.)

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.