

Messiah-Mania hits fever pitch in Israel



An artist's depiction of the Jewish Temple (video screenshot)

Messiah-mania has reached a fever pitch in Israel, as one prominent rabbi says the prophesied redeemer was born a week ago, while a group promoting the rebuilding of the Temple released a new TV spot saying, "The time has arrived."

Meanwhile, a group of Muslims clashed Friday with Israeli police on the Temple Mount.

Maybe it's the blood moons. Maybe it's the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Or, maybe, suggest other rabbis, now that the majority of Jews in the world now live in Israel, prophecy is read to be fulfilled.

Perhaps the most surprising development is a statement by a well-respected Israeli rabbi, Chaim Kanievsky, a leading authority in Haredi Jewish society, stating unequivocally that the messiah was born July 21.

Kanievsky, hailed as one of the leading rabbis of his generation, wrote a book, "Siach Nechama," or "A Comforting Discourse," that claims the messiah is alive today and when Israel merits it, he will immediately reveal himself."

A Hebrew-language religious news site explained the rabbi based his statement on the Jerusalem Talmud (Tractate Brachot) and Midrash Rabbah, a collection of homiletic teachings believed to have been compiled in the fifth century in Tiberias, which states that the Messiah will be born on Tisha B'Av, which is observed as a fast day mourning the destruction of the Jewish Temples. This year, Tisha B'Av fell on Saturday, July 21.

"It seems to me that the sages intended to teach us that even when the Temple is destroyed, in any case the Redemption exists," he said. "And the Messiah actually exists and lives among us. He passes from one body to another in each generation."

Why now? he explained that the generation when the Messiah from the House of

David appears, is a generation full of accusations against Torah scholars.

“This generation displays absolute hatred for those who learn the Bible, especially in recent years,” Kanievsky wrote. “We are seeing all of the conditions described in the Talmud appear before us. It is for this reason that we anticipate the appearance of the Messiah at any moment, God-willing.”

At the same time, the Temple Institute in Israel, a group of scholars and activists promoting the rebuilding of the Temple, released a new provocative TV spot designed to stimulate debate about whether it is time to follow the Bible’s commandments on the holy site.

“The Temple Institute considers it of primary importance to educate about the great significance of Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the only site in the world that is considered holy by the Jewish people, and the only site in the world which G-d chose to rest His presence through the establishment of the Holy Temple,” the group’s website explains.

On Friday, masked Palestinian youths threw a stones towards Israeli riot police during clashes following Friday prayers at Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa mosque compound. Four Israeli policemen were injured in the riots when they were attacked with rocks and fireworks while dozens of Arabs barricaded themselves inside the Aqsa Mosque.

Police used stun grenades and smoke grenades to control the crowds. Some 24 Muslims were arrested after Police Chief Yoram Halevy ordered police to enter the building. After the riots, the Temple Mount was closed to Muslims for four hours but reopened in the afternoon.

Friday night also marked the longest lunar eclipse of the century that appeared in the Jewish state, with one rabbi labeling it “an omen for Israel.”

“People may try to interpret this as having significance for world politics but the lunar eclipse is an omen for Israel,” Rabbi Lazer Brody said. “If anything, this may be a warning specifically for Israel and potential war from the east. In today’s context, that might be Iran.”

Is there a connection between the coming of the Messiah and the rebuilding of the Temple?

Rabbi David Bar-Hayim, head of Machon Shilo, spoke to Arutz Sheva this week about this question. He gave a definitive yes and no.

“In the vast majority of the Jewish people, there is a connection,” he said, adding most people, Jewish or not, believe these two things will happen together.

Israel reached another milestone in recent weeks that also contributes to the Messiah-mania – with most Jews in the world today now residing in Israel.

This demographic fact has far-reaching messianic ramification in Jewish Law, requiring the Jews to reinstate Biblical commandments that have not been seen in two millennia and bringing redemption one, rather significant step closer, reported Breaking Israel News.

This month, Immigration Minister Sofa Landver reported to the Knesset that Israel had taken America’s place as home to the world’s largest Jewish population.

The Jewish population in Israel at the state’s inception in 1948 was approximately 650,000, less than 6 percent of the global Jewish population, and grew over the next 10 years to 1.8 million. By 1980, there were 3.2 million Jews living in Israel, rising to 5.8 million by 2010. Landver reported that there are currently 6.6 million Jews in Israel.

“Having a majority of Jews in Israel creates a different halachic (Torah law) reality, requiring Jews to perform certain mitzvot (Torah commandments) they have not had to perform in 2,000 years,” said Rabbi Hillel Weiss, spokesman for the nascent Sanhedrin. Weiss explained that this condition of a majority of Jews in Israel was anticipated in prophecy as the final return of the Jews to Israel. It is referred to as the third inheritance of the land, the first being by Joshua, the second after the Babylonian exile.

Jewish tradition holds that this return will usher in the building of the Third Temple, the return of the Davidic Dynasty, and the messianic era, he said.

“But this is not something that will just happen,” Rabbi Weiss said. “The Jews returned to Israel in order to pave the way for the moshiach.”

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